

Action for Affordable Warmth Partnership

Notes from Steering Group Meeting 10th December 2004

Present: Lisa Jones (S. Glos. Council), Nicky Swetnam (NEA), Andrew Honeyborne (Cheltenham BC), Sarah Giff (SWEA), Evelyn Nightingale (Pension Service), Barbara Piranty (GRCC), Laura Bramley (Centre for Sustainable Energy), Fiona O'Driscoll (S. Glos. Council), Giles Deane (S. Glos. Care & Repair), Diana Billingham (Gloucestershire Healthy Living Partnership), Jessica Howell (Tewkesbury BC), Andrew Cross (Forest of Dean DC), Sam Robinson (Eaga Partnership).

Apologies: Kaye Welfare (SWEA), Philip Bennett (Cotswold & Vale PCT), Maria Hickman (Stroud DC), Lynfa Vater (SGC Social Services), Helen Bown (W. Glos. PCT), Louise Twinam (NEA), Tim Garland (S. Glos. Pension Service), Maggie Cornock (Stroud Care & Repair), Lindsey Thomas (S. Glos. PCT), Peter Iles (S. Glos. Age Concern), Gary Packer (Cotswold DC), Sue House (S. Glos. Sensory Impairment Team).

This meeting was different to most in that we had a TV news crew from ITV in attendance who interviewed Sarah Giff for a piece aired on 10th December 6pm news bulletin about the importance of keeping warm in winter for older people / the S. Glos. Winter Greetings Card / the Warm & Well scheme.

1. Minutes of last meeting: There were various actions identified: to arrange for information on affordable warmth issues to be included in hospital discharge packs and to be supplied through Age Concern's hospital discharge programme; to arrange further Active, Warm & Well training; to arrange Warm & Well training for Pension Service staff and to ensure that affordable warmth is covered in any future SAP (Single Assessment Process) training. These actions are being taken forwards by the various parties.

2. Ensuring information is accessible to all: this meeting considered the issue of whether our information on solutions to fuel poverty, such as the Warm & Well scheme, was available to everyone on an equal basis regardless of language, visual impairment, hearing impairment, learning difficulties etc. As we were lucky enough to have Nicky Swetnam from NEA along to the meeting we mostly discussed issues around communicating with profoundly deaf people, as Nicky has experience of this with the Meeting the Energy Needs of the Deaf project. A copy of Nicky's presentation on this project is attached and she can be contacted directly for copies of the video / DVD resource by email: Nottingham@nea.org.uk.

Discussion followed Nicky's presentation and a viewing of the video:

- Profoundly deaf people cannot necessarily read written English, hence the need for a different approach for delivering energy advice to this group, using BSL
- Both the Pension Service and Eaga Partnership have experience of working with various groups that cannot access information in the most common formats e.g. written English
- NS mentioned that lots of deaf people claim DLA on the basis of their deafness as their disability and that lots of deaf people are also unemployed, but that there is probably an under-claiming of a wider range of benefits because the information about these is not in a suitable format, thereby this suggests a higher proportion

of deaf people may be fuel poor (Nicky stated this was not based on hard evidence)

- The British Deaf Association website should be a good source of statistics on benefits take up etc. - www.bda.org.uk. (The BDA tends to deal mainly with the profoundly deaf).
- Key contacts for this and other related issues within Local Authorities are Sensory Impairment Teams - in some LA areas this service is jointly provided by the local PCT.
- Supported housing providers may be keen to work in partnership on any joint projects - perhaps make contacts via Supporting People?
- Eaga Partnership has lots of contacts with national organisations (MENCAP, MIND etc.) but would be keen to work on more local initiatives via the Affordable Warmth Partnership
- NS - disabled groups are pleased when approached re. developing resources for their clients and keen to work in partnership - if we offered to develop a resource specifically for their group they would probably be keen regardless of the subject of that resource - it's the fact that something specific is being developed that is the key factor
- Pension Service visiting officers have had deaf awareness training; Partner Liaison Managers (such as Tim Garland in South Glos) often give presentation with the aid of interpreters to different language groups
- RNID provides free deaf awareness training to organisations
- EST & EEACs are also looking at the issue of access to information at present
- The typetalk service is available to anyone by using a prefix before dialling - info in front of BT phone books

Suggested action item: there is probably a need for a sub group of people with relevant contacts and experience to convene and look at this issue in more depth, with a view to developing some resources: suggest this group includes Adrian Goode, Tim Garland, Sam Robinson and an EEAC representative.

3. Round up of activities by Partnership members:

- SG updated the group on Energy Efficiency week (October) which resulted in a sustained increase in enquiries to the EEAC, with EST better tailoring their activities with local work this year; SWEA organised a Warm Homes for All pledge signing event in Cheltenham during Warm Homes Week (November) which was aimed at encouraging new organisations to join the work of the Partnership and which was very successful and was supported by Nigel Jones MP, Cheltenham BC's Mayor and Gloucestershire Pensioners' Forum amongst others; thank you to all those who provided displays for the public part of the event; the Warm & Well scheme has negotiated lower prices for the bulk discount customers until end of March 2005 to improve the grants on offer to householders; Tewkesbury BC have held another older peoples' advice day incorporating benefits advice which was supported by a range of agencies including GRCC and which attracted some 100 visitors; GRCC is holding its Rural Strategy conference in January (17th at Cheltenham & Gloucester Moat House from 6pm to 9pm) including presentation by Catherine Packer from DEFRA re. the rural strategy and its impact on the local

economy (details on www.grcc.org.uk, follow links); GRCC's Community Days tool kit is to be piloted by 1 parish Council in each of the 6 Gloucestershire Districts, with the aim to refine then launch formerly in the spring; CSE is hoping to develop an Affordable Warmth Partnership with the Somerset and former Avon authorities (excluding South Glos.).

4. New Chairperson & Secretary for the Partnership:

- Lisa Jones is standing down as Chairperson after 3 years (and also going on maternity leave) so a new Chairperson is needed - suggest that Severn Wye Energy Agency takes over this role so that the next meeting at least can be arranged and the actions from this one taken forwards, JH suggested the role of secretary e.g. notes taking at meetings & circulation afterwards, is rotated and JH has offered to carry out this role for the February meeting - thank you Jessica.

5. AOB & details of 2005 meetings:

- Thursday 24th Feb
- Thursday 19th May
- Thursday 15th September
- Thursday 8th December

Andrew Cross, Forest of Dean Council	Senior Technical Officer, Private Sector Housing	Tel. 01594 812426 andrew.cross@fdean.gov.uk
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Diana Billingham, Gloucestershire Healthy Living Partnership (Chelt & Tewkes PCT)	County LSP Manager	Tel. 01242 548830 Diana.billingham@glos.nhs.uk
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