

# Case study: community information event

## What was the issue to address?

**Residents of the Hillhouse community in Huddersfield, had expressed concerns over the general state of the area both in terms of environmental issues such as household waste and litter as well as anti social behaviour and the fear of crime.**

Following consultations with individuals and community organisations we found there was a need to increase the involvement of diverse communities who shared some of the same concerns.

We needed to raise the profile of how services are able to address some of residents' concerns by giving people access to relevant information and useful contacts to ensure action was taken when residents report incidents.

In doing this work we hoped to improve the image of the area and raise the expectations of local people.

## What did we do?

We held regular contact with the local community to gather up to date information on the current issues at grassroots level. This included making links with newly arriving communities such as Kurdish and Polish people living and working in the area.

Once the community networks were in place, we organised a community information event at Birkby Community Centre to engage local people, provide information about where to report crime and anti-social behaviour. Information was also provided on recent developments in the local area such as the installation of CCTV, increased use of CCTV vans, the status of Hillhouse as a neighbourhood management area, and the new play area.

The event provided opportunities for services to get information out to sections of the local community that otherwise experienced difficulty in accessing information with advice on how to find a job, information on housing, benefits and citizen's advice, education, health care, legal advice, and activities for young people. Information was made available in a wide range of languages and translators were on hand during the day.

We are also trialling a CCTV network in the area to prevent anti social behaviour, reduce crime and the fear of crime. This will be followed by an information campaign to encourage people to report incidents.



## What difference did we make?

Over 100 people attended the event and were able to access information and guidance on a range of topics such as housing and benefits advice, ESOL provision and environmental services in their area. By having interpreters present on the day we were able to ensure that everyone had the chance to take part in the event.

Community safety issues are being addressed through home security equipment being given out to residents, CCTV cameras have been installed in the area with a campaign to increase the number of residents knowing where to report crime. The environmental service have organised 'clean ups' of the area and we have supported this by providing residents with details of who to contact if they need bulky items removing.

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## What were the keys to our success?

Without the input of local residents and their passion for wanting to make a difference in the area this event would not have been possible. While we recognise that some of these issues cannot be addressed overnight, with a supportive community we can begin to overcome them in a structured way, taking a long term strategy to improve the environmental and social issues affecting the area.

Building on this input, we are developing a residents' steering group that will act as a point of contact for services and allow residents to influence the way in which services operate in their area.

Focused neighbourhood management resources have had a dramatic impact on the way in which services respond to the needs of the local community. Without the support of the neighbourhood management team who make direct links with services and help to report the concerns of residents, the visible impact of the work undertaken may have been reduced and more difficult to achieve.

## What are we doing next?

Positive links have been made with new communities and we are continually developing new projects to engage local people with the aim of enabling them to participate in the wider community over the longer term.

Many new projects have been planned since the information event including a 'Communities Together' football project. The Communities Together project will celebrate the diversity of local people at Birkby Fartown Community Centre. This will involve local community groups alongside Birkby Junior School. Community organisations can showcase their work with different cultures and communities such as the Kurdish Dance and Music group, Cultures United, New Way 2 Women's group and Age Well. This project is aimed at bringing people together in a fun way that reflects the diverse make up of the local area and communicates positive messages about the local area.

This is part of a programme of activities, events and initiatives that we are planning for the local area.

The football project includes a five a side football tournament involving Polish, Kurdish and Congolese communities and the Neighbourhood Police team. Regular training sessions will take place for a period of five weeks leading up to a five a side football tournament at Fartown Cricket Pavilion.



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