

# Strengthening organisations

At the heart of our work is the support we give to not-for-profit organisations. These organisations range from small, volunteer-led groups that improve local neighbourhoods, to larger charities and social enterprises that support people from all over the borough. What unites them is their passion and energy to improve people's lives. We give information, training and practical guidance to help people to set up, efficiently run and develop their group, helping them to access the tools, knowledge, resources and funding they need to be successful.

Supported  
**267**



## voluntary and community organisations

including community groups, charities, voluntary organisations, social enterprises and people that wanted to set one up

Funding and finance  
Training events  
Compliance  
Volunteer management  
Setting up



Common areas of  
support

## We asked groups what they thought of our support...



**100%** feel  
more confident



**90%** feel  
more skilled



**90%** have better  
opportunities



**70%** feel  
better known



**60%** feel more  
sustainable & efficient



**60%** feel better  
connected

# Getting groups on track

## Lower Gornal Friday Night Youth Club

In September 2015, a group of Gornal parents were determined to bring back the Friday night youth club after the closure of the Council-run youth club the previous summer, but they didn't know where to start.

Dudley Youth Service staff referred them to Dudley CVS's Small Groups Officer, who gave them intensive support over a few months to build the club on solid foundations.

Support included:



helping them **plan** what they wanted to do that would help them access **funding**



developing a **committee** & helping members to know their roles & responsibilities



producing a **constitution** which they needed to apply for **funding**



**connecting** them to **safeguarding** support from CVS & Youth Service colleagues & to the Dudley CVS Volunteer Centre to help them **recruit and manage volunteers**



### This led to Lower Gornal Friday Night Youth Club:

- receiving a **grant of £4,000** to give the club a great kick start
- having a pool of **over 30 volunteers** they can call on so that they can manage a weekly rota of cover for the club
- building a membership of over **40 young people** – at least 30 attend regularly!

# 2015-2016

**18 new groups set up**



- 8 community groups
- 6 social enterprise community interest companies (CICs)
- 4 charitable incorporated organisations (CIOs)



**6** registered as charities

**19 brought their governing documents up to date**



# Unlocking resources and funding

## Supporting a collaborative approach to accessing funding

Back in 2013, Wolverhampton-based charity Believe to Achieve (B2A) contacted the Dudley CVS Funding Officer with an idea to build on one of their successful Lottery funded projects. They wanted to deliver work in Dudley borough that would address the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of children and young people.

Recognising that a funding bid would be stronger if it could demonstrate collaboration, the Dudley CVS Funding Officer encouraged Believe to Achieve to build partnerships with Dudley-based groups, particularly through Dudley's Children, Young People and Families Network, which is supported by Dudley CVS.

This preliminary work led to:



a partnership project developed between B2A, Stourbridge-based The What? Centre and Wolverhampton-based Peer Support Network (PSN). This meant the project could benefit more children and young people as each partner works with different age groups and specialises in different areas



B2A leading on a funding application to Reaching Communities, supported by the Dudley CVS Funding Officer during 2015 over a series of meetings

### This led to:

- The partnership being awarded a three-year grant of **£252,806** from the Reaching Communities programme
- The delivery of wraparound support for wellbeing and mental health of children and young people between the ages of 5 and 18, in school and community settings right across the Dudley borough.





# Supporting organisations to use new technology

## Increasing efficiency with the use of digital tools

One of the challenges facing the voluntary and community sector today is how organisations can make the most out of technology in order to improve efficiency and ultimately support their communities and beneficiaries better. Voluntary and community sector organisations recognise this, but they often lack a combination of time, skills and resources needed to adopt new digital tools that will ultimately improve their work. Dudley CVS's PSIAMS (personal social impact action measurement system) project has been supporting organisations, including local charity Langstone Society's Community Support service, with this challenge throughout the year.

Langstone was a solely paper-based organisation that had a small database, consisting of limited service user contact information. Support workers at Langstone often worked out of the office, having to return to the office at the end of the day to record any new information for each service user they had met that day. The PSIAMS team has supported the transformation to digital tools in the following ways:



converting all paper records into digital format that could be easily accessed and updated



enabling records to be accessed remotely so that support workers could update their service users' information instantly from anywhere



training 35 members of staff to use the new system

### This led to

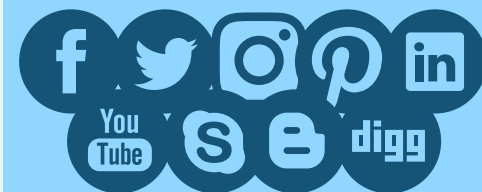
- Increased efficiency for Langstone's Community Support service and time-saving for staff
- More accurate records of the work, outcomes and impact of the service
- Radical reduction in the amount of paper used by the charity
- Langstone planning to roll out PSIAMS across the whole charity.

## Supporting groups with social media

Social media surgeries are a relaxed place to help people to learn how to use the web to communicate, campaign or collaborate.

Participants are paired with a social media surgeon who listens to what they want to do and then demonstrates free and useful social media tools.

This year **12** volunteer surgeons helped **33** people from **24** groups to make the most of social media and free online tools to help them communicate, share and collaborate.





## Bringing the sector together

Dudley CVS recognises that strengthening organisations is about more than supporting them individually to help them to become more effective. It's also about bringing them together with each other and with strategic partners in order to explore how together we can respond to big challenges, which we cannot do in isolation. Today's challenges include widening inequality, which increases demand on dwindling resources, how we can improve resilience in communities and how can we empower people to participate in decisions that affect them.

At local level, Dudley Council is becoming a Community Council, which hopes to support residents and communities to get involved in activities that improve our communities; partnerships are being formed around new models of care for residents' health and wellbeing and the West Midlands Combined Authority is being formed. The voluntary and community sector should be a meaningful participant in these areas of work and Dudley CVS has been ensuring that the sector has a strong voice.

### Levering in hard-to-access funding

In 2014-15, Dudley CVS jointly set up Black Country Together CIC with the three other Black Country CVSs in order to maximise opportunities for the sector, including bidding for work and funding to passport to frontline voluntary sector organisations to deliver great work.

Continuing this work in 2015-16, Dudley CVS and partners:

- Brought together 99 people from voluntary sector organisations across three workshops on the Building Better Opportunities EU funding stream
- Identified and worked with voluntary sector partners that could deliver work through Building Better Opportunities
- Contributed to a Black Country-wide application to Building Better Opportunities

### During the year, we have brought the sector together with partners to contribute to and learn more about:

Working together to improve health and wellbeing

- **105 attendees** over **4 events**

Community Council: how we can work together to realise Dudley Council's vision

Forming a Children's Alliance

Police and Crime Commissioning consultation

HR and employment law, Awards for All funding, social finance and trading and volunteer management training: **120 attendees** across all workshops

# In their words

"A really exceptional service. Without the Funding Officer's support I don't think our bid would have been successful."  
Nick Pratt, CEO, Believe to Achieve

"The team at Dudley CVS are friendly and helpful, therefore even the simplest of enquiries is answered with empathy. Also, the range and breadth of knowledge and experience of the team is exceptional."  
Janice Freeman-Phillips,  
Project Coordinator, Sandwell  
Financial Services Hub

"Dudley CVS provide great support to so many voluntary organisations with a wide variety of different needs. Their advice is second to none - which makes working with volunteers easier for an organisation and should seek to enhance and improve any volunteer experience with an organisation. Keep up the brilliant work."  
Zyllah Moranne-Brown, Head of Marketing and Communications, Black Country Radio

"Your support has helped us secure funding, have the confidence to sit on various boards, represent other voluntary organisations, form meaningful partnerships and help in planning for sustainability."  
Jayne Sargeant, Phase Trust

"Without the Small Groups Officer's involvement I'm not sure how much the group would have developed. She has given us a structure, that means we continue to try and achieve something!"  
Ruth Blackburn, Friends of Hay Green  
Recreation Ground

"We wouldn't have even known where to start if it hadn't been for Dudley CVS. We are now running a very successful youth club with over 70 children registered."  
Lisa Blackham, Lower Gornal Friday Youth Club



"The Funding Officer has a passion for the voluntary sector and we would be lost without his expertise, his knowledge and intelligence."  
Karen Fielder, Top Church  
Training

"I can't believe how much progress we have made in such a short space of time and can't comprehend what things would have been like if I hadn't picked up the phone to arrange that first meeting with the Volunteer Centre Officer."  
Kate Clarke, SWITCH -  
Young Person's Drug &  
Alcohol Project

