



West Midlands Resident Involvement Champions Launch Event

Winning Ideas

We had loads of good ideas about engaging 'need to reach' groups on the day and the interactive sessions were a buzz of activity. We asked each table to select one idea to put forward between them and the following were the chosen selection. These are just brief descriptions with the contact details for those who presented them.....



Table 'A'

Moseley and District Churches HA Food Cultural Awareness Day

This idea was initially used to engage clients with mental health issues but could be used to reach other 'need to reach' groups or the community as a whole. It began with a brainstorm about what might encourage customers to attend sessions.

The idea is to encourage customers to share their cultural heritage, initially through food, which quite rightly was seen as a 'draw' to customers. Moseley and District also involved local shops in the project to help with the costs of running the scheme and support local businesses.

Attendance at the involvement sessions rose from 2 to 22 as a result of this initiative and has led onto other culturally themed days.



Table 'B'

Solihull Community Housing

Contact: mhocknull@solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk

Facebook

And

Staffs and Rural Housing

Contact: chris.plant@sarh.co.uk

Wii

The Solihull Facebook site, which was recently nominated for an award at the TPAS Midlands event, is

Can you add in specifically aimed at 13 - 24 year olds but anyone can join as a fan. The project is aimed at 13 – 24 year olds and taps into the phenomena of social networking to engage this age group, who had previously been difficult to reach. The site is now run by two 17 year olds, has 226 fans all of whom have the opportunity to comment on issues, put their ideas across and engage with Solihull Community Housing on a range of issues.

The project is a great way for younger people to get over the positive things they are doing in the area and gives the different people the opportunity to interact and close the generation gap whilst encouraging community spirit. The young people administering the facebook site on behalf of SCH have also been nominated for two major awards for their outstanding work on this project

Staffs and Rural Housing learnt from using a Wii as a tool for exercising in sheltered accommodation that the handsets are easy and fun to use for residents. They have therefore used this technology as an engagement device with residents using the handsets to express their opinions. They are also investigating the use of Skype and webcams to enable migrant workers from other European countries to maintain contact with home.



Table 'C'

South Staffordshire Housing Association

Contact: elaine.mitchell@ssha.co.uk

Engaging Young People Through Design

This project demonstrates an innovative approach to engaging younger people which also benefits them educationally, allows intergenerational working and rewards younger people for positive engagement with South Staffordshire Housing Association.

SSHA targeted younger people by working in partnership with a local High School. GCSE Year 10 students were set a "Design Challenge" by SSHA to design a room interior following their observations from a site visit to a new shared ownership development. This activity was incorporated into the academic curriculum and counted towards the students final grades. The design challenge also had an awards scheme for the best submissions of the year.

Students were selected by the school who had previously taken part in the design challenge to become members of a formal consultation group run by SSHA - the Design Panel. The purpose of the group is to provide end user perspective on proposed new developments, from initial conception through design, to finishing elements and marketing strategies. The group features regular talks by architects and other consultants as well as SSHA officers and site visits to new schemes. Students attend regular meetings along with older already involved residents. The group has benefited from a three day residential "Homes by Design" course at Trafford Hall which increased the ability of delegates to understand good housing design and the spaces that surround them as well as a guide to related regulation. It also encouraged intergenerational working and a sharing of knowledge and experiences.

Two students who have attended the Design Panel have used their experience to assist them in successfully gaining places at University to study Architecture and Interior Design.



Table 'D'

Fry Housing Trust

Contact: Hayley@fryha.org.uk

Confidence and Capacity Building in Individuals – Ex-Offenders

The RAG (Residents' Action Group) was set up in December 2007. This was to bring all Fry clients together as a method of engaging with them on a larger scale than local meetings and to consult with them about the service that they receive. They decided on a name for the group, branding, terms of reference and how the group should continue. It enables clients to socialise with people from different schemes and give feedback about ways that we can shape or improve services. The group makes important decisions about issues that impact on them such as repairs procedures, and their induction process.

Fry Housing Trust work with Ex-offenders and had found engagement difficult for a number of reasons. Self confidence within their clients was discovered to be both a major issue and an opportunity to develop a residents action group.

Working initially with 10 residents and limited resources, each resident was encouraged to identify and discover a skill or positive experience they had which they could share and develop. Certain key skills identified were cookery and gardening. In the former example this led to residents cooking for each other and sharing knowledge / building relationships in this way. There were obviously also links to healthy eating and exercise.

This example was really important because it reminded us all that to build a group you must develop individuals and that everybody potentially has something to bring to the table if they are encouraged and supported.

After receiving the £250 winnings, the RAG decided they would like to spend it on something educational and fun at the same time. They unanimously chose to visit the ThinkTank science museum in Birmingham which included a planetarium and IMAX 3D cinema viewing. We have invited all clients who have been involved in the RAG in the past and present as a thank you to them for their involvement. The trip to the science museum will not only be educational but will also improve clients confidence, social skills and self esteem.

Table 'E'

West Mercia Housing Group

Contact: Richard.Hancock@wmhousing.co.uk

Linking football to behaviour, personal development and wider engagement

The All ages Soccer Bureau (ASB) scheme was developed by Kemble Housing, who are part of the West Mercia Housing Group, and is funded by the football foundation. Its aim is to promote football to young people (boys and girls) including those who have been excluded from sport for various reasons, including poor behaviour and disability. Youths engaging in ASB can be signposted to the scheme.

Those participating sign up to an agreement around behaviour that they must keep and the scheme includes formal opportunities to discuss behaviour and other issues. As in football, poor behaviour leads to yellow and then red cards prohibiting activity. As an addition the scheme looks to promote personal development and increase the chances of a career path in sport by providing the opportunity for participants to take football coaching and referee qualifications.

The added bonus is that officers are able to engage with parents on the touchline while their children play football, giving a valuable opportunity to discuss other issues around the locality. The scheme features in the TSA launch video seen here:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViSUN8cJBkE&feature=player_embedded