

Case study: Dewsbury West Over 50s Forum

What was the issue to address?

Building community capacity by bringing together five over 50s groups (two groups predominantly South Asian members and three groups predominantly white members) from across Dewsbury West to jointly plan and organise a range of social activities to reduce feelings of isolation and to increase mutual understanding and tolerance.

What did we do?

The initiative brought people together from across communities. Over the last two years they have organised three joint events through a joint planning group, including a trip and an information session about changes to adult care.

Each had an average membership of 20 plus people with a wide range of activities on offer. Groups had previously no opportunity to link up and network with other groups in the ward. Groups were also defined in terms of ethnicity and gender (such as either all male/female groups, English, Irish, Pakistani, and so on).

Events included:

- Women's Day Event
- Over 50's Celebration Event
- outing to Skipton Market
- information session with Neighbourhood Renewal, Adult Services and a Gateway Worker

What difference did we make?

The project increased awareness, understanding and interaction amongst people of different backgrounds.

Two core group members are now on the Neighbourhood Renewal People's Purse Grants Panel, advising on £100K small grants scheme in the area. One core group member is now a representative on the Dewsbury West Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Board actively contributing to decisions on the overall programme.

What were the keys to our success?

- Facilitation role at initial stages
- Build trust relationship with individual groups then act as a broker to bring groups together.
- Identify potential blockages which could cause divisions, for example which centre to host event, what venues are viewed as 'neutral', and so on.
- What activities are appropriate for all.
- Need to facilitate discussions on all issues.
- Sub group planning meetings, attended by two representatives from each group. Once ideas were generated they provided the link to their members for feedback and comment.

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Shaping our future Together
Kirklees community cohesion strategy

