

THE BULLETIN



Winter Issue 2008



Swings and Roundabouts:

- + The Big Lottery supported Helpline Development project has been successfully completed and a final report is being prepared
- + The outline of a project, **Dial Up**, agreed with support from the European Social Fund (**ESF**), is shown inside
- + We have had very positive feedback on our training programme held with partners in the autumn and early winter
- + We continue to successfully recruit volunteers – but more are always welcome
- + We have just published, with support from the Big Lottery Helpline Development funding, a new edition of the comprehensive “**Dial Guide to Services**”. This is already on line at www.nwdial.org.uk
- Trustees have found it necessary to reduce paid staff hours by around 60% to ensure the maintenance of core services through the volunteer team. In doing this it has been acknowledged that this will have both obvious and unseen impact, every effort is being made to attract additional resources. It's not that the work is not there but there is not the money to pay for it, an ongoing issue in the voluntary sector
- One of the impacts is that it will be more difficult for Dial and our interests to be represented at the breadth of partner and community events and meetings we are invited to participate in, if you think you can help, let us know

Finishing on a positive, we have activity across the breadth of North Worcestershire and all involved in Dial get tremendous satisfaction from working together for our clients, directly and with partner organisations.

“Dial-Up and go”

Could this help you to move on and benefit your community as well?

Over the next nine months, in Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest, Dial will be recruiting and supporting special groups of volunteers and offer each a minimum of 10 weeks on placement with us, or a partner organisation. During this time there will be planned informal learning opportunities.



At the end of each individual's period there will be no pressure to disengage and as far as possible we will work with individuals to retain their active involvement, including, access to more specialised training. When it is more appropriate we will work with others to place volunteers in roles and sectors which meet their aspirations, skills and expectations.

This is Dial

Dial has a wide variety of volunteers; people who offer extensive high level prior knowledge and experience and people who can offer time but have limited prior experience or skills. Through team work, training, support and opportunity, we aim to and succeed in the raising of individual's self confidence, expectations and achievement and prepare them for further volunteering, employment and / or training.

There will be a number of elements to the project; after an induction, individuals will:

- Be matched into an appropriate volunteering role with a peer coach from the more experienced Dial / partner team. An appropriate community champion will be identified in the latter stages to contribute to the individual's self sustainability and progress.

Start to participate in periodic “**off the job**” activities which will help the recognition / acquisition of knowledge and skills in an informal but structured manner. The maintenance (**with appropriate support**) of a personal diary of activity and achievement will be central to this process.

Through individual and group activity:

- Many people having prior knowledge and experiences which they don't recognise. With assistance, they can identify and use these to build self esteem and confidence.
- There will be a proportion of participants who, potentially, will be quickly able to move onto accredited training. We are developing an arrangement for some existing volunteers to participate in a **“Train to Gain”**, one to one, programme with an approved service provider (**Beacon**). If this is compatible with this programme it could be extended as an option to participants.
- Soft training, designed to build individual skills, team work, confidence and self esteem will be available for three hours most weeks, on a pick and mix basis, Contributions will be made by experienced Dial staff and volunteers, partner organisation and importantly members of the project group themselves.
- Access to training will be on a roll on – roll off basis ensuring maximum flexibility of delivery.
- **Dial volunteer awards will be presented to participants in this programme.**

It is anticipated and hoped that a proportion of participants will maintain unpaid voluntary activity, not limited to within Dial, in addition to any economic activity, or further education/training, that they may progress towards.

Dial's management and volunteers include experienced; management, health, social care, education and training professionals who are appropriately qualified to deliver all aspects of this project including the training.

Anyone who is interested in these opportunities, or thinks some one they know may be, can contact our office for more information.



“Dial-Up”



European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills

What is an equality impact assessment?

An equality impact assessment (**EqlA**) is a tool for identifying the potential impact of a council's policies, services and functions on its residents and staff. It can help staff provide and deliver excellent services to residents by making sure that these reflect the needs of the community. By carrying out EqlAs, a council may also ensure that the services that it provides fulfil the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation.

What is the purpose of an EqlA? EqlAs offer an opportunity for council staff and their teams to think carefully about the impact of their work on local people and other members of staff. They can then take action that will promote equality for all. On the whole, EqlAs should make sure that equality is placed at the centre of policy development and review, as well as service delivery.

The equality impact assessment process focuses on:

- initial screening
- scoping and defining
- information gathering
- making a judgement
- action planning
- publication and review

At the end of the process there will be a summary report published to let people know the outcome of the assessment.

When are they carried out?

The Race Equality Scheme, Gender Equality Scheme and the Disability Equality Duty are all statutory requirements that set out the relevance of the council's key functions, policies and services. There is a timetable for conducting equality impact assessments for all existing functions, policies and services. This sets out when the impact assessment will need to be conducted. However, in line with the statutory requirement, the council must conduct impact assessments as soon as a relevant new policy, function or service is considered. It should be an integral part of policy development.

Who carries them out? Service managers and frontline staff are important in the assessment process. They will be involved in implementing actions and changes that the assessment identifies as necessary. It doesn't have to be an equalities officer who carries out the EqIA. When considering the equalities implications it is necessary to involve others who may offer challenge to views or some evidence of impact.

Why do we carry them out? The EqIA process is not just a legal requirement, under a number of acts including the Race Relations [Amendment] Act 2000. It actually helps to improve policies, strategies, procedures, functions, projects, reviews and organisational change for the whole community and not just minority groups.

Who are the target equality groups? EqIAs can be used to focus on specific equality strands. This can help promote equality of opportunity for a particular group. For instance, certain sections of the community may be known to experience more disadvantage than others. They may be adversely affected by a policy or service or omitted from the benefits of a policy or service. This needs to be carefully considered in the context of the EqIA process.

There are a range of different equalities target groups. The EqIA focuses on these groups to try to find out whether or not they are benefiting from a strategy, policy, service, project or function. These groups stem from the existing legislation in the United Kingdom that covers discrimination.

The groups and target areas include:

- age
- sexuality
- faith or belief
- race
- ethnicity
- Disability
- Gender

The groups are not homogeneous and people within these groups have different and individual needs. Many will be members of several of the targeted groups. Their experience of unlawful discrimination can involve a variety of factors.

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(What is an equality impact assessment continued)

Let's look specifically at Disability:

The 2005 Disability Discrimination Act (**DDA**) requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful disability discrimination and harassment
- promote equality of opportunity and positive attitudes towards people with impairments
- take account of people's impairments – even if this means treating them more favourably
- encourage participation in public life of people with impairments

Doing the Duty:

The Disability Equality Duty (**DED**) is intended to prevent disability-related discrimination from occurring at the outset and to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. Chapter 13 of the DDA places a duty on public bodies to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. This includes procedural adjustments, physical alterations to buildings or provision of auxiliary services such as British Sign Language (**BSL**) interpreters. The duty requires public bodies to anticipate the requirements of disabled people and to make the necessary adjustments required by them.

However, it is not just about the physical changes like adapting buildings – it is also about attempting to change the way councils approach issues relating to disabled people. In essence, it is about including disability equality into all aspects of the council's policies from the outset.

What's happening in North Worcestershire?

The three District Councils, Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest and Worcestershire County Council have undertaken work, individually and together. Other public bodies also have the same duty but we are not aware of what they are doing, or have done. Bromsgrove and Redditch have established “forums” for their respective areas.

For more information about these and other aspects of what is being done contact the Councils directly by phone or, look at their websites.

There but for the grace of god!

There have been several occasions in my 45 years of working when I have thought "I'm so fortunate to be here". The Holocaust Memorial event in Redditch on the 24th January was one of these occasions.

Volunteer, Peter Hewitt and I represented Dial at this annual event; going in procession from the Town Hall to Worcester Square in the Kingfisher Centre for the main activities and then outside at the Holocaust Memorial for a contribution from the Mayor and a laying of flowers by the Fire Service on behalf of the uniformed public services.



What made it such a memorable event? Well, it was a number of things; the most moving of singing, poetry and readings, from children and adults, and a fantastic turnout from the variety of communities which make up Redditch.

There were people who attend every year, others, like Peter and I, attending for the first time, passing shoppers stopping to actively join in, others who just looked on in amazement.

Why was Dial involved? Although the most well known victims of the Nazi Holocaust were the Jewish people others included; black and ethnic minorities, trade unionists, Roma and Gypsies, disabled people and social and political opponents of the regime. Sadly, although more than 60 years have passed we still hear of genocide and persecution in the world and individuals who suffer discrimination and disadvantage. There but for the grace of God goes I. On this personal note I was also pleased to not only meet some old friends but also to discover that one of the officials organising the event is the daughter of a colleague from a former life and role, someone I've not seen in almost 20 years. A day of mixed emotions!

Jim D. Smith

Useful Contacts

Disability Living Allowance / Attendance Allowance Helpline:	08457 123456
Benefit Enquiry Line (BEL):	0800 88 22 00
Pension Credit:	0800 99 1234
Social Services:	0845 6072000
Out of hours Emergency Number:	01905 768020
Worcestershire Carer's Unit:	0800 3892896
Worcestershire Association of Carers:	01905 26500
Blue Badge Offices:	
Bromsgrove District Customer Service Centre:	01527 881288
Redditch One Stop Shop:	01527 534123
Wyre Forest Customer Service Centre:	01562 732928
Community Legal Advice (CLA):	0845 3454345
Age Concern Bromsgrove & District:	01527 871840
Age Concern Redditch & District:	01527 584653
Age Concern Kidderminster & Wyre Forest:	01562 827788

NW DIAL can help with your queries about all manner of issues related to impairment / disability, access, holidays, discrimination, support organisations both local and national, transport etc. We can also help with form filling.

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