

**Briefing on Black and Minority Ethnic Communities access to the
Communities First Programme in Swansea for the Communities Cabinet
Advisory Committee**

14 April 2016

Background to the Communities First Programme:

The City and County of Swansea has received Communities First funding since 2001. The 2015/16 budget allocation is £2,844,812 which includes a 5% reduction on the previous year. This funds 3 central support staff and 5 Cluster Delivery Teams. There is a combined staffing number of 47.5 that has responsibility for delivering 5 Cluster Delivery Plans. These cluster delivery plans outline projects which deliver outcomes for communities first residents in the main areas of learning, health and prosperity.

How does Communities First engage people?

In order to engage people on the Communities First programme within each of the Cluster areas the teams work to understand community engagement and involvement and the diversity of residents in the areas.

Definition of Community Involvement

Swansea's Communities First Programme has a shared definition of Community Involvement:

"It is the process of creating opportunities for everyone to:

- have the confidence to take part in their community and society,
- have a voice in local service planning and delivery, and
- have the capacity, strength and wellbeing to contribute towards more sustainable and cohesive communities and societies."

Purpose of the Community Involvement Plan

The Community Involvement Plan enables the CF team to fully understand the community needs and maximise involvement with residents who are hard to reach. Community Involvement needs to be continually evaluated to identify the effectiveness and relevance of the plan.

Each Community Involvement Plan supports Swansea's Tackling Poverty Strategy which recognises that resilient communities have strong community involvement. The Communities First Programme through the CIP identifies and targets the most marginalised members of our most deprived communities and increasingly involves local people in decision making.

Not all community members/residents respond to engagement techniques and the provision of information in the same way. Therefore there are a number of tools available to increase Community Involvement:

There are local 'hooks' to get people involved. Residents like to receive up to date information on projects and activities via leaflets or the local newsletter. Community information boards provide local information.

Other methods of engagement include:-

- **Door to door consultation** – to engage with the hard to reach.
- **Newsletter, leaflets** – for those who are digitally excluded. We have also monitored this and find a lot of our participants first heard of the CF programme through receiving a newsletter.
- **Information boards** – these are located in each of the LSOA's.
- **Social media networks** – for those residents who have access to the internet via their phone or a lap top, this is a means of communication the young people have requested.
- **Translation of information** – A request for translation of all literature is included in English, Welsh and other languages on request
- **Community Groups/Organisations** – Linking with existing community groups and organisations, working in partnership to increase opportunities for community residents.
- **Community Meetings** - these are held bi-monthly

What does the BME population look like across Swansea and by each Communities First Cluster area?

	People born in Wales	People born outside UK	People in non-white ethnic groups
Swansea	77.7%	7.2%	6.0%
South Cluster %	67.0%	18.1%	18.4%
South Cluster	8,936	2,408	2,449
West Cluster %	80.2%	9.9%	8.9%
West Cluster	9,440	1,171	1,050
North West Cluster %	84.2%	7.4%	6.2%
North West Cluster	11,542	1,015	857
East Cluster %	82.7%	7.1%	5.0%
East Cluster	10,597	909	643
North East Cluster %	83.4%	6.5%	4.9%
North East Cluster	8,997	702	529

BME people accessing the Communities First Programme in 2015/16:

In the North West Cluster 6.42% of project participants this financial year so far are from a BME background. This shows that the North West cluster are engaging with a slightly higher percentage of BME people through the programme than live in the area.

In the East Cluster approximately 2% of participants are from a BME background. This shows that engagement is lower than it could be in this cluster area of BME communities as it is 3% below the overall BME population in the cluster area.

In the West Cluster, in this current year, 2015-16, 22% of participants are from BME groups – this is for the first three quarters as monitoring for Q4 is not yet complete. In the previous year, 2014-15, 7.5% of participants were from BME groups. This shows a far higher level of engagement with BME groups for Communities First than the percentage of BME residents in the area.

The South Cluster has broken down their participants as follows for 2015/16:

Q1-3 stats

Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	1
White and Black African	1
White and Asian	2
Any other Mixed	3
Indian	2
Pakistani	17
Bangladesh	90
Chinese	7
Any other Asian	12
Caribbean	12
African	22
Any other Black background	1
Gypsy or Traveller	6
Arab	13
Any other	10

This shows a concentration of Bangladesh residents engaged in the CF programme followed by African and then Pakistani, but overall a diverse mix of BME communities.

What have BME communities accessed and participated in?

The intention of these case studies is to demonstrate the diverse range of activities across Communities First areas that BME residents as well as non-BME residents have engaged in.

South Cluster

In 2015/16 Communities First South cluster have so far supported 30+ parents to undertake a 6 week 'Stepping into play' training programme, this course is designed to encourage parents to be more involved with their children's learning experience through play, 60% of the 52 overall families supported by the family learning project have been from BME backgrounds, showing the positive engagement with these communities within the South Cluster.

Parents are equipped with new play ideas/activities to enable them to create learning experiences for their children at home, they learn about their children's development and how play supports their learning and the importance of being involved in this process.

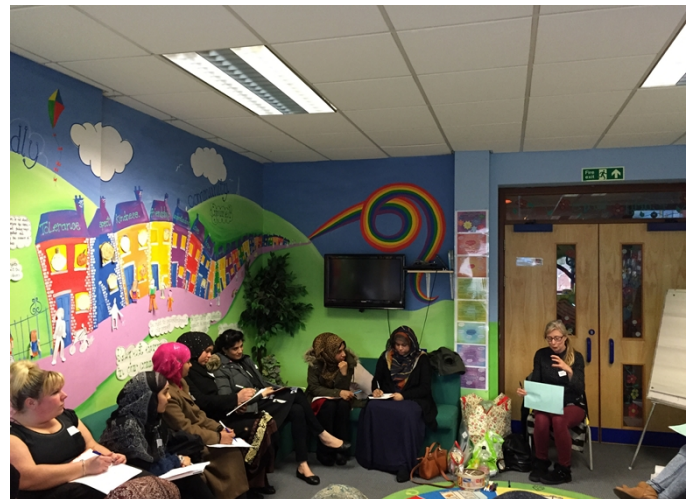


In December parents were given the opportunity to attend a presentation by the Lord Mayor in Swansea Guildhall; certificates were presented to parents who gained their 'Stepping into play' qualification. Parents were praised for their hard work and dedication to improving their own parenting skills. 3 parents have since pursued careers in working with children and have gained employment in local primary schools.

This work has been made possible through close partnership working with Swansea Children's Play Team, Communities First and translation services from EYST (Ethnic Youth Support Team). Parents have commented that the support offered has helped them 'to cope more and have more patience with their children', they know how to 'communicate more effectively with their children' and that this has helped develop a support network for parents as they are able to 'talk with other parents who have similar experiences'.

As part of the Stepping into play course in hafod in May 2015 there was an opportunity to attend a session at 360 beach and Watersports café for parents. This gave parents a chance to take part in some beach sports to get them motivated and enthused as a group to take their learning further in their community, the majority of the group were Bangladeshi mum's who have never or very rarely been involved in physical activity, this was thoroughly enjoyed by all, and parents have since expressed an interest in doing similar activities with their children.





Communities First Family Learning

Project and Dynamix have been working in partnership to engage Bangladeshi parents and support them to get involved in an exciting project with Dynamix, this project was looking at making Wales a fairer place. The project involved 20 Bangladeshi mums from the south cluster sharing experiences of their own culture, barriers that they have faced when accessing services and how they feel services could improve to better support their needs.

The 'Making Wales a fairer place for Bangladeshi families' Project with Dynamix continued, with most parents still involved and having their say, Dynamix will create a training course based on this information and this will be commissioned across local authorities and health boards in Wales to help train professionals on how best to support Bangladeshi families in Wales when they are accessing services. The parents involved in this project will also be given the opportunity to become trainers

and support Dynamix with training organisations and help 'make wales a fairer place for Bangladeshi families'.



South Cluster

Muhammed was referred to the Employment project in November 2015 by Swansea Job Centre for help with job searching and to update his CV.

Muhammed is an experienced tandoori chef originally from Bangladesh now living in Hafod. He is active in his local community and passionate about using his good English speaking skills to help and support members of both the Bangladeshi community of Hafod as well as refugees and asylum seekers from many other Arabic speaking countries. Each week he volunteers as a chef for a number of refugee support groups where he cooks for over 100 individuals across Swansea.

Muhammed has been proactive in bringing new clients into the Dyfatty Community Hub for benefits advice and help with CVs and job searching – acting as translator and mentor. He has also worked with the Adult Learning Project Officer to put on the Basic Food Hygiene certificate (Level 2) for a group of Bangladeshi chefs and kitchen assistants from Hafod – helping this group to get a recognised qualification which will help them to progress in their careers.

Happily Muhammed himself was offered two jobs in January and is now working again in an Indian restaurant in the city centre of Swansea. This full time job will allow him to bring his wife over to join him in the UK after nearly 5 years of living apart.

East Cluster

ESOL Classes.

The ESOL course initiated to help improve the English language skills of Communities First residents. It aims to increase confidence in communication and building new friendships in the community.

Husna Begum has been coming along the ESOL classes for many months. *“I enjoy coming to ESOL class because I get to meet lots of different people. I am able to socialise and get out of the house and do something different whilst learning English at the same time. In the ESOL class I feel I have learnt things that I did not know, and I am confident that I will continue to learn new and different things”*

A gardening group has been developed with the participants from the ESOL course.

LOCWS Film Project

The film project was delivered in partnership with Communities First. Residents were invited to complete a 5 week film project, where they would develop, direct and produce a short film. A diverse group of residents participated with ages ranging from 16 – 50+ and a BME resident also completing the course.



Korey Coughlin a participant stated “I enjoyed meeting new people. During the week the group grew closer, supporting each other during filming. We would never have met under normal circumstances; we were 16 year olds working with adults. It was nice to meet people from different backgrounds and cultures. I even tasted real home cooked Indian food when one of the ladies’ cooked

for us all. It was a lot of fun, I was glad to have had the opportunity to try new things. I definitely think the film project has helped me with my confidence. I also met the staff at Communities First and know how they can support me with courses and job search. I have written a CV with the help of Communities First.”

West Cluster

X is a female lone parent with four children and is a refugee, from sub-Saharan Africa. She had been considering health or social care as a career path so was directed to the ‘Introduction to Health and Social Care’, a Learn Direct course, to gain a better understanding of both sectors. She struggled with the written English content of the course but nevertheless wanted to enrol on a modular Health & Social Care course in Gower College.

The Learning Officer printed off the course content for her to consider and talked to her about the level of skill in literacy needed in order to complete the course successfully. The Learning Officer suggested X might find it easier to improve her English writing skills before giving further thought to enrolment in college. Following

that discussion X joined the Essential Skills: Basic literacy class in order to be assessed and undertake a relevant level of study to improve her English writing skills.

It also emerged that X suffered from chronic back pain and had been unable to walk without pain or discomfort for two of the preceding four years, although her mobility had started to improve. For this reason it was clear that nursing or care work was not a wise option but by talking at length to X the Learning Officer found that X had a talent and a passion for dressmaking having been a fully trained bespoke tailor in her country of origin.

She then considered a different career path i.e. becoming a self- employed dressmaker as this would allow her to work hours to fit around her children's needs and better accommodate her back problems. X was signposted to a 'Taking the Plunge' course at the Centre for Business to gain a better understanding of what would be involved in setting up and developing a successful business. 'Taking the Plunge' was followed up by a 1-1 business advice meeting with a Business Advisor at the Centre. Following both, X decided self- employment was the avenue she wanted to pursue in future.

X still had many outstanding financial problems as so the Learning Officer arranged for X to see Citizens Advice about an overpayment of Income Support and the C1st Financial Inclusion Officer for support on money management and other issues. The Financial Inclusion Officer:

- helped X to contact the District Housing Office for possible re-housing as X was living in an upstairs 2 bedroom flat with her 4 children (aged between 19 years and 20 months);
- carried out a benefits check with a view to making a claim for sickness/disability benefit;
- contacted X's employer about getting a regular payslip which would allow her to make a correct claim for working tax credits;
- helped X talk to her daughter's college about possible student financial support; and
- assisted her to get a letter of support from her GP for her benefit and housing claim.

What next for the Communities First programme?

Plans are nearing completion for the introduction of the Communities for Work (CfW) European Social Fund programme. This programme is a Priority 1 & 3 programme working specifically in Communities First Cluster areas to support long term unemployed people into work. The narrative for this programme includes an expectation that there will be a close working relationship with the Communities First programme. Funding for this programme is confirmed until March 2018 in the first instance with a likely continuation until March 2020.

The Communities First programme is being remodelled to include three theme leads for engagement, learning and employment. There will be one Delivery Plan, and the development of five Community Involvement Plans within each of the cluster areas

after 1st April 2016. These will update the information we have on the diversity of the population in Communities First areas, and assist in the targeting of hard to reach communities, and individuals.

BME communities accessing services:

The reach of the City & County of Swansea council's programmes goes far beyond that of Communities First in involving and engaging BME communities including: Flying Start, Families First, Supporting People, which are the targeted programmes, through to universally accessible services including leisure centres, and libraries.

Reports such as the Ethnicity and poverty report by JRF will be taken into account when supporting BME people into employment, but more will need to be done across the City & County of Swansea and its partners to give BME people an equal opportunity to access well-paid jobs and better life opportunities. The Tackling Poverty Unit staff will be attending the round table discussions on this report and the implementation of its recommendations organised by JRF and Egino. This could be a further topic for the CAC to assist in informing the Cabinet Member for Tackling poverty and communities.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation Viewpoint, *Breaking the links between ethnicity and poverty in Wales*, available at <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/breaking-links-between-poverty-and-ethnicity-wales>

For further information please contact Karen Grunhut, Tackling Poverty Unit Manager or Sarah Crawley, Head of Poverty & Prevention.