

how to build...

delivering community projects

Cannock District

checklist:

Make sure there is good leadership and a committed project team in place. Good project staff should not only have a track record of successfully delivering projects but they should also bring the right values to their work – such as a willingness to work with residents.

A lot of projects are too rigid in the way they are delivered. Instead they should be allowed to learn and respond to (changing) community needs. Similarly projects should be allowed to learn from making mistakes.

During the planning phase of a project create a project focus group involving local community members alongside local community workers from larger organisations and statutory provision. This is an effective way to bring a diverse range of expertise and skill sets to the planning of your project to consider aspects you had not thought of.

During implementation involve willing members of the project focus group as well as considering local community volunteers. This enhances the delivery of the project as it will ensure the project remains tailored to what the community wants.

When promoting your project:-

- Utilise local community venues for events or a launch of your project as local residents are more likely to engage when it's a local familiar place.
- Hold a launch event inviting all aspects of the community, not just your prime beneficiaries, they may know someone who needs your service.
- Involve your local councillor or MP in your launch event; this may also attract a few more community members as well as the press.
- Speak to existing local groups face to face, backed up with a flyer. Any flyer should be clear and to the point, taking into consideration the diversity of your chosen beneficiaries.

Ask the community for feedback throughout the project to continually gauge the level of success and make any changes to improve aspects of your project.

jargon buster

Projects are frequently based on little more than a "good idea" such as "we need a community centre" and the assumption is that if the idea is good enough then the project will be a success. Unfortunately success takes a bit more than that. The best project idea in the world can still fail if it is not well delivered or managed. For example good project management should also consider risks, costings and timescales.

Top Tips

With funding now so limited all projects need to be challenged to maximise the impact they will have on a community.

This can be done if a project is also used as the catalyst for increasing general community activity, for example by supporting community events or providing community consultation.

Alternatively this can be achieved by helping services to target resources more effectively or by improving links between residents and services.

case study

where it worked

Cannock District



Street friends is a project based in a small area of Cannock where a team of volunteers have been recruited to act as a point of information and support within their local streets. The Street Friend offers information and signposts to services in order to enhance the wellbeing of vulnerable people within their area.

In the beginning a focus group was set up which included a local councillor, the community police and neighbourhood watch as well as parent support workers and the fire service, with Chase CVS taking the lead on the project.

A local organisation was used to carry out a leaflet drop in the specific area determined by the funder - this attracted the initial interest of seven volunteers with four now committed to the project.

The volunteers were CRB checked and enjoyed two morning sessions of training. The volunteers were instrumental in the development of the finer detail of how the project was going to work and how it would be implemented.

A launch event was held at the local church where the pastor has agreed to offer the venue for free once a month.

This has prompted the Street Friend volunteers to create a Community Brunch, where local residents are invited along to access information and talk to local community workers such as fire, police, housing, benefits, family support and the CVS.

A monthly meeting is held with the project lead and the volunteers to discuss any issues, to receive feedback on how the project is working and to extract any positive stories or outcomes that have arisen as a result of information or

signposting they have given.

Outcomes have included helping people to access benefits, community transport, wheelchair and other specialist services; as well as reducing isolation for some members of the community.

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