

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE - EQUALITIES**

**DATE 7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2011**

**REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE - PERFORMANCE**

**STRENGTHENING THE LINKS BETWEEN BRIDGEND EQUALITY FORUM AND THE NETWORK OF EQUALITIES GROUPS**

**1. Purpose of Report.**

The purpose of this report is to introduce a report that has been developed by VALREC which identifies a way of improving the opportunities for groups and individuals to engage with the Equalities Forum, the statutory agencies and the strategic partnerships. This is attached as Appendix A.

**2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities**

2.1 Bridgend Equality Forum plays a key role in supporting advancement of the equalities agenda in Bridgend. The Equality Scheme is a statutory scheme and a cross-cutting issue that impacts upon the work of the whole Council.

**3.0 Background.**

3.1 The Valleys Regional Equalities Council (VALREC) actively promotes engagement with equalities groups across five local authority areas, including Bridgend. Information gathered within the area suggests that the network of groups that have an involvement with the Bridgend Equality Forum would benefit by being better connected and by strengthening the opportunities to promote 'user' involvement.

**4. Current situation / proposal.**

4.1 As part of its wider equalities role, VALREC has developed a project entitled 'A Voice in the Valleys' which seeks to empower individuals and groups and help them identify equalities issues for consideration by the organisations involved with planning and delivering services to the local community. In liaison with Council officers, VALREC have developed the attached report as a basis for discussion with the Committee and to seek the views of Members on the proposals outlined therein.

4.2 The report outlines the proposal to develop a forum for users, enabling them to identify issues and be consulted about service delivery issues. The objective is to strengthen the mechanisms for engagement with people who are within the groups that have protected characteristics under equalities legislation.

**5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.**

5.1 As this is an information report, there are no proposed changes to the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 Whilst no equality impact assessment has been carried out, this report provides the Committee with information which will positively assist in the delivery of the Authority's equality duties.

## **7. Financial Implications.**

- 7.1 The proposal does not involve financial implications for the Council as if the user forum is developed, it will be facilitated by VALREC.

## **8. Recommendation.**

- 8.1 The Cabinet Committee - Equalities receives the attached report and considers the proposal to establish a user forum outlined therein.

**David MacGregor**  
**Assistant Chief Executive – Performance**

**27<sup>th</sup> February 2011**

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### **Background documents:**

Bridgend County Borough Council Corporate Equality Scheme 2009-2012.

## APPENDIX 1



### **REPORT TO BRIDGEND CBC**

### **CABINET COMMITTEE – EQUALITIES**

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2011

DARREN RALPH  
*The Valleys Regional Equality Council*

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#### **1. ABSTRACT**

This paper will identify core equalities networks facilitated by and/or supported by Bridgend County Borough Council and will suggest ways in which these may become better connected and help mainstream the key objectives that reoccur throughout the different equality agendas.

This paper will suggest that more effective links between existing networks will enhance communication; strengthen relationships; expand knowledge and understanding and create confidence' in the ability to signpost.

Furthermore, this paper will recommend a new initiative prepared by VALREC (The Valleys Regional Equality Council) that will (a). Help support the Bridgend Equality Forum (BEF) in identifying and utilising the work of its local networks (b) promote the valuable input of service users with consultations; procedures; development and evaluation.

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## **2. Introduction**

Much work is already being undertaken in Bridgend to build one community that celebrates differences in customs, traditions and faiths. Bridgend is a community that values individual diversity and a community that is strengthened by the differences in skills, languages and life experiences.

Bridgend Council is not only committed to providing accessible services to the diversity of people whom it serves, it is equally committed to helping multi-cultural Bridgend to become integrated and cohesive, which in turn, will improve individual safety, increase self confidence and ensure a greater quality of life for all its citizens.

This paper will outline some of the key networks that exist to ensure that fairness, equal access to services and social justice remains a high priority for Bridgend County Borough Council. Existing networks and potential additions to these networks will ensure that equality is embedded in all services delivered by all directorates within the local authority. This will also ensure that the needs of *everyone* are identified, not just those considered to be marginalised and/or disadvantaged.

## **3. Bridgend Equality Forum (BEF)**

Bridgend's Equality Forum currently exists to promote and protect matters of Equality and Diversity in and around the County Borough. It is made up of organisations or groups that have a range of expertise and are involved with services such as Health; Education; Employment; Third Sector; and Private Sector. This forum provides excellent scope for networking between organisations and offers opportunities for building relationships to promote best practice. Several members of BEF are also active members of other equality based forums and networks in and around Bridgend.

## **4. Bridgend & District Community Cohesion Group**

The Community Safety Partnership has responsibility for developing and delivering a Community Cohesion strategy and developed the Community Cohesion Group to assist with this task. Several Partners and community members attend the group from a diverse range of backgrounds. One of the functions of the group is to receive reports from South Wales Police relating to hate crimes, hate incidents, stop and search data and emerging issues and trends. The group acts as a critical friend to partners, adds vital information with recommendations, ensures transparency and improves communication between minority communities and partners.

Bridgend & District Community Cohesion Group are in the process of reviewing their Terms of Reference to reflect; changes to legislation, membership, and the forthcoming recommendations of *GVA Grimley*.

## **5. GVA Grimley**

*GVA Grimley* are consultants who have been commissioned by the Community Safety Partnership to conduct mapping, undertake consultation, evaluate current provision and develop proposals for promoting the growth of a more cohesive County Borough. They are currently in the latter stages of formulating a draft *Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan*.

The most recent meeting of the Bridgend Equality Forum (BEF) took place on **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2011** and was hosted by *GVA Grimley* who conducted several 'Visioning Workshops'. Participants (BEF Members) were invited in teams to consider the following identified 'Priority Areas':

- *Spatial* - Issues that have a geographical trend and require targeting on this spatial basis in particular neighbourhoods or wards.
- *Thematic* - Issues that link to the key themes identified in the analytical framework and present specific social, economic or physical environmental problems affecting cohesion.
- *Target Groups* – Issues that affect a particular group or community of individuals in a specific way and require tailored interventions to meet these needs.

Much of the feedback echoes the needs, concerns, anxieties and fears that are typically identified through existing networks but participants believed that there is little opportunity for individuals and groups to have their voices heard. In addition, some of the forum members identified Mental Health to be an aspect that is overlooked as a minority issue with limited opportunities for service user consultation/input. The problematic process of accessing services such as public transport was identified, particularly by those blind and partially sighted members. Furthermore, members strongly believed that there were limited opportunities for service users to convey any concerns they have to a local authority representative. The proposal outlined later in this paper (Re Valley Voices) will address these concerns.

Among the aims and objectives put forward by *GVA Grimley* in the visioning workshops was the 'Improved availability of data and intelligence for the PREVENT agenda'. The patterns and trends of radicalisation and the emerging of extremist behaviour can be traced to individuals and groups on the periphery of the community. It is essential that counter-terrorism and anti-extremism agendas are incorporated into the Community Cohesion Strategy and Action plan. It is also important that extremism is used as an exemplar for highlighting the risks associated to communities that are divided and non-integrated.

## **6. PREVENT**

*PREVENT* is a Home Office initiative which seeks to prevent violent extremism and potential terrorist activity. Its strategy is inspired by a belief system that vulnerable groups and individuals are more susceptible to the recruitment of extremist ideologies. Any community that is better integrated and more cohesive will reduce the likelihood of peripheral individuals and groups becoming isolated, alienated and unheard in the community. Existing networks in Bridgend are key to the success of *PREVENT* and further training and awareness raising on this topic is needed.

South Wales Police held a *PREVENT* training day at the Heronston Hotel, Bridgend on **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2010** which reiterated the above and concluded that considerable awareness raising and training was required for delivery in the near future.

All the equalities networks (and beyond) need to be aware of *PREVENT* and their role in identifying those individuals and groups that are most vulnerable. Trends associated with prejudice, discrimination and hate crimes are more easily identified by victims and potential victims. The motives behind perpetrator actions are also more likely to be better understood by their victim. For this reason, it is essential that service users and minority groups are fully engaged and consulted.

## **7. VALREC (The Valleys Regional Equality Council)**

Once, the Valleys Race Equality Council, VALREC is now an Equalities and Human Rights Council which supports those subject to prejudice and/or discrimination. In line with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, VALREC has now broadened its remit to work with all equality strands that include age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and transgender. VALREC offers support to those who live and/or work in the Boroughs of Rhondda Cynon Taff, Bridgend, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Caerphilly and therefore serves approximately 25% of the population of Wales. Officers support individuals and groups through casework designed to address and combat experiences of prejudice or discrimination and Hate crime in relation to the above strands. There are also a number of projects that work with organisations, groups and individuals to promote good relations which strengthen communities recognised under the 2006 Equality Act and now the Single Equality Act 2010. *A Voice in the Valleys* is VALREC's first project as a multi-stranded equalities organisation as opposed to race specific. This project will provide support to the existing networks facilitated and/or supported by Bridgend County Borough Council.

### **7.1 'A Voice in the Valleys'**

'A Voice in the Valleys' seeks to create stronger lines of communication to enable organisations in the voluntary sector to empower people in these areas valleys to access their equalities and human rights entitlements. The project is funded via 'The Big Lottery' and involves:

- Thorough mapping exercise around all equality strands across 5 Boroughs
- A comprehensive Database
- Equality & Human Rights Networks in each County Borough and one collective Network made up of all the areas
- Raising awareness of equalities and human rights amongst organisations, interest groups and individuals identified
- Regular reporting to agencies, local authority departments and other strategic forums on issues raised in the Networks
- Providing education and training through forums

### **7.2 Mapping**

Recent research suggests a lack of service provision around equality and human rights within the voluntary sector in Wales. This may prevent individuals (especially in rural areas) from getting the most out of the services available to them which in turn can result in alienation, isolation and prevents an individual's contribution to their community. The Mapping exercise identifies organisations, individuals and interest groups that are noted to have an interest in equalities and human rights. The mapping will also identify

organisations which go beyond the existing equality strands such as for example; domestic violence, poverty and substance misuse. This exercise has already highlighted clear gaps in service provision in rural areas of Wales and in Bridgend.

### **7.3 Database**

The Mapping exercise will lead to the formation of a database that will cover the 5 local authority areas. It will hold information on organisations, individuals and interest groups against each of the equality strands. VALREC project officers (Darren Ralph and Rez Jamal) have already built strong relationships and have encouraged inter-agency working by meeting with each organisation individually.

### **7.4 Service provider/user Forums**

The forums/networks will be facilitated by Darren Ralph and Rez Jamal in each of the Boroughs and will include representation from all equality strands. Service providers and users will have the opportunity to network, raise issues and exchange best practice. The forums will feed into more strategic forums and local authority departments to amplify individual voices and influence policy.

## **8. Pulling together existing networks by creating a focal point for service user input**

The Bridgend Equality Forum (BEF) is effective in that it provides opportunities for networking and the exchange of best practice. Its principal functions are to learn about changes in legislation and for organisations to take information imparted by visitors/guest speakers, back to their respective fields; thus developing their role and improving service delivery. However, there needs to be a stronger line of communication so that the agendas, action plans and outcomes of The Bridgend Equality Forum are incorporated into its associated networks. Members need to be aware of the work carried out by other groups so that they avoid unnecessary duplication when developing their agenda.

The absence of service user input, can sometimes reflect in the inaccuracy of information that is transferred back to inform organisational agendas. VALREC believe that the capacity of the Bridgend Equality Forum (BEF) could be strengthened by introducing an additional forum made up of voluntary sector service users and providers. This will enhance the working of the Bridgend Equality Forum (BEF) and the Community Cohesion Group and the new forum would seek to:-

- Advise BEF/CCG of the issues faced by minorities living and/or working in Bridgend
- Identify issues that are prevalent to specific localities in Bridgend that, consequently, affect those living/working there
- Identify and report on equality issues that are inadvertently neglected.
- Report on the work of BEF/CCG and its sister forums to individuals and groups in Bridgend so as to inform them of actions/plans that will improve services (which in turn will increase confidence in the Council)
- Empower service users by providing an opportunity to feed issues, concerns, anxieties and fears directly into the forums
- Create Service user representatives who will consult their respective communities for information and advice (This will empower individuals in the process)
- Create opportunities for service providers (who will accompany their service users) to evaluate the quality of their service delivery.



This new forum will be made up of the close community groups that are representative of all protected characteristics, such as (for example):

- *Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People* (Disability)
- *Bridgend People First* (Disability)
- *Bridgend Coalition Against Racism* (Race and Religion or Belief)
- *Bridgend Gweini* (Religion or Belief)
- *Bridgend Women's Aid* (Gender)
- *A voluntary sector representative from the Children and Young People Partnership* (Age)
- *Bridgend Yellow* (Age and Sexual Orientation and Transgender)

In addition, other individuals and groups identified via *A Voice in the Valleys* will be invited to contribute to this forum. Such groups also reflect the diversity of citizens living and/or working in Bridgend; the mapping work undertaken suggests that there are over fifty such groups in the Bridgend area.

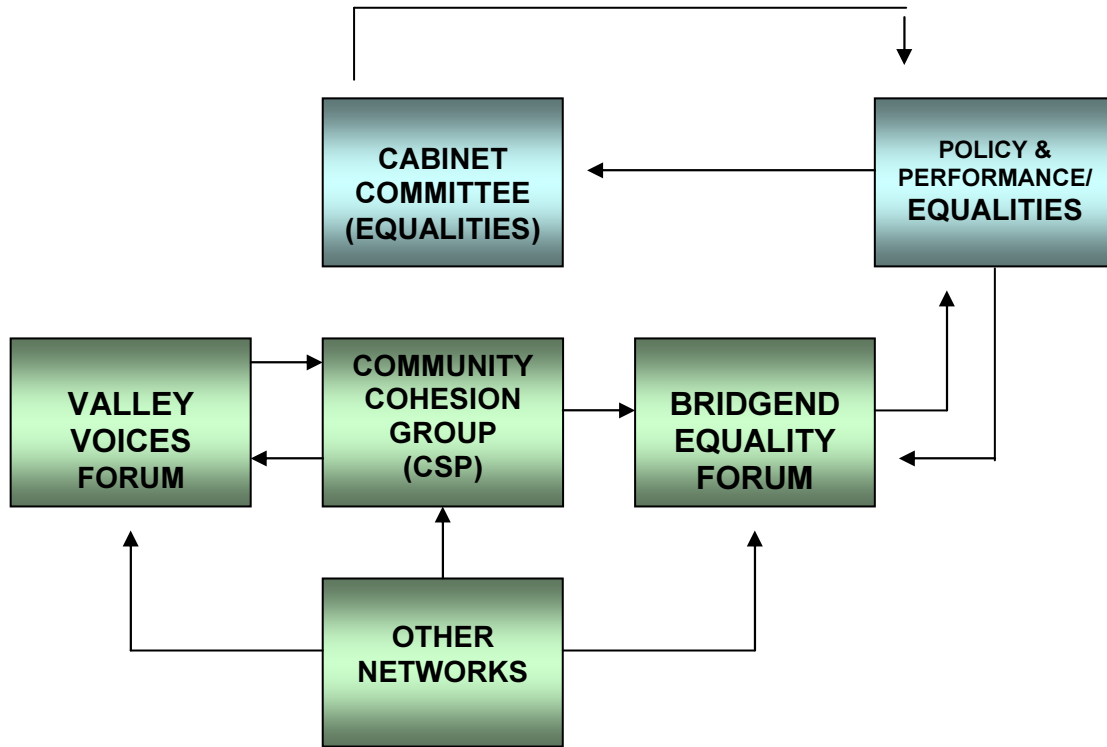
*A Voice in the Valleys* project has a responsibility to establish a voluntary sector Forum in the five County Boroughs of: Bridgend, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Caerphilly. From the outset, the project considered that should any forums/ networks exist to provide the services it seeks to deliver, then adjustments would be made to avoid duplication. VALREC's project officers are in the process of piloting in Blaenau Gwent the first such forum in the area to cover all the equality strands (See DRAFT Terms of Reference, Appendix: 1).

It is considered that this type of forum will fit comfortably with the Bridgend Equality Forum. This will be initially facilitated by Darren Ralph and Rez Jamal but it is important to stress that this is intended as a people's forum that does not require a governing body. *A Voice in the Valleys* project will launch its forum (Valley Voices) as a Voluntary Sector Forum and will implement systems and procedures that increase its chances of sustainability. VALREC would welcome the support of Bridgend County Borough Council in providing *Valley Voices* with the opportunity to support the Bridgend Equality Forum.

*A Voice in the Valleys* anticipates that 'Valley Voices' will be ready for launch April/May 2011.

Please see Draft structure overleaf :

9. **DRAFT EQUALITIES NETWORK STRUCTURE**  
**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH AREA**



**Explanation**

- Valley Voices (**VV**)
- Other Networks (**ON**)
- Cabinet Equalities (**CE**)
- Bridgend Equality Forum (**BEF**)
- Community Cohesion Group (**CC**)
- Policy & Performance – Equalities (**PP**)

- ON** to work with **VV**, **CC**, **BEF**
- CC** to work with **VV**
- CC** will report on **VV** to **BEF**
- BEF** will inform **PP** which will report to **CE**
- CE** to feed back to **PP**
- PP** to feedback to **VV**, **CC**, **BEF** and **ON**

VALREC is already represented at all the networks identified in the chart. VALREC is also pleased that their previous initiatives have contributed to the work of the Bridgend & District Community Cohesion Group and that plans have been made to begin preparations for a second Diversity event to take place this year in Bridgend.

## **10. Bridgend & District Community Cohesion Group: Promoting the Agenda**

GVA Grimley has identified that:

“Some people who have lived in Bridgend all their lives have not experienced many people from other ethnic backgrounds and can be prejudiced in their views”  
(Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan, p.18)

Much work has been undertaken by VALREC to bring about exposure to citizens in Bridgend, not only ethnic minorities but minorities that fall under all equality mandates. VALREC recognises that not everyone is fortunate to have exposure to the diverse population of people round them. It is important to understand that unless individuals and groups are able to engage with ‘different’ individuals and groups then there are inevitable limitations for engagement. The Bridgend & District Community Cohesion Group seeks to encourage and provide this exposure to citizens in Bridgend. This is a significant task that may begin with community events as recommended by *GVA Grimley*.

## **11. Potential for a second ‘Diversity Day’ facilitated by VALREC and Bridgend Community Safety Partnership, supported by South Wales Police**

Following recent discussions with the Community Cohesion Group around the issue of ‘exposure’, South Wales Police have requested that VALREC support the initiative of holding a Diversity Day in 2011. This event will primarily target pupils of comprehensive schools in Bridgend. Carefully tailored workshops will assist the Community Cohesion Group with helping pupils to understand and celebrate what it is to be different. The Diversity Day 2010 held on **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2010** delivered by VALREC with the Community Cohesion fund, will provide a model for this (potential) forthcoming event. The report on the 2010 event is provided in Appendix 2

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## Appendix 1

# VALLEY VOICES *Blaenau Gwent* DRAFT Terms of Reference:

## Name of Forum

VALLEY VOICES: Blaenau Gwent.

## 1. Principal Function

To create, improve and sustain strong links between voluntary organisations and their service users. To mainstream effective communication between individuals, groups and organisations in Blaenau Gwent that share interests and obligations to the equality and human rights agenda.

## 2. Purpose of the forum

The purpose of *Valley Voices* is to

- 2.1 Create a platform from which a). Voluntary organisations may exchange ideas and good practice, b). Service users are empowered to inform and advise organisations, hence, amplifying individual voices and those whom they represent.
- 2.2 To learn about new changes in policy and legislation and to discuss implications, consequences and benefits for service users.
- 2.3 Provide an opportunity for voluntary organisations to learn about each others services and create an opportunity for an effective networking system.
- 2.4 Encourage inter-agency working.
- 2.5 Encourage discussions and activities to address issues prevalent to the areas of Blaenau Gwent.
- 2.6 To impart education and training to its members. This may include guest speakers and providing alternative venues for *Valley Voices* that expose members to unfamiliar and interesting settings.

## 3. Membership

The membership of *Valley Voices* is open to:

- 3.1 Voluntary organisations, interest groups and individuals who serve the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent, of which equality and human rights is key to their work.
- 3.2 Voluntary organisations representing any or all of the recognised equality strands, for example: Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation and Transgender.
- 3.3 Voluntary organisations who work beyond the recognised equality strands, for example, health and substance misuse.
- 3.4 A service user who seeks to benefit from services delivered by organisations, interest groups and individuals.

## **4. Chairperson**

The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected by *Valley Voices* members for a period of 12 months only.

The responsibilities of the Chair Person are as follows:

- 4.1 Sets the agenda for each *Valley Voices*.
- 4.2 Ensures that the agenda and supporting materials are delivered to members in advance of meetings.
- 4.3 Clarifies the purpose of each *Valley Voices* to members and outlines the agenda at the beginning of each meeting.
- 4.4 Ensures the effective pace of each *Valley Voices* so that each agenda item is addressed within the timeframe of the meeting.
- 4.5 Encourages effective discussion by calling on the participation of each member present.
- 4.6 Brings each *Valley Voices* to a close by summarising the agreed decisions and assignments.
- 4.7 In the absence of the Chair the Vice Chair will be responsible for all the above duties.

## **5. Secretariat**

The role of the secretariat is to:

- 5.1 Prepare agendas and the issuing of notices for meetings, and ensuring all necessary documents requiring discussion or comment are attached to the agenda.
- 5.2 Taking notes of proceedings and preparing minutes of each *Valley Voices*.
- 5.3 Distribution of minutes to all members.
- 5.4 The minutes will be checked by the Chairperson and accepted/checked for accuracy by members who will agree/challenge the accuracy of each meeting.
- 5.5 Secretariat duties may be undertaken by service users should they express a desire to do so.

## **6. Frequency Of meetings**

The forum will meet every 3 months. Additional meetings may be called by the Chairperson or by members with the agreement of the Chairperson.

## **7. Steering Committee**

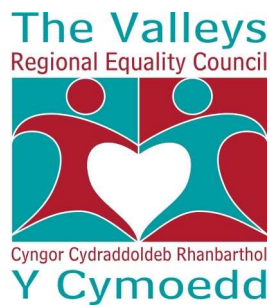
In addition and in support of the forum, a steering committee will exist in order that the forum is managed and monitored. Steering committee members will meet as and when necessary to ensure that each forum is properly conducted in line with the terms of reference. Steering committee members will play an active role in the recruitment of membership and for the organising of guest speakers, venues and other practical matters.

## **8. Quorum and Decision Making**

- 8.1 A minimum number of 7 members must be present for each *Valley Voices* to take place and for the purpose of any decision making.
- 8.2 A minimum number of 4 members must be present for each *Valley Voices* Steering Committee to take place and for the purpose of any decision making.
- 8.3 In the case of both *Valley Voices* and *Valley Voices Steering Committee*, a majority vote is required. A course of action requires support from more than 50% of members who attend the meeting if there is quorum.

## **9. Reviewing Terms of Reference**

The terms of reference are to be reviewed annually or as and when deemed necessary.



# Community Cohesion Fund 2010

Report on work undertaken with Communities First  
wards in Bridgend County Borough



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**VALREC: Background**

In accordance with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, VALREC has broadened its remit to work across all equality strands that include age, religion and belief, disability, gender, sexual orientation, transgender and race. VALREC offers support to those who live or work in the Boroughs of Rhondda Cynon Taff, Bridgend, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Caerphilly and therefore work with 25% of the population of Wales. Through casework, officers support individuals who experience prejudice, discrimination and Hate crime in relation to the above strands. There are a number of projects currently being undertaken by officers who work with other organisations, groups and individuals to promote good relations which strengthen communities recognised under the 2006 Equality Act. Community Cohesion is the overarching incentive behind the work of VALREC and its casework and projects are key tools for building cohesive communities in Wales.

## **Preliminary work**

Communities First Co-ordinators from each ward in Bridgend were contacted and informed of the funding which VALREC had been awarded in order to carry out training and community activities which focused on the theme of Community Cohesion. Communities First wards that participated in this project were:

- Sarn
- Llangeinor
- Caerau
- Brackla
- Wildmill
- Blackmill
- Bettws
- North Cornelly

## **Community Cohesion Workshops**

Elaine Clayton (Deputy Director, VALREC) and Darren Ralph (Development Officer, VALREC), immediately constructed a timetable for Communities First workshops to take place, leaving enough time to organise a 'Diversity Day' which would focus on themes, issues and discussions raised from the series of workshops.

Communities First Co-ordinators were given the opportunity to select dates and times for their workshops which best suited their needs. Co-ordinators and partners were able to choose their preferred venue and were able to provide groups with refreshments, buffet lunches and childcare on account of our available funds and in line with our allocated budgets. Each workshop lasted for a minimum of 3 hours followed by feedback discussions.

Elaine and Darren designed the initial workshops (Awareness Raising) to focus on the concept of 'Community Cohesion' which provoked discussion around topics such as:

- What is Community Cohesion? Is it effective? Who is responsible for its creation?
- Home Office initiative of 'Prevent' agenda
- Positive and negative trends of Stereotyping



- Equality and Diversity terminology and legislation including but not exclusive to; age; disability; gender; race; religion & belief; sexual orientation and Transgender

The second workshop (Advanced Workshop) was intended to provide a smooth transition from basic awareness, onto a more advanced level of understanding. These further sessions focussed on:

- Specific issues prevalent to the geographical areas
- Issues, concepts, terminology or legislation which perhaps required further explanation or a more in-depth understanding
- Further training on one or more of the equality mandates which were introduced in the initial workshop

## Feedback on workshops

Both Elaine and Darren were pleased with the way in which all workshops were received by participants. Co-ordinators were pleased with the soft skills that VALREC brought with them which increased positively affected the learning experiences of participants; providing a friendly and warm rapport amongst all those present which in turn, developed the confidence of participants. As a result, the more vocal the group, the more applicable the content of the training became to individuals lives, circumstances and professional/community work.

Generally, the consensus was that although two sets of 3 hours provided an interesting insight into the ways in which important key concepts can be applied to the Communities First areas, it was clear that the workshops had only scratched the surface of issues which have clear scope for greater deciphering.



***Community Cohesion poses much discussion***



**Diversity Day: Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2010**



***Kate Bennett opening the Diversity Day with a talk on Human Rights***

The 'Diversity Day' was designed as a way of pulling together themes that were introduced in the two workshops. The overarching theme of the day was 'Community Cohesion' which was reiterated by five workshops, namely:

- **Community Cohesion** (VALREC)
- **Hate Crime** (Myles Davies, Hate Crime Officer, South Wales Police)
- **Human Rights** (Kate Bennett, Director of Wales, Equality and Human Rights Commission)
- **Disability** (Simon Green)
- **Transgender** (Joanne Whitehead)



***Simon Green discusses disablist hate crime trends***



***PC Myles Davies explores the concept of Hate Crime in Bridgend***





***Joanne Whitehead discusses issues surrounding Transgender***

## **Programme of the Day**

- 10.00** Opening of the day by Kate Bennett (Director of Wales, Equality and Human Rights Commission)
- 10.30** Workshops
- 11.00** Comfort Break
- 11.15** Workshops
- 11.45** Workshops
- 12.15** Mayor Councillor Jefferson Tildesley to close the morning
- 12.20** Lunch (a hot buffet is available for everyone)
- 13.10** Welcome back by Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor of Bridgend
- 13.15** Keith Towler (Children and Young Persons Commissioner for Wales)
- 13.30** Workshops
- 14.00** Comfort break
- 14.20** Workshops
- 14.50** Closing remarks by Darren Ralph (VALREC)



***Keith Towler presents a speech on the rights of children and partakes in question and answer session with the help of the Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor of Bridgend***

***The Mayor comments on what he has learnt from the series of workshops and the importance of ensuring a sense of cohesiveness in Bridgend and beyond***

## **Feedback on ‘Diversity Day’**

The Diversity Day was a reflection of the work carried out with the Communities First partnership in Bridgend and highlighted their high level of interest and commitment to creating, improving and sustaining community cohesion in and around the borough of Bridgend. One participant noted that “the workshops today have given people the chance to meet ‘real people’ from minority groups and have real conversations.”

Those who attended claimed that the day was successful, thought provoking, educational and enjoyable, albeit, somewhat disappointing that more people were not there to reap the benefits. VALREC was also disappointed as every effort was made to advertise the event as widely as possible and via exhaustive methods of communication.

However, guest speakers and workshop facilitators were delighted with the engagement of all those present. In fact, some believed that the numbers were just right; providing an equal balance of those in each workshop. Consequently, workshops were not too overcrowded meaning that interactive engagement with groups was able to take place effectively.

## **Community Cohesion Poster**

During the Diversity Day, a workshop was specifically designed to assess ones level of understanding around the subject of Community Cohesion which was introduced and

discussed in community workshops prior to the event. Participants were asked to document their thoughts and ideas in order to contribute to a poster which would be later distributed to all Communities First wards so as to raise awareness of the importance of building cohesive and inclusive communities.



Poster on  
Community  
Cohesion  
put  
together  
by  
Communities First  
wards of  
Bridgend  
Borough

Proposal  
for  
future  
work in  
Bridgend  
or/and

## Rhondda Cynnon Taff, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Torfaen

An interest in whether the 'Diversity Day' can become an annual event has already been expressed by the majority of those who attended. VALREC would welcome any further opportunities to work on raising awareness of Community Cohesion in Bridgend and are convinced that other neighbouring Boroughs would benefit from the same workshops followed by a finale showcase event. VALREC believe there is scope for replicating this work across other Borough's in order to compare and contrast diverse issues as well as the different levels of knowledge and understanding of those living and working in these areas.