Community based research project

Prepared by All Saints Action Network

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The National Empowerment Programme: Context and overview

The National Empowerment Programme (NEP) is a programme committed to supporting and improving empowerment activities across England. It gathers evidence of effective community empowerment activities and promotes the powerful benefits of involving communities in decisions that affect them. The focus is to provide a structure for empowerment activities and to steer and lead the empowerment agenda. In particular, it supports local authorities and community organisations to increase the number of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality.

The NEP is managed by the Community Development Foundation and funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The Empowerment Partnerships

The practical work of the NEP is carried out by organisations working together in empowerment partnerships. There are nine empowerment partnerships across England and each one brings together a range of statutory agencies, voluntary and community organisations, networks and people who are running community empowerment activities. The partnerships use their collective expertise to support local authorities, statutory agencies and community organisations to work together. This helps to give more power to communities and local people to make decisions about what happens in the areas where they live.

RAWM was granted the contract to deliver one of the nine empowerment programmes in 2008. The West Midlands Empowerment Partnership is called Every Voice Counts (EVC) and its work is directed by the EVC Partnership Board. This Board has members from GOWM, IEWM, BIG Lottery, as well as two local authority NI4 representatives, and a range of voluntary sector organisations.

RAWM: Already engaged in a Big Society agenda

RAWM is a body that exists to support the voluntary and community sector in using their voice and their influence to engage with both government and the local agenda. All of RAWM’s projects originate from the need to provide an effective voluntary and community sector response to a changing environment. This quite often requires RAWM to not only manage the change environment, but to also provide strong leadership and, where appropriate and necessary, challenge behaviour and practice in a constructive manner.

RAWM’s role in the empowerment agenda in the West Midlands has been to promote empowerment, encourage partnership working, provide opportunities for communities and citizens to engage with local authority NI4 leads, link to voluntary and community organisations in their communities, and take part in activities to develop their voice and influencing. RAWM also highlights the huge variety of resources and opportunities that exist to enhance community engagement and participation and bring these resources together to be accessed to support the growth of the Big Society.

RAWM delivers the NEP alongside a number of other programmes, including the Target Support for Empowerment and Participation Improvement Fund (TSEPI) which is a two year programme complementing the work of the EVC, delivered through Local Authorities commissioning Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to feed into and improve priority needs in their local areas. RAWM also delivers projects around Sustaining Influence and Change (BIG Lottery), 2012 Sports Volunteering Project (Sport England and AWM), Regional Voices (DoH), Third Sector Economic Engagement Programme (AWM) and various infrastructure programmes funded by Capacity Builders.

Available in large print
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www.evcwm.org.uk
1. Introduction

The key aims of the Every Voice Counts Programme are ‘to capture and then disseminate the diversity of empowerment experiences and stories in the West Midlands and to imbide and improve the quality and impact of citizen empowerment activity, citizen engagement activity and community development activity across the region’.

This report presents the empowerment stories of community-based practitioners in the West Midlands. It details case studies of how practitioners have explored what works and why in empowering their communities and influenced service delivery.

The Community Based Research Project has worked with practitioners in the following local authority areas:

- Birmingham City Council
- Coventry City Council
- Herefordshire Council
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- Staffordshire County Council
- Stoke City Council
- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
- Warwickshire County Council.

2. About the project

Project overview

The key aim of the project was to work with community-based practitioners and empowerment champions across the West Midlands to develop a portfolio of evidence that captures the diversity of empowerment experiences and stories. The target beneficiaries for the Community Based Research Project were community-based empowerment practitioners.

The need for the project stemmed from the following factors:

- There is widespread acknowledgement of the failure to involve communities in programmes which seek to tackle community regeneration. For example, the Government’s whole Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy is predicated on the belief that ‘change has been imposed from above without proper understanding of what the problems are, or there has been no support for communities to get involved.’ (A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal – National Strategy Action Plan).

- A vivid illustration of this process is where regeneration programmes such as New Deal for Communities (NDC) bring in external consultants to provide information and leadership on community development issues within local communities. This clearly demonstrates the need for increased capacity to be built and to support leadership skills within communities so that they can increasingly take on these roles.

- Despite much of the capacity building activity that goes on across the West Midlands, there is too little awareness amongst communities about how they can make changes to their community and how they can work together to achieve this.

- There is very little evidence of residents working together to advise each other - that is to say there are very few programmes around where residents are trained to support other residents.

- There is a general lack of resident involvement in community representation positions in initiatives and programmes. While programmes like NDC have helped to increase this level of
involvement, there is generally a lack of formal commitment to engage where it matters.

• Finally, there remains a lack of social and community sustainability in regeneration activity. Too many programmes and activities are professionally led without any major connection with local communities.

On a local basis we have explicitly identified the need for this project through piloting an approach in 2004 to identify and recruit existing community activists and train and support them to become far more effective in taking a leading role on issues impacting upon their communities.

This project had over 80 applications for 8 paid training places. The project fully achieved its stated objectives. It turned theory very swiftly into successful practice. The pilot demonstrated the unmet need for this type of initiative in Wolverhampton since we had more applicants than we could deal with and continue to receive enquiries.

There was a particular emphasis on peer learning in the project since residents with experience of effective community involvement and leadership in regeneration and neighbourhood renewal have a valuable role to play in inspiring other residents about what can be achieved, despite the perceived barriers. This was achieved through, for example, organising ‘Seeing is Believing’ visits.

The project provided, in addition to the training, a programme of mentoring support from experienced community development practitioners.

Methodology

Some local authorities in the West Midlands have included National Indicator 4 (NI4) – ‘Percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions locally’ – in their Local Area Agreements. We used our extensive partnership links to identify and engage community-based empowerment practitioners, including a minimum of two in each NI4 local authority area.

An intensive targeted marketing initiative was carried out focusing on the local authority NI4 leads and grassroots voluntary and community organisations, with the aim of recruiting the community-based practitioners. A flyer was developed and circulated to NI4 leads and Third Sector organisations.

We spoke directly to NI4 leads and grassroots voluntary organisations. The results were patchy, with some NI4 leads agreeing to meet with us and share extensive local information on:

• Identification of local community-based practitioners who could be involved in the Community Based Research Project.

• Identification of any current or future community research projects that we could support and which could demonstrate community empowerment – particularly in relation to influencing service delivery. This could include community audits of needs and feasibility studies.

• We also received guidance on links with studies and correlations between our work on NI4 and other indicators (eg NI5).

We held the first learning session on 16 December 2009 at BVSC. The learning session covered a range of community research techniques from those using participatory rapid appraisal to interviewing, questionnaire design, data analysis and report writing skills.

We introduced the project so that everyone fully understood what we were trying to do. We then outlined the support that the project would offer to enable practitioners to undertake the research:

• Training in social research techniques: questionnaire design, interview skills, data analysis and report writing.

• Training in how to use participatory appraisal techniques which cover skills for working together with local groups and agencies and which provide skills to tackle issues more effectively in communities: transect walks, activity calendars, problem trees.

And we examined research ideas and related them to particular training or other support required by participants.

NI4 leads were invited to the first session to feed in their knowledge and insights. There
were practitioners from five of the eight local authority areas present and we have subsequently made progress with engaging practitioners from the remaining local authority areas.

The learning session was participative in nature and one of the key issues we discussed was how practitioners could be best supported to carry out and draw out the learning from the local research. Notes from the first workshop can be found in Appendix 1.

There was a consensus that in terms of delivering of training and support, local practitioners would prefer if the training and support was tailored to their particular needs and research ideas could be delivered to them directly in their local setting and via one to one support. One of the key factors relating to this, mentioned by practitioners from Hereford & Coventry in particular, was the time required to attend the learning sessions in Birmingham (chosen as the central venue).

Consequently it was agreed that rather than hold workshops in Birmingham trainers would meet with practitioners directly in their local settings to deliver the training and support required. It was recognized that this would be more time consuming from but would enable the provision of more targeted and relevant support which will ensure that the project is delivered effectively and on time.

Therefore the following amended approach to delivering the project was agreed and implemented:

• Month 1 (December 2009): General Introduction to the project, developing research ideas and Workshop 1
• Months 2 & 3 (January and February 2010): Finalising research ideas, receiving training and support with research techniques and methodologies, undertaking local research (mainly delivered in local settings and one-to-one)
• Month 4 (March 2010): Completing research, reporting and reflecting on learning.

There was agreement that there would be a final Learning Session in Central Birmingham to report on findings and draw out, refine and agree the lessons learned in relation to community empowerment.

Partners engaged
NI4 leads were all contacted, with varying outcomes. Local infrastructure organisations (such as CVSs) were contacted and co-operation was obtained, particularly in Warwickshire and Staffordshire. Finally, and most usefully, local third sector organisations including development trusts were contacted and extensive participation in the programme was secured as detailed in Section 3 of this report.

One of the key obstacles we encountered was that some local authority NI4 lead officers were difficult to make contact with or were not wholly supportive of the approach of the Community Based Research project. Some expressed discomfort with the terminology linked to the project especially the terms ‘empowerment champion’, and ‘community-based empowerment practitioners’ which they felt were open to several interpretations.
3. Case studies

**CASE STUDY**

**HEREFORD**

**Names of local practitioners**
- Kindle
- South Wye Regeneration Partnership
- Community Regeneration, Herefordshire Council

**Research idea and summary of work carried out**
South Wye is an area subject to SRB funding. A residents’ perception and satisfaction survey was conducted in 2006, which gave an excellent snapshot at the time of their views regarding local services and what they would like to see improved in their area. Kindle and the South Wye Regeneration Partnership wanted to find out where things stand now – how people feel about life in South Wye – in order to underpin future activities and resourcing of Kindle development trust.

The survey was led by practitioners based at the Kindle Centre.

**Support provided**
- Discussion about the scope of the research and its delivery
- Help with designing the survey questionnaire to make it effective for a wide ranging community consultation
- Assistance with processing, analysing and drawing out clear conclusions and recommendations from the research findings and then presenting them to maximise their impact.

**Summary of what works and why in terms of practitioners empowering themselves and their communities, especially in relation to influencing service delivery**
- Any research or consultation tools should avoid jargon, so that is easily understood by people with a range of literacy skills and educational achievements, and be written in plain English. This will help to ensure a range of responses.
- Research tools should not be lengthy.
- Involving ‘community leaders’ - residents active in residents associations, local groups, Kindle trustees and local religious leaders - increases engagement from the wider community as they are able to explain the aims of the research and encourage involvement.

**What short and long term impacts did the intervention provided have on the empowerment of service users – especially with influencing delivery of services?**
- Residents would like an improved flow of information to them so that they know what is happening in the area in terms of local services and facilities.
- The need for improved local amenities, such as shops, was prioritised, indicating that the local planning authority should encourage appropriate local retail development.
- The local Parish Council found out about the research and supported its aims; it has said it will respond to the findings.
- The Hereford strategic partnership between the PCT and the council will also try to take forward the findings from the research.

The work will therefore positively impact upon the responsiveness of local service delivery and in particular ensuring that residents are better informed.
BIRMINGHAM

Names of local practitioner
• Norton Hall Children & Family Centre (NHCFC)

Research idea and summary of work carried out
There were two strands to the project.
1. The first involved an arts project to enable community participation in design of a new community building. The aim was to gain feedback on a number of issues, including using art in the newly refurbished front entrance to make the building a more inclusive and welcoming place and thereby increase the numbers of local residents (mainly Asian women and their children) making use of services delivered there.

Consultations were carried out with:
• Children and young people
• Staff and parents
• Members of the community using the Centre.

2. Secondly, funding was identified to develop a community open space. The local Urban Wildlife Trust agreed to allocate their landscape architect to work with NHCFC for a week to engage in consultations with potential service users (children and parents) and then develop drawings of what would be in the space, as well as cost the project out.

Options for features and facilities in the space included:
• Sensory garden (possibly of particular interest for children with disabilities)
• Water feature or pond
• Games area (eg for football or basketball)
• Secure outdoor play area with toys
• Herb garden, grow your own and eco garden (to promote awareness of composting, recycling, understanding nature and naturally themed arts and crafts)
• Wind turbine
• Safe area for women to exercise.

Key research topics were:
• What would potential users and other stakeholders like to see provided in the community open space (with clear prioritisation of choices)?
• What times would they want access to the facilities?
• Would they be willing to pay?
• Would they like to play a role in development of the facilities?
• Would they like to play a role in the ongoing management and maintenance of the facilities (through a project management group, for example, or a gardening club?).

Key research techniques used:
• ‘Seeing is Believing’ Visits: These were organised to the nearby Birmingham Eco Park and the ‘Centre of the Earth’ in Winson Green. The visits involved both children and their families and included consultation exercises eg completion of short questionnaires.
• Door to Door Survey: This was undertaken on the streets in the immediate vicinity of Norton Hall. These were undertaken by staff and volunteers using a short structured (tick box) questionnaire based on the above topics. This made it easier to be completed on the doorstep
• Consultation of NHCFC Service Users:
  » Children – various participative techniques (integrated with play activities) were used to get views of children on what they would prefer to see in the space

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Young people were consulted as above, whilst making use of services at Norton hall. Local women participating in training, e.g., ESOL, or Childminders Network were consulted by means of short interviews using a structured questionnaire in community languages such as Mirpuri.

- On-site consultation
  - A display table and stand were placed on the open land itself and centre users, local residents and passers by were invited to see the plans of what the space could look like and leave their comments – either by using short structured questionnaires, which were self-completed, or through interviewers, or by means of Post-it notes which could be stuck to the plans.

Support provided
- Discussion and agreement that the arts consultation should be linked to the need to consult local residents on their aspirations for open space adjoining the centre.
- Assistance with capturing information relating to attitudes and perceptions of potential users and how they change through their engagement in the research.
- Help with scoping out the research questions and areas to be investigated.
- Help with analysis of data after consultation with users, to put into a report.

Summary of what works and why in terms of practitioners empowering themselves and their communities, especially in relation to influencing service delivery
- The ‘Seeing is Believing’ visits worked particularly well. These were organised to nearby community-run open spaces. Importantly the visits involved both children and their families together. It was particularly important to engage disabled children with their parents who gave input to the design of the sensory garden. The visits aided individual empowerment and confidence, since people could see what other communities had achieved, and included consultation exercises, e.g., completion of short questionnaires.
- The on-site consultation also worked well since it showed visually what was possible in the actual space. Since local residents and passers could see the plans of what the space could look like and leave their comments either by using short structured questionnaires which were self-completed or completed by interviewers and left their comments on post its stuck to the plans/drawings. This enabled the engagement to move beyond the abstract to the level where they could tangibly see what was possible. This aided involvement and engagement.
- Carrying out consultation in a safe neutral community venue encouraged engagement from local Asian women as did making use of a researcher able to communicate in the local community languages.

What short and long term impacts did the intervention provided have on the empowerment of service users – especially with influencing delivery of services?
- Staff at NHCFC were assisted to develop skills which they then used to empower and involve service users in the consultation process. The project activity enhanced the profile of NHCFC and resulted in increased numbers of beneficiaries actively participating and influencing the services delivered at the site.
Names of local practitioner

• Sahil Project

Research idea and summary of work carried out

The research examined the empowerment stories of Sahil’s service users – women (mainly of South Asian origin) experiencing stress and isolation.

The stories were captured by Sahil volunteers and staff who, with support, used research techniques to produce a small number of case studies to show how the support provided by Sahil had empowered local service users to directly access and influence service delivery.

The research qualitatively explored what works and why in relation to local communities influencing service delivery. Specifically the following areas were investigated:

• The nature of the support provided by Sahil to service users
• The impact of the support, with a focus on taking up services and/or influencing their delivery
• What works and why in terms of empowering Sahil clients.

Research methods that were appropriate to Sahil’s service users were used. These included women-only focus groups and one-to-one interviews using advisors known to the service users.

The focus group was kept short (1-2 hours) and was planned and delivered appropriately (facilitated by experienced Sahil staff). Guidance was provided on how to structure and organise case study information.

Support provided

• Reviewing scope of questions and areas to be investigated
• Discussing additional areas to be investigated, as part of consultation with service users
• Providing assistance with design and content of questionnaire
• Providing training on case study development.

Summary of what works and why in terms of practitioners empowering themselves and their communities, especially in relation to influencing service delivery

• With this type of client group there was an extended process of befriending and counselling, which sought to provide support to deal with service providers’ requirements. The emphasis was on building confidence and developing trust in both the supported and wider institutions. Through this process there was an exchange of knowledge and skills as well.

• The end result of the above process, which often included direct support in interacting with service providers, was that emotionally clients ‘started to live their lives again’ resulting in increased empowerment and outcomes of greater independence and confidence. Clients were then capable of interacting and influencing mainstream service providers for themselves and their families.

• The services provided by Sahil were particularly suited to supporting individual empowerment and included a befriending service and a bi-lingual counselling service. Service users often then moved into a volunteering and development programme, thereby passing on the confidence and feeling of empowerment that they themselves had attained.
• The service user case studies indicated that through intervention from Sahil they experienced improvements in general quality of life resulting in increased happiness and an enhanced ability to cope with life.

• The case studies demonstrate the positive impact of services provided by Sahil such as the counselling sessions, including cultural counselling and the befriending support. This support enabled service users to deal with emotions and feelings as well as enhancing very low self esteem and negative feelings around trusting people.

• The case studies significantly challenged the stereotypes surrounding Asian women and families by showing that often Asian women experience isolation as well as loneliness. There was evidence that often the cause of isolation and anxiety is treatment from other extended family members.

• Service users suggested that Sahil had made the following differences to their lives:
  » Improvements in quality of life
  » Improvements in confidence
  » Accessing appropriate services.

• Sufficient time was allocated to build up a trusting relationship with service users and appropriate research methods were used, such as women-only focus groups and one-to-one interviews using advisors known to the service users.

What short and long term impacts did the intervention provided have on the empowerment of service users – especially with influencing delivery of services?

• Through services provided by Sahil to support and advise women (mainly of South Asian origin) experiencing stress and isolation, the women were encouraged to make use of local services and even go on to support and advise others experiencing similar problems. Some of the women were empowered to engage directly with service providers to influence how services were delivered through participating in forums. There were also empowered to play a greater role in social and community life through overcoming isolation.

• With regards to the longer term difference, following the interventions provided these were evident around improvements in self esteem and self confidence along with improvements in skills and confidence to deal with day to day issues. This process is well summarised in the following extract from one of the case studies:

  “Since being supported to deal with the demands of a particular service provider Ms B’s rapid change was noticeable. She seemed more relaxed, with the aid of continual weekly befriending sessions, and started to attend the project for her appointments and had gained confidence and trust. Ms B was no longer an anxious or awkward person who used a barrier to protect herself from her past experiences. The positive outcomes have been: (i) Ms B looks and feels more relaxed and is a happier and more confident individual and mother; (ii) Ms B has overcome her fear of professionals and is working on trusting people once again; (iii) Ms B has put her name forward to become a Sahil volunteer and offer her support to women who are in a similar position to the one she was once in. She has completed her application and is currently going through the process of getting trained. This is a very positive outcome for both Sahil and Ms B.”
Names of local practitioner
• Rugby Community Partnership (RCPL)

Research idea and summary of work carried out
The research project examined the processes used by community-based organisations to engage with and influence statutory and voluntary sector providers within a defined geographic location, with a view to influencing the service providers to collocate their services in a new community facility.

The project was action-research orientated and reflected on the impact of using various approaches to engage with service providers.

The research was undertaken by representatives of Rugby Community Partnership Ltd, mainly local residents, who were attempting to engage service providers within the development of a new community facility.

The research examined how and why certain approaches work and what skills are required, specific issues to be examined included:
• Techniques required for community representatives to become more effective in what they do, including representation regarding provision of service delivery to meet the needs of their community
• Increased confidence in the organisation itself and amongst its beneficiaries and other stakeholders (eg funders, service providers)
• Relevance of various approaches and processes to engage with service providers that will involve local residents.

A case study was written up highlighting the learning from the project.

Support provided
• Questionnaire design
• Interviewing skills
• Data analysis
• Report writing.

Summary of what works and why in terms of practitioners empowering themselves and their communities, especially in relation to influencing service delivery
• A committed group of resident activists could make significant inroads into influencing the co-location by service providers into community settings. Factors enabling this were:
  » Strong support from third sector infrastructure organisations
  » Support from local authority community development staff
  » Having the skills to make a robust business case to sustain the co-location activity
  » A partnership approach with a local authority supportive of community asset transfer and community led enterprise.

• Effective processes used by community-based organisations to engage with and influence statutory and voluntary sector providers within a defined geographic location in relation to co-location included:
  » A sustained programme of networking activity (eg meeting on a weekly or monthly basis to progress the project idea)
  » Seeking a presence in strategic and policy-making forums, particularly those involving the local authority
Through networking activity achieving support and relationship building with local politicians and local authority officers – it was found that an incremental approach worked best

- This research project demonstrated the value of meeting and learning from the work of other community organisations that had already successfully negotiated the path of securing and developing a community asset for the benefit of the local area. Local practitioners maintained a pro-active approach throughout in seeking out and accessing support from relevant bodies such as the Development Trusts Association, Asset Transfer Unit and Community Matters and the Community group networked well with local authority and larger voluntary sector organisations.

- It is important to examine the knowledge required to engage with service providers.

- Confidence in the organisation itself, and amongst its beneficiaries and other stakeholders (e.g. funders, service providers), could be developed and encouraged.

What short and long term impacts did the intervention provided have on the empowerment of service users – especially with influencing delivery of services?

- The confidence, project-development and implementation abilities of the resident activists has been enhanced significantly through learning from other practitioners, who have succeeded in delivering similar projects, and through interacting with and exchanging skills with support organisations.

- Strong sustainable networks have been developed with co-locating organisations – from both the public and third sectors.
Names of local practitioners
- Galton Valley Children’s Centre
- North Smethwick Development Trust

Research idea and summary of work carried out
The idea has focused on undertaking local research on community attitudes to two local facilities. These are the North Smethwick Development Trusts Community Centre and the Galton Valley Children’s Centre.

The main point of the exercise has been to find out what local people think about the two centres and what they have to offer.

Support provided
- The work has involved supporting the two organisations in developing a questionnaire, which has then been used to invite comments from local residents. There have been about five sessions between practitioners from both centres. The questionnaire was first piloted for any problems and then used for both centres with the target of 100 almost reached. A session on reviewing the results is also planned.

Summary of what works and why in terms of practitioners empowering themselves and their communities, especially in relation to influencing service delivery
- The key to this work has been a desire to get on and make things happen. The practitioners involved have already got some experience of engaging with the local community. The main support has been to help them create a credible questionnaire and then start to consider the results and the implications that the outcomes of the research have for each organisation. It is clear that well organised research will help communities to demonstrate that they understand the issues within their community and will then be able to tackle some of those issues.

What short and long term impacts did the intervention provided have on the empowerment of service users – especially with influencing delivery of services?
- In the short term, the intervention is certainly giving the centres information which they can use to improve the way in which they provide services to the local community. While the results have not yet been fully considered by the two centre managements, an initial discussion has taken place and a full feedback session is planned.
- In the short term also, the intervention has empowered the organisations and will help them in their work to demonstrate that they can serve the local community through the running of local services.
- The longer term is much more difficult to predict. It is hoped that through a better understanding of the issues, the organisations involved will be better able to develop their services and services to the wider community. The process will hopefully also demonstrate that both organisations are concerned enough to find out what users think and to start developing ways to respond to users interests.
COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH PROJECT

CASE STUDY

STAFFORD

Local practitioners
- Staffordshire Observatory
- Staffordshire Third Sector Network
- Staffordshire Consortium of Community Organisations
- Community Action and Support, East Staffordshire

Research idea and summary of work carried out
The idea was to develop some understanding of community needs in the four most deprived wards of Staffordshire. These four wards are within East Staffordshire, Tamworth, Cannock and Stafford. One of the key issues to be considered was the increase in population into these areas provoked by changing migration patterns. The long term plan will involve using resources from the Future Jobs Fund to create an implementation plan to identify key community issues in the four wards. In addition to the community research a further aspiration is to try and measure the community impact of local services provided by the use of impact measurement tools such as Social Return on Investment.

Support provided
- This intervention is at an early stage, largely because it has taken a long time to establish a local connection within Staffordshire. Public sector representation could not be established and efforts have then been made to work directly through the community and voluntary sector. Initial support has been with CASE to talk through an approach to empowering local people in the most deprived areas of the county. A further session to give the project more substance has now taken place and a plan is being developed, which will involve the establishment of a number of local projects whose initial aim will be to undertake a programme of community research. This work will probably be undertaken by young people appointed through the Future Jobs Fund and supported by the organisations participating.

Summary of what works and why in terms of practitioners empowering themselves and their communities especially in relation to influencing service delivery
- The first meeting of the project has helped practitioners to understand better what baseline information is available through organisations such as the Staffordshire Observatory. In addition a discussion has taken place about the value of impact measurement and what techniques might be valuable for guiding the project in the long term.
- At the moment there is insufficient information available within the project to report outcomes.

What short and long term impacts did the intervention provided have on the empowerment of service users – especially with influencing delivery of services?
- In the short term it has been possible to have a useful networking discussion to consider what might be possible in undertaking some local research on community need in disadvantaged areas within Staffordshire. Time has unfortunately prevented any serious engagement.
Names of local practitioners

- Stoke Neighbourhood Renewal Team
- Stoke Neighbourhood Renewal Team
- Ingestre Square Community Steering Group

Research idea and summary of work carried out

The main body of work undertaken has been to mentor the Steering Group of the Ingestre Square Hub in Blurton to help them better understand how they can develop and manage a community hub for their area. The Community Hub is a new building funded through a Section 106 agreement as part of a wider housing development. The new building will be a focal point for local people living in the Blurton area of Stoke. The main issues to be considered as part of the investigations and research are the approach to future management of the building and the likely business model to be adopted.

Support provided

- The first piece of work was a scoping exercise with staff at the City Council with regard to what might be possible on the project. This has involved working through the current situation and what is needed to take it forward.
- The next stage has been to develop direct work with the Steering Group of the Hub. Three meetings have now been held at which short sessions have been conducted on helping the Steering Group to understand their business needs. This has included a SWOT analysis, a discussion on governance, a session on building design and sustainability and most recently a short discussion on approaches to business planning.
- Summary of what works and why in terms of practitioners empowering themselves and their communities especially in relation to influencing service delivery.
- The most important aspects of the work have involved encouraging practitioners to confront issues which they had been reluctant to take on. In this case they seemed unaware of the abilities they had and how they could use them. They seemed to be willing to allow staff at the City Council to run things for them. At the same time staff at the City Council seemed reluctant to hand over too much responsibility too early in the process.
- The local research has enabled both parties to think for themselves and to start challenging each other about the way in which they have approached the development of the project.

What short and long term impacts did the intervention provided have on the empowerment of service users – especially with influencing delivery of services?

- The intervention seems to have helped those involved in the process to take responsibility. The test will be what happens in the long term and whether the intervention on its own is insufficient. This short term piece of work is almost certainly not enough. Longer term support is required to ensure that it will be possible to build on the progress made.
- In the short term, the Steering Group has now taken on the responsibility of managing its own meetings. A new Chairman has been appointed and a number of issues are now being managed by the Steering Group itself.

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• The intervention has also resulted in the involvement of a third party, the Development Trusts Association, which has provided a presentation on the work it does.
• Also in the short term, contact has been made with Communitybuilders, a fund which can assist organisations such as Ingestre Square. This intervention should provide a very considerable short term impact assuming support is forthcoming from them.
• The intervention is influencing services in the short term, in that the City Council needs to feel that the Steering Group is capable of taking responsibility for the building.

In the longer term it is not possible to be clear how the intervention will impact on service delivery.

• For the longer term, the Steering Group is now considering a six month action plan, which sets out where it is going and how it is going to get there.
• Also in the longer term, is the possibility that the Steering Group will be able to take on the management of the building. The process has helped a little in giving the residents confidence. However there is still much work to be done.
• Finally, the intervention has given the City Council staff some food for thought in planning forward towards the transfer of the asset of the building.
Names of local practitioner
• Old Hall Peoples Partnership (OHPP)

Research idea and summary of work carried out
The project involved working with OHPP to help them to clarify their organisational objectives and consider how the organisation should move its business plan forward.

OHPP is a community development company involved in running training and other activities for the local community of Bentley. OHPP is managed by local residents and employs a number of local people on its staff team. In addition it has many local volunteers engaged in its work. Its connection, therefore, with the local area is considerable.

The organisation decided that it would like to undertake some form of review of its work to understand better what impact it is having within the local community. One issue it wished to tackle in particular was the image it has with the wider community. The belief was that they may need to change this to enable people to understand what they do. The review was to help them understand more clearly what they are doing and what impact it is having on their local stakeholders.

Support provided
• The support thus far has been in the form of several meetings with staff and Board members to consider the issues they are concerned about. For example, they are unclear about whether the name they currently use is right for the organisation given the scope of its work. The main piece of work to be delivered is planned in the next month and will involve an away day session where OHPP will consider and review its activities and then look forward to how it plans to operate in the future.

Summary of what works and why in terms of practitioners empowering themselves and their communities especially in relation to influencing service delivery
• OHPP is very successful at what it does. It is an excellent example of residents empowering themselves to provide a range of services to the local community. However, they lack a little confidence in shaping the organisation as it changes to meet new needs. The approach and intervention adopted has been to help them to think through what they do and how they do it. An attempt has also been made to demonstrate how they can learn from looking beyond their community.

What short and long term impacts did the intervention provided have on the empowerment of service users – especially with influencing delivery of services?
• In the short term, the aim is to demonstrate an impact through rethinking the way in which OHPP works. This will enable the organisation to be more confident about the way it delivers its work in the local community. Although the away day session with residents and staff has not taken place yet, it is likely that the session will make changes to the organisation’s aim and objectives and may even result in a name change. This will have both a positive short term, and hopefully a long term, impact on the way the organisation and its users operate.
• In the longer term, it is anticipated that a process of the type used as part of the intervention will provide a template approach for the future, enabling the organisation to embed the process in its annual planning activities.
4. Conclusions and recommendations

• Any research or consultation tools should avoid jargon, so that is easily understood by people with a range of literacy skills and educational achievements, and be written in plain English. This, along with ensuring that any research tools are not too lengthy, will help to ensure a range of responses.

• Working with established local networks, including seeking the engagement of ‘community leaders’ who comprise residents active in residents associations, local groups, organisational trustees and local religious leaders, is recommended. Through using this approach it is possible to increase engagement from residents since the ‘community leaders’ are able to explain the aims of the research and encourage resident involvement. This also enables a cross section of responses to be obtained from the geographic area to match the spread of community leaders.

• ‘Seeing is Believing’ visits work particularly well. In this case, these were organised to nearby community run open spaces. Importantly they involved both children and their families. It was particularly important to engage disabled children with their parents, who were able to give input to the design of the sensory garden. The visits aided individual empowerment and confidence, since they enabled people to see what other communities had achieved, and included consultation exercises eg completion of short questionnaires.

• With respect to developing buildings or land, onsite consultations worked well since they showed visually what was possible in the actual space. Local residents and passers by could see the plans of what the space could look like and leave their comments by using short structured questionnaires which were self completed or completed by interviewers and leave their comments on Post-it notes stuck to the plans. This enabled the engagement to move beyond the abstract to the level where they could tangibly see what was possible. This aided involvement and engagement.

• Carrying out consultation in a safe, neutral community venue encouraged engagement from local Asian women, as did making use of a researcher able to communicate in the local community languages.

• Ensuring that the research techniques were appropriate to the particular setting was crucial. For example, research methods were used such as women-only focus groups or one-to-one interviews using advisors known to the service users.

• With beneficiaries experiencing social isolation, depression as well as negative experiences of interacting with service providers, a tailored and staged programme of befriending and counselling was found to be effective. This was often accompanied by direct assistance with interacting positively with service providers. The outcomes from this process were that beneficiaries made use of local services and even went onto support and advise others experiencing similar problems. Some of the beneficiaries thus empowered further went onto engage directly with service providers to influence how services were delivered through participating in forums etc. They were also empowered to play a greater role in social and community life through overcoming isolation.

• It was particularly effective to encourage practitioners to confront issues which they had been reluctant to take on. Often they seemed unaware of the abilities they had and how they could use these. They seemed to willing to allow statutory service providers to run things for them. At the same time statutory sector staff seemed reluctant to hand over too much responsibility too early in the process.

• Undertaking the types of community research identified in this document often enabled both parties (service users and service providers) to think for themselves and to start the process of challenging (within a structured ‘safe’ process) each other about the way in which they have approached the development of local projects and the delivery of local services.

• The research projects worked with some groups who were already very successful at what they do. They provided excellent example of residents empowering themselves to provide a range of services to the local community. However they also lacked a little confidence in shaping their organisations
to meet new needs. Such groups found it useful to receive facilitation support to enable them to step back and think through what they do and how they do it. As part of this it was demonstrated that they can learn from looking beyond their community

- Local practitioners found it beneficial to understand better what baseline information is available through organisations such as the local and regional observatories. In addition, this baseline information was often fed into discussions about the value of impact measurement and what techniques might be valuable for guiding the project in the long term.

- Practitioners need a desire to get on and make things happen. They often already have some experience of engaging with the local community, but require support with practical tasks - such as creating a credible questionnaire and then considering the results and the implications that the outcomes of the research have for each organisation. It is clear that well organised research will help communities to demonstrate that they understand the issues within their community and will then be able to tackle some of those issues. Disseminating the case studies of how groups have carried out these tasks, and what tools they have used, will prove beneficial to those groups considering undertaking similar research projects.

5. Acknowledgements

- Gita Natarajan and Ted Pallot – Rugby Community Partnership Ltd (Warwickshire)
- Rani Saund and Kinder Mahil – Sahil Project (Coventry)
- John Williams, Parveen Ahmed and Suzanne Knipe - Norton Hall Children & Family Centre (Birmingham)
- Lara Latcham (Kindle) and Mandy Evans – Kindle Development Trust (Hereford)
- Warwickshire CVA
- Staffordshire CVS
- Karen Cheney, Birmingham City Council
Appendix 1:
Notes from workshop held at BVSC on 16 December 2009

Every Voice Counts Programme – West Midlands
Learning Session / Workshop – 16 December 2009
BVSC, 138 Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DR

1. Attendance list
Derek Munro – Community Council of Staffordshire (Stafford)
John Williams – Norton Hall Children & Family Centre (Birmingham)
Parveen Ahmed Norton Hall Children & Family Centre (Birmingham)
Tahira Kauser – North Smethwick Development Trust (Sandwell)
Moin Uddin – North Smethwick Development Trust (Sandwell)
Michael Truelove – Community Regeneration, Herefordshire Council (Hereford)
Lara Latcham – Kindle, South Wye Development Trust, (Hereford)
June Jeffrey – Coventry Community Empowerment Network (Coventry)
Mike Swain – Tara Consultancy / All Saints Action Network (ASAN)
Iftikar Karim – Tara Consultancy / All Saints Action Network (ASAN)

2. Workshop objectives
Iftikar gave a short presentation on the key objectives for the workshop, which were to:
• Understand the aims of Every Voice Counts West Midlands Programme
• Understand the aims of Community Based Research Project
• Be clearer about individual research ideas & support required
• Understand project timescales and administrative arrangements.

3. Introduction to the EVC Community Based Research project
Iftikar gave a short presentation on the Community Based Research project and the following points were emphasised:
• The national Government is funding a ‘National Empowerment Partnership Programme’ to support and improve empowerment activities.
• ‘Empowerment is the result of strategic and practical actions – such as engagement, participation, partnership working - that increase the capacity of people to influence the decisions that affect their lives and is central to community development principles and practices’. The ultimate impact will be the empowerment of citizens.
• In our region the programme is badged: ‘Every Voice Counts in the West Midlands’ and managed by Regional Action West Midlands.
• This year’s programme is focused on supporting the eight local authorities that have signed a LAA for ‘increasing the percentage of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality’ (NI4).
• One of the programme activities is community-based research.

4. Exploring research proposals and support required
Mike facilitated group discussion to develop and refine local research ideas. A short form which had been developed to record the research idea was also circulated for completion. The following points were emphasised when refining the research ideas:
• Research plans should ensure that they qualitatively explore what works and why in relation to communities influencing service delivery
• Plan key stages in delivering the research. Ensure research fits in with timescale – fieldwork need to be completed by early March to enable reporting by the end of March.

The following initial ideas were discussed:

Staffordshire
The proposal is based around the development of a parish plan. A parish plan is an ongoing exercise that aims to identify local priorities within a parish council area. The approach to developing a parish plan is based around the development of consultation, which may include questionnaires and meetings with local people. Issues can be about almost anything but often include matters such as transport, traffic and education.

For the purposes of the Every Voice Counts programme, the proposal is to undertake some research related to the development of a parish plan for Burntwood.
The research approach here would be a mix of questionnaires and consultation/discussions.

Birmingham

The proposal from Birmingham came from Norton Hall and is in two parts. The first part is to do with computer training for childminders. The issue is that local childminders have not been able to make full use of computers to help them run their own childminding businesses. If the childminders were more computer aware, they could use them to manage their childminding businesses and get access to information on childcare online.

The second proposal is to do with an arts project involving local residents and young people. The arts project will gain feedback on a number of issues including using art in the newly refurbished front entrance to make the building a more inclusive and welcoming place and thereby increase the numbers of local residents (mainly Asian women and their children) making use of services delivered there.

Consultations will be carried out with:
- Children and young people
- Staff and parents
- Members of the community using the Centre.

Support is needed to capture information relating to attitudes and perceptions of the above groups and how they change through their engagement in the research. Support will also be required to then analyse data received and shape it into a report.

Hereford

There were a number of proposals from Hereford. The first of these is an existing research programme run by Hereford Voluntary Action which also involves the Primary Care Trust. The timescale for the project did not seem to fit very easily with the EVC timescale.

The second proposal is about some research which needs to be undertaken in Newton Farm Community Association which is based in a large council estate in the southern suburbs of Hereford. The estate is relatively poor and the research project would be aimed at local women who live on the estate and would be designed to ascertain their needs with regard to life on the estate. The research method here would be probably based on a consultation exercise or discussion group.

A third proposal had been submitted by Kindle (South Wye Development Trust). A residents’ perceptions and satisfaction survey had been conducted in 2006. It gave an excellent snapshot of community feeling and the state of the area at that time and the development trust was formed using that information and tailored its mission to answer remaining concerns. After three years of operation they would like to find out where things stand and what impact the trust has had in terms of quality of life and community involvement and engagement. They would like to work closely with the local regeneration partnership to compose a survey and collect information. Guidance and support is requested to manage the data collection and particularly with analysing and presenting the findings.

Coventry

Two proposals have been received from Coventry.

The first is related to work that has already been undertaken with a number of community groups on how effectively they are developing their organisations. A standard has already been developed by the Community Empowerment Network and deals with matters such as the organisations’ constitutions, their finances, the way they manage themselves and other organisational issues.

The research undertaken could attempt to examine how the standard has helped the organisations to become more effective in what they do. Representatives from up to four organisations could be involved in demonstrating how they have been able to develop their organisations to be more effective in their local communities.

The research method here would probably be based around the development of a number of case studies on the organisations involved. The second is from the Sahil Asian Women’s Centre which provides support and befriending services to Asian women experiencing stress, isolation and mental health problems. The aims of the research would be to assess the extent of service user engagement and empowerment in terms of taking greater control of their lives and interacting with service providers. The research methodology will be essentially qualitative in
nature and will be largely carried out by former service users who are now volunteers at Sahil.

Sandwell

The proposal from Sandwell is linked to the work that North Smethwick Development Trust is undertaking with the local children’s centre at Galton Valley. The children’s centre has been running a number of workshops and classes for local mums. These have included yoga, ESOL and sewing. In addition to this the children’s centre has been trying to get greater parental involvement in the centre’s work.

The research undertaken could be based on the emerging 'Parents Parliament’ – this is a body that has been set up to enable the children’s centre to get feedback on what parents want from their centre. The aim would be to get parents to talk about their experiences of the children’s centre.

The research method here is likely to be a discussion group or consultation exercise.

5. Support required to undertake the research

Iftikar confirmed the range of support which the Community Based Research project could offer including:

- Training in social research techniques: Questionnaire design, interview skills, data analysis and report writing.
- Training in how to use participatory appraisal techniques which cover skills for working together with local groups and agencies and which provide skills to tackle issues more effectively in communities: transect Walks, activity calendars, problem trees.
- The project aims to provide a portfolio with a range of tools which local practitioners can choose and then use confidently.
- It is important to fit the research tool or technique with the purpose for which it will be used.

It was confirmed that this support would be provided through learning sessions or workshops and supplemented by one-to-one support including delivery of support by trainers in local settings. The allocation of trainers to local areas was clarified:

- Mike Swain – Sandwell MBC, Staffordshire County, Walsall MBC & Stoke City
- Iftikar Karim – Birmingham City, Coventry City, Herefordshire Council & Warwickshire County.

6. Forward Planning

The views of workshop participants were sought on how best to move the project forward. Most respondents clarified that they would prefer to receive the training and support in undertaking the local research projects tailored to their particular needs and delivered in their local settings – rather than receiving the support via learning sessions in Birmingham. Effectively this would require an increased level of direct engagement by trainers with local practitioners both in terms of a number of local sessions and increased support and mentoring. Therefore the amended approach to delivering the project would now involve the following:

Month 1 (December 2009)
General Introduction to the project, developing research ideas and Workshop 1

Months 2 & 3 (January & February 2010)
Finalising research ideas, receiving training and support with research techniques and methodologies, undertaking local research (mainly delivered in local settings and via one-to-one).

Month 4 (March 2010)
Completing research, reporting and reflecting on learning and Workshop 2.

Mike and Iftikar proposed that they would consult with the project funder Regional Action West Midlands who are the accountable body and lead for the National Empowerment Partnership in the West Midlands, to get their approval for the above emphasis in terms of project delivery. Direct feedback would be provided by the above named with local practitioners.

In the meantime participating organisations and practitioners were asked to further develop and refine their research ideas and plan their delivery early in 2010. As part of this the research idea forms completed during the workshop would be fed back.

Iftikar Karim & Mike Swain
6 January 2010
Appendix 2:
Programme for workshop held at BVSC on 16 December 2009

Every Voice Counts Programme – West Midlands
Community Based Research Project

First Workshop – 16 December 2009
BVSC, 138 Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DR

Programme

12.00pm  Buffet lunch
12.20pm  Introductions, welcome & housekeeping
12.30pm  Objectives for the workshop
12.40pm  Introduction to the EVC Community Based Research project
12.50pm  Workshop Session 1: Exploring Research Proposals
  • Small group discussion to develop/refine local research ideas
  • Return to plenary session to share, discuss & contribute to refining research proposals
1.30pm  Workshop Session 2: Exploring Support Required
  • Small group discussion to explore individual / organisation support required to undertake local research project
  • Return to plenary share, discuss & agree support requirements
2.10pm  Forward Planning & Admin
  • Share & agree key project milestones
  • Agree dates for future workshops
  • Project administrative arrangements including funding agreement
2.25pm  Concluding remarks
Appendix 3:
Birmingham case study: Research tools

Norton Hall Children & Family Centre (NHCFC) Community Outdoor Space Development Research Project

Questions to be asked

1. Introduction and background
The questions / topics below will be investigated using a variety of approaches suited to the groups, linked to NHCFC being surveyed:
- Children (including disabled children)
- Young people
- Women (centre users/child minder trainees) and
- Local residents.

The methods to be used to investigate the question topics will be jointly developed by Norton Hall staff with relevant experience and who will then lead on implementing the research techniques.

2. Possible features and facilities in the open/community space
- Sensory garden (may be of particular interest for children with disabilities)
- Water feature or pond
- Games area (eg football/basket ball)
- Secure outdoor play area with toys
- Herb garden/grow your own and eco garden (eg awareness of composting, recycling, understanding nature and naturally themed arts and crafts)
- Renewable energy eg wind turbine
- Safe area for women to exercise/walk, etc

3. Research questions
3.1 What would centre users (children, young people and their families) and stakeholders (eg local residents) like to see provided in the community open space – with some clear prioritisation of the choices.

3.2 What days and times would they want access to the facilities.
3.3 Would they be willing to pay – annual/monthly subscription or charge per usage & how much.
3.4 Would they like to play a role in the initial development or setting up of the facilities. If so what role can they play, eg gardening, landscaping, publicity and marketing, etc.
3.5 Would they like to play a role in the ongoing management and maintenance of the facilities (project management group or gardening club or joining a ‘Friends of...’ group). This would also encourage some ownership by centre users and local residents.
Norton Hall is working with the Urban Wildlife Trust to engage children, young people, parents and local residents in a consultation on what they would like included in the outdoor area next to Norton Hall. We would be very grateful if you would take a few minutes to answer the questions below.

ALL INFORMATION GAINED WILL BE STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

What would you like to see included in the outdoor area next to the Centre? **You may tick more than one box** and please prioritise your choices with 1 being the greatest priority and 5 the least priority.

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<th>Sensory garden (may be of interest to children with disabilities)</th>
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<td>Water feature or pond</td>
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<td>Games area (eg football/basket ball)</td>
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<td>Secure outdoor play area with toys</td>
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<td>Herb garden/grow your own and eco garden</td>
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<td>Understanding nature classes</td>
<td>Priority 1</td>
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<td>Renewable energy eg wind turbine</td>
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<td>Safe area for women to exercise/walk, etc</td>
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<td>Other (please state)</td>
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What days and times would you want access to the outdoor facilities? You may tick more than one box
Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday ☐ Weekends ☐
Mornings (9am – pm) ☐ Afternoons (1pm – 5pm) ☐ Evenings (after 5pm) ☐

Would you be willing to contribute to the costs of the outdoor space?
Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

If yes how much would you like to pay per month/week (please delete): £_____

Would you like to take part in the initial development and setting up of the facilities? Examples of tasks could be: gardening, landscaping, painting, publicity and marketing, etc
Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

If ‘Yes’, please provide your contact details below and tell us what would you like to do
Would you like to play a role in the ongoing management and maintenance of the facilities, for example by joining a gardening club or a ‘Friends of Norton Hall Garden’ group who would help to manage the outdoor space?

Yes □ No □ Maybe □

If ‘Yes’, what would you like to do?

Are you (Please tick a box):
- An adult Centre User □
- Child Centre User (aged 2-11) □
- Young person (aged 11-18) □
- Local Resident □
- Other (please specify) □

Are you disabled?

Yes □ No □

If yes please state your disability:

If you would like us to keep you informed about the development of the outdoor space please provide your contact details below:

Name
Address

Post code
Telephone number
Email

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. If you have any enquiries about the planned outdoor space at Norton Hall or regarding any of the activities at Norton Hall then please contact the Centre Manager – Suzanne Knipe on 0121 328 3043 or Suzanne_knipe@nortonhall.org.uk
Appendix 4:
Coventry case study: Research tools

Developing case studies with Sahil service users

We aim to examine the empowerment stories of Sahil’s service users – women experiencing stress and isolation to produce a small number of case studies of how the support provided by Sahil has empowered local service users to directly access and influence service delivery.

The stories will be recorded by Sahil volunteers and staff via interviews with local women and record their qualitative feedback. Please record the information gained from the interview below and as far as possible record some responses in the service users own words. Thank you.

1. Background details of service user:
   Age: 
   Ethnicity: 
   Other information:

2. Brief details of presenting issues ie why they approached Sahil:

3. What intervention or support was provided by Sahil? (How was this different to previous support?)

4. What was the impact of the intervention (eg improvements in self esteem and confidence)?

5. What impact did the intervention provided have on the empowerment of service users – especially in influencing delivery of services? (eg joining service provider feedback forums, such as patients groups, or supporting other women to get empowered by becoming a volunteer with Sahil)

6. Please provide details of any other long term impacts following Sahil’s intervention around service users taking a more active role in society:
1. Introduction to uses and benefits of case studies

Case studies are particularly useful in depicting a holistic portrayal of an individual client’s experiences and results regarding a programme or service. For example, to evaluate the effectiveness of a programme’s processes, including its strengths and weaknesses, evaluators might draw out and develop cases studies on the programme’s successes and failures.

Case studies can be written up and presented in a relatively straightforward and easy to read manner, which is easily understood by a wide range of stakeholders linked to the service provider. In particular, organisations and individuals supporting the service can easily appreciate the full impact that the service provider is having on various aspects of the life of the service users and other ‘knock on’ benefits of receiving the service. Case studies if written up effectively, often using the words of the individual whose story is being told, can bring to life in a realistic way the feelings an individual is experiencing.

Case studies are used to organise a wide range of information about a case and then analyse the contents by seeking patterns and themes in the data and by further analysis through cross comparison with other cases.

2. Case study development techniques

All possible information about the case is gathered

Within the constraints of time and other resources, as much information as possible about the service user’s experiences needs to be collected, including all service interventions, the background of the service user and their experiences and views. Data could result from a combination of methods, including documentation (client records etc), questionnaires, interviews and observation.

Information is organised to highlight the focus of the study

In this evaluation, information gathered could be organised in a chronological order to portray what factors resulted in the client becoming a service user, how the client got to know about the service, what interventions the client received and the impact of those interventions on the life of the client and possibly their family and friends.

A case study narrative is developed

The narrative is a highly readable story that integrates and summarises key information around the focus of the case study. The narrative should be complete to the extent that it is the eyes and ears for an outside reader to understand what happened regarding the case. In our example, the narrative might include key background information about the client, phases in the programme’s process through which the client passed and any major differences noticed about that client during the process and key quotes from the client. The story should be presented in a creative and interesting way.

Case studies might be cross-compared to isolate any themes or patterns

For example, various case studies about clients’ experiences of service delivery might be compared to notice commonalities in these clients’ experiences and how they went through the programme. These commonalities might highlight which aspect of the services being delivered need strengthening or it may highlight commonality or divergence in the experiences of service users.
Appendix 5: 
Herefordshire case study: Research tools

Living in South Wye

This survey is for people living in South Wye; that is people with a postcode that starts HR2 in the city of Hereford. The survey has been written by people working at the Kindle Centre by ASDA Superstore and they want to know how people feel about life in South Wye. There are 14 questions and it should take about 15 minutes to fill in. There is a pre-paid envelope to return the completed questionnaire. The information gathered will be used by Kindle to plan improvements in services delivered. Please answer the questions as fully as possible and thank you for your time.

There is a piece of paper attached to this questionnaire. If you write your name and a contact number on it and return it to us with a fully completed questionnaire, you will be entered into a draw for £50 worth of shopping vouchers.

If you have any questions about this survey or would like help completing it, call Lara on 01432 278070.

ALL INFORMATION GAINED WILL BE STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Where do you live?
☐ Hunderton  ☐ Hinton  ☐ Belmont  ☐ Putson  ☐ Newton Farm  ☐ Redhill
☐ Golden Post  ☐ Rotherwas  ☐ Lwr Bullingham

Did you know of the Kindle Centre (next to Asda Superstore) before receiving this questionnaire? (Tick one box)
☐ Yes  ☐ No

1. Have you ever visited the Kindle Centre? (Tick all boxes that apply to you)
☐ Yes  ☐ No

Please choose from the responses below
☐ to go to a meeting  ☐ to visit Stonham/Barnardo’s/South Wye Regeneration
☐ to go to one of their events (craft, knitting, cultural)  ☐ to ask advice/seek help or support
☐ to go to or take somebody to a class there  ☐ to use the Internet/Photocopier/Laminator

2. How long have you lived in South Wye? (Tick one box)
☐ Always  ☐ More than 20 years  ☐ Between 16 and 20 years  ☐ Between 11 and 15 years
☐ Between 6 and 10 years  ☐ Between 1 and 5 years  ☐ Less than a year

3. How do you feel about living in South Wye? (Tick one box)
☐ ‘It’s a great place to live’  ☐ ‘It’s okay’  ☐ ‘I’d rather live somewhere else’
☐ ‘It’s not a good place to live’  ☐ ‘Living in South Wye is a nightmare’
4. Look at these things that we do on a daily basis and tell us how happy you are living in South Wye on a scale of 1 to 10; 10 being very happy and 1 being very unhappy. (Tick one box for each thing)

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5. If you have been unhappy about something, have you ever gone to a public meeting to tell anybody about it? (Tick any boxes that apply to you)

- No
- No, but I have contacted my local Councillor
- No, but I have been to the Newton Farm Information Centre
- No, but I have contacted Herefordshire Council
- No, but I have contacted Herefordshire Housing
- Yes, I’ve been to a PACT meeting
- Yes, I’ve been to a meeting of my local residents association
- Yes, I’ve been to a Parish Council Meeting
- Yes, I’ve been to a Herefordshire Housing inspection
- Yes, but nobody listened
- Other (Please give details):

6. If you are unhappy about something, do you feel that you have a way to get somebody in authority to listen to you? (Tick one box)

- Yes, always
- Sometimes
- Possibly, if it’s very serious
- Rarely
- No, never
- No, because I can’t speak English
- Not applicable

7. If applying for a job, do you feel that living in South Wye affects your chances of getting the job? (Tick one box)

- Yes, I am more likely to get the job
- Yes, I am less likely to get the job
- No, it makes no difference
- It depends if the job is north or south of the river
- I don’t know
8. Are you happy with your job? (Tick one box)
- I'd like to work, but I don't have a job at the moment
- I don't work
- I'm not happy with my job, it doesn't pay well
- I'm not happy with my job, there aren't enough hours
- I'm not happy with my job it's boring
- I'm just glad to have a job
- I like my job
- I love my job

9. Tick any of these statements which are true for you. (Tick all relevant boxes)
- I'd like to study more, but I don't have the money
- I would rather not work unless absolutely necessary
- I will never be able to get a job that satisfies me
- It's hard to get a good job because they've been taken by immigrant workers
- I will never be able to get a job that pays more than my benefits
- I would take any job to get off benefits
- I'm not British and I am glad to have a job
- I am studying and when I finish I hope to start a rewarding career
- I work for my family as a full-time home-maker
- I am not well enough to work
- I am not confident enough to work
- I have trouble reading and writing, so work is difficult
- If I worked or studied, who would take care of the kids?
- I feel I am progressing well in my job
- I'm really worried that I will lose my job because of the recession
- Work is necessary, but it isn't something I enjoy
- I need help to get a job and there isn't any

10. Tick any of the following sentences that are true for you. (Tick all relevant boxes)
- I am a member of my local residents association/Community Group
- I'd like to be involved in my residents association/Community Group, but I don't like the people who are running it
- I'd like to be involved in my residents association/Community Group, but I don't know how to
- Residents associations/Community Groups have no power so there's no point being involved
- Why should I waste my precious leisure time doing things for the community?
- I'm not British and I don't feel accepted by the community so I am not involved

11. What would you like to see happening in South Wye? (Tick all relevant boxes)
- I'd like to join a drama group
- I'd like a cinema in South Wye
- I'd like to take an art class
- I'd like to join a choir
- I'm interested in radio and broadcasting
- Other (Please give details):
12. Tell us about Rotherwas Business Park. (Tick all relevant boxes)
   ☐ I don't know anything about it
   ☐ Not much happens there
   ☐ I work there
   ☐ I use the dump
   ☐ It's an amazing place with lots of important businesses

13. There are lots of things happening in South Wye, which of these have you heard about or been involved in. (Tick all relevant boxes)
   ☐ The Women’s Project at the Oval
   ☐ Belmont Pools
   ☐ Newton Farm Information Centre
   ☐ Saxonhall Community Building
   ☐ Knit, Stitch and K-Natter
   ☐ Redhill Residents Lunch Club
   ☐ Other (Please give details):

   ☐ Newton Farm Newts Youth Club
   ☐ Haywood Country Park
   ☐ The Oval Regeneration Project
   ☐ Plans for a new community building at Putson
   ☐ Hunderton & Belmont Community Hall Bingo
   ☐ Hinton Foot Tappers

14. Please use this space to make another comments relevant to living in South Wye:

   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. A report on the findings will be available from April 2010 and can be seen at the Kindle Centre. Good luck in the draw!

If you have any enquiries about this research, please contact:
The Kindle Centre at ASDA Supermarket, Belmont Road, Hereford HR2 7JE
Tel: 01432 278070
LaraLatcham.Kindle@googlemail.com
www.kindlecentre.org.uk
Appendix 6:
Warwickshire case study: Research tools

Rugby Community Partnership Ltd
The Gateway: Work space and conference facility demand research

The Gateway Steering Group wants to speak to local agencies and businesses who are interested in using managed work space in the proposed Gateway Building in central Rugby. The evidence of need will establish a business case for the proposed development.

To help us we would be very grateful if you could answer the questions below.

ALL INFORMATION GAINED WILL BE STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

1. Are you interested in renting managed workspace, such as office space, in the Central Rugby area within the next 6 months?
   - Yes
   - No
   If Yes, when would you want to take up the space:

2. Have you visited other work space in and around Rugby?
   - Yes
   - No
   If Yes, what other space have you considered: 
   Where & which providers considered
   If No, please go to question 4

3. How long have you been looking for managed workspace:

4. Is there adequate provision of managed work space in the Central Rugby area?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Don’t know
   Please give reasons for your response:

5. Are you aware of other agencies or businesses seeking managed workspace in the Central Rugby area:
   - Yes
   - No
   - Don’t know
   Yes, please provide details:

6. What facilities do you require from managed workspace? (Please tick box)
   - 24Hr access
   - Administrative support
   - Meeting space
   - Nursery
   - Learning/training facilities
   - On-site business advice
   - On-site café/refreshments
   - Onsite parking
   - Broadband
   - Inclusive office furniture
   - Security including CCTV
   - Any other facilities (please specify):
7. How much space do you require? (Please tick box):

☐ Larger space for community projects/initiatives (over 800 sq ft per unit)
*Eg. initiatives which will provide services to the local community*

☐ Larger office space (600 sq ft approx per unit)
*Eg space aimed at larger businesses (eg 6 staff or more) and community project/initiatives.*

☐ Incubation and smaller office space (150 sq ft approx per unit)
*Eg Smaller offices for start up businesses*

☐ Hot desking / virtual office facilities
*For businesses wishing to use the Centre as a mailing address and on an occasional base.*

Any other space:

8. What price would you be willing to pay for the above space? £________ (per wk/mnth)

9. What is the nature of your business?

10. Are you interested in hiring Conference or meeting facilities, in the Central Rugby area within the next 6 months?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Maybe

If Yes, please respond to questions 10a to 10d:

10.a. Approximately how many people would attend the event(s):

10.b. How often would the events take place:

10.c. What would you be willing to pay to hire Conference or meeting facilities: £_______

10.d. Please tick the appropriate box to indicate what additional facilities would be required:

☐ Breakout rooms
☐ Audio-visual equipment
☐ Refreshments / Catering
☐ Internet access
☐ No facilities required
Other (Please give details):

Thank you for taking part in this research. If you require any further information regarding ‘The Gateway’ initiative then please contact Gita Natarajan on 01788 533656 or gitanatarajan@warwickshire.gov.uk
1. Introduction
The case study will seek to explore and develop an understanding of how community-based organisations and individuals can influence and engage with statutory and larger voluntary sector providers within a defined geographic location, with a view to influencing the service providers to co-locate their services in a new community facility.

The action research involving Rugby Community Partnership will examine relevance of various approaches and processes to engage with service providers.

2. Research Topics
Effective processes which could be used by community-based organisations to engage with and influence statutory and voluntary sector providers within a defined geographic location.

How and why certain approaches work and what skills are required. Specific issues to be examined include:

- Techniques required for community representatives to become more effective in what they do, including representation regarding provision of service delivery to meet the needs of their community
- Knowledge required
- How confidence in the organisation itself, and amongst its beneficiaries and other stakeholders (eg funders, service providers), could be developed and encouraged.