

EAG / CMT Meeting – 19th December 2011

Notes from Table Discussions

Fairness and Equality

- Regarding the Fairness Commission suggestion to cancel Ward Committee Funding:
 - Age UK had, in the past, obtained funding from almost every Ward Committee, however, monitoring arrangements were particularly onerous given the amounts of money involved. Consequently they had withdrawn from putting in blanket bids and would prefer a centralised grant funding process instead. However, they would have used the Ward Committee for smaller services where they wanted to target a particular geographic area e.g. for toe nail cutting. Smaller, area specific groups would suffer if ward committee funding went.
 - There was a question of prioritisation in that many educated, middle-class people knew how to work the system to obtain WC grants. Did that make the system unfair for those that didn't know how the system worked? Shouldn't it just be targeted at those areas that needed it most?
- BME issues, cohesion champions likely to be reflected in the final Fairness Commission Report
- The Equalities Act duties and how the Council would meet them:
 - There was a lack of information for older isolated people about the services that were available to them. Training should be provided for all staff who come in to regular contact with members of the public to cross-refer them to things like toe nail cutting and putting their bins out. Home carers and refuse collectors cover the whole of the city and they should be given the confidence to help signpost the people they come in to contact with.

- Contracting out of services - TUPE regulations could not be met by voluntary organisations with relation to salaries and pension requirements.
- There were examples of best practice in relation to cross referrals, such as hotspots and first call 50+ that could be learnt from.
- The Timebank Programme might be able to contribute to this agenda.
- More needed to be done to market care homes to LGBT.
- Stonewall had recently done some elder life work (Sue Lister would provide a copy) and Scarborough had also done some good work linked to LGBT and Care Home provision.
- More effort was needed by the Council to understand LGBT issues.
- Regarding the Council's ability to meet Equalities Act duties:
- It was exciting that there was now much more open dialogue between the council and voluntary groups about this issue. Also there were a lot of good suggestions in the Fairness Commission interim report in terms of balancing deprivation and focussing on those in most need. Everybody needs to ask what contribution we can all make towards achieving excellent.
- Getting communication right was very important.
- The move towards co-production was a fascinating philosophy and a very exciting development, however good dialogue and accountability arrangements were needed to make it work well.
- Protection of 'vulnerable' people would mean different things to different people. How have we defined that and in the current budget situation was there a need to re-define vulnerability?
- Use of the word 'protection' also came across as negative / reactive and perhaps language used now needed to reflect the shift towards individuals and communities helping themselves.
- CYC does an Equality Impact Assessment on everything – is it a box ticking exercise?

- Equality Peer Review – its important to publicise better and important for people to challenge the Council. CYC response: CYC are embedding equalities across the directorates

Employment/Workforce

- YREN asked whether the council's workforce reflected the changing demographic:
 - It was estimated that the BME population in York was approximately 9%, however our BME workforce was probably only about 2-3%. The new HR system would give us access to much better data regarding staff profiles. The HR team planned use this to target recruitment and train staff involved in recruitment in order to get a better balance in future.
 - In addition, to a more balanced workforce, it would be good to see a more diverse mix of political representatives.
 - York was changing from being a very insular city to one which was pulling together more and also was much more outward looking.
 - It would be good to work through the Youth Forum and BME Youth Group to inspire young people to perhaps work for the council.
 - Youth unemployment in York – a lack of accessibility to job opportunities
 - Councillor and York Youth Council rep went into school-cultural differences
 - Concern about the increasing number of 16-18 yr olds out of work
 - Within the education system children from an ethnic minority background generally do as well as others
 - Employment advice – Connexions advisors going to Mosque? Need to make sure info is widely available
 - Older students returning from University struggling to get support
 - Apprenticeship campaign discussed

- Workforce Strategy (14-19 involvement in service design as well as work for CYC)
- Opportunities targeted at specific groups eg Chinese community
- Can younger teenagers be targeted for apprenticeships? Made more accessible to bme groups?
- What is CYC doing to get more people into employment? It's important to use services such as Future Prospects who run specific contracts eg European Social Fund
2 x Local Enterprise Partnerships promoting economic growth
- The Council are looking at opportunities for 'looked after' children to go into apprenticeships
- Can CYC put pressure on employers eg new Monks Cross development to draw on all sections of the community
- Good practice: There is coproduction with the DWP. CYC work closely with the Job Centre, doing presentations in JCs, targeting long term benefit recipients

Other issues discussed

- CYC not good at showcasing, mentoring/recruiting through the right mechanisms.
- Question about sound proofing of homes
- Fair Access to Care Services (3 levels Moderate, Substantial, Critical)
- York is good as it makes sure that vulnerable people are in the loop, its important that someone is providing a service whether or not its the Council
- Someone told a young person with Aspergers to use a phone, 'get over it'
How can CYC increase awareness of what support is available to people?
Empower people to challenge? Get employers to 'widen the net'
- Can we promote and celebrate/showcase good practice of successful equality practice to encourage others?

- CYC does monitor home care, nursing care but can do more as some services are increasingly fragmented
- Bus Services – equalities issues as a customer with health issues, unsympathetic response to the individual

Support

- How does reduction of deprivation and coproduction work in reality? Is there more resources available?
- We need to understand better the make up of the city , hotspots etc
- Benefits changes etc will widen the gap and increase/compound child poverty levels. The launch of the Child Poverty Strategy will make work more targeted.
- Money needs to be used (Pupil Premium) to improve outcomes for children, have to publish
- Kingsway project example
- Announcement of more money for support to families. Protect and expand Family information project
- The way of doing things – a vacuum is created by a lack of prescription
- ‘Churches Together’ – unseen work with older people
- Students volunteering within their community
- City of Sanctuary provide hospitable support and signposting people, eg loneliness, mental health issues
- Changing demographics – what percentage of CYC staff are from BME backgrounds? Does it match with current demographics? A good organisation should reflect a changing population Can CYC encourage equal opps in the employment process? In response: Workforce Development Strategy in place
- Those with ‘invisible’ disabilities, desperate desire to be ‘normal’, have to prove they have a disability eg chronic fatigue syndrome. But how do you provide targeted support in a non-stigmatising way?
- Challenge for internal staff training to raise awareness, staff retention issue

- Foster care services suitability for eg Muslim child if no Muslim foster parents in York
- There is an increased number of people requiring services for physical and mental health issues – we must ensure that services are targeted correctly, what should be the criteria?
- Challenge the Health and Social Care Fund, shouldn't have happened in isolation
Part of the City Plan to establish a Health and Well Being Board
- How do we make sure that groups who are more secluded have access to information? Eg muslim women Need to be aware of the cultural factor.
- Good Neighbourliness: noticing when people are not coping, could the Council take more of a lead?

Voluntary Sector and partnership working

- CVS are representing the Vol and Community Sector who are seen as a provider of services – they have to be located in the overall planning framework. Shows level of engagement – Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- North Yorkshire example of voluntary sector approach
- No one can achieve in isolation!
- Use the reports and finding of YREN to change service culture eg housing etc
- CYC to work with YREN as a conduit eg Welcome Guide to the City

HR and Workforce development

- City wide accessible HR procedures, ensure all CYC employees feel empowered to offer solutions to wider problems eg through signposting, knowledge , awareness
- Draft Customer Strategy – any CYC employee can take any issue and seek to resolve it
- Contact Centre – having the necessary tools and software and important to give feedback

- New Headquarters – what savings are expected? – capital savings