

REGIONAL BULLETIN: WEST MIDLANDS REGION

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 West Midlands 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

Corrina McHale and **Mary-Jane Peach** are the Regional Coordinators for the West Midlands. Corrina has joined Capacitybuilders from BBC's Children in Need where she worked as a Regional Coordinator and Mary-Jane previously worked for ruralnet, as part of the net:gain team responsible for delivering an ICT project funded under ChangeUp.

Regional Coordinators act 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 programmes on a regional, sub-regional and local level.

NET INTEREST IN SOLIHULL

Deploying good practice in using IT is a key element of the ChangeUp programme. So, when SUSTAIN, the Solihull ChangeUp consortium, decided to set up a website, they were determined to create it with a structured approach. The Consortium had been formed from a dozen second tier VCS organisations in Solihull. It's Chair is also Chair of the Solihull Partnership (LSP) and it has advisory members from Solihull MBC, which provides a strong platform for delivery of the ChangeUp project in the borough.

One of the Consortium members, Colebridge Trust, operates a social enterprise, providing Web and Media services to the sector and was well placed to lead on the web site initiative. Dave Pinwell, CEO of Colebridge Trust said:

"We facilitated a structured workshop, which is an approach we use with clients to obtain a high quality specification of requirements for the look and content of a website. One of the conclusions of that session was the need for the site to be a tool which would add value in the sector. We want it to grow into a first port of call and one stop shop when people in the sector are looking for answers."

"We have kicked off with two searchable directories that have not previously been as accessible in an up-to-date form. Firstly, of organisations in the sector and, secondly, of meeting rooms available for hire. Feedback has already been very positive."

For further information about this project, please visit www.solihull-sustain.org.uk

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