

REGIONAL BULLETIN: SOUTH WEST

WELCOME

Welcome to the first edition of the Capacitybuilders' newsletter. This regional bulletin is intended to provide more information on what is happening across the South West of England region with Capacitybuilders and the ChangeUp programme. The Newsletter will be produced around 3 times per year and will be supplemented with regional bulletins; the next edition will be out in November/December. We welcome suggestions for articles and content; in particular on areas of sharing best practice, so please do get in touch if you would like to contribute.

THE ROLE OF A REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Vernon Samuels is Regional Coordinator for the South West of England. Over the past 17 years, Vernon has worked in a variety of roles within, or connected to the voluntary and community sector. Before joining Capacitybuilders, he was involved in the planning and implementation of ChangeUp in the South West between 2004 and 2006. Prior to this, Vernon held the post of Chief Officer for an inner city community association.

The Regional Coordinator role acts as the link between Capacitybuilders and ChangeUp initiatives, and they have been described by Simon Hebditch as ambassadors of Capacitybuilders and advocates of the voluntary and community sector. Broadly, this translates into two key functions:

- Providing a communication link between Capacitybuilders, Consortia and other ChangeUp stakeholders
- Working with stakeholders to maximise the impact of the ChangeUp programme and Capacitybuilders' grants programme on a regional, sub-regional and local level.

Lyme Regis Community Resource Centre

Funded through a capital investment fund, the Dorset Shire County Consortium has begun to create a Community Resource Centre in Lyme Regis. This is a major settlement in a geographical area experiencing deprivation and lack of venues for community meetings. The Centre will offer excellent provision, be accessible to all and will actively promote diversity. The ChangeUp capital has allowed the Dorset Consortium to leverage significant commercial loan finance. The revenue generated by this asset will then enable financial sustainability within the Changeup timescale of 2014.

Torbay Consortium

The ChangeUp programme has contributed significantly to improving relationships between Torbay Council and the Voluntary Sector. Torbay Council is represented on the Consortium and over the past year they have successfully delivered shared outcomes in partnership with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).

Improved relationships and understanding between the Council and the Voluntary Sector in Torbay has led to many benefits for frontline organisations. Meetings can now be arranged at short notice to deal with important issues. Recently a funding bid was turned around jointly in less than one day. A web portal has been developed for Voluntary and Community Groups, and an audit of the VCS was carried out. Training modules of VCS/partnerships was developed and a BME conference was held and a BME forum established.

The Torbay Consortium using the ChangeUp funding are securing a property for the VCS in a central Torbay location, again in an area experiencing multiply deprivation, to support front line VCS organisations. The Torbay Consortium is a good example of where all agencies recognise that they must fully embrace the ChangeUp agenda and where the Local Authority is committed to delivering more services in partnership with the VCS. The Local Authority recognise that the VCS must be sustained

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