



West Watford Outreach Project

Background

Watford CAB was asked to set up a culturally sensitive outreach service based in West Watford primarily to mitigate any negative impact on the West Watford community if the Muslim Community Project were to cease providing a service in the local area.

The funding for the outreach service was for one year and commenced in July 2012. As this was a new service, there was an initial 'set up' period (sourcing suitable accommodation, recruiting staff, publicising the service). It was considered prudent to have the outreach in place from September 2012 as it was not clear when or if the Muslim Community Project would cease providing services.

Considerations of the project from a CAB perspective during the 'set up' period

- Of upmost importance was to maintain CAB aims and principles: free, independent, confidential and impartial advice
- Careful consideration was given to ensure that outreach locations allowed clients to access the service in a confidential way
- The location of the service needed to be selected with the target audiences in mind
- The outreach centre operational principles needed to be in keeping and complimentary to CAB and vice versa
- The outreach worker needed to be confident and capable of working in an outreach capacity
- A risk assessment of the venue and general working conditions needed to be undertaken

Venue

The CAB chose Westfield Children's Centre which was considered to be a suitable venue as it was known that young Muslim women already accessed it for other purposes. However it did have some constraints due to its distance from West Watford (and therefore not being totally suitable for those with mobility difficulties). Whilst there was a telephone advice service operating, it was felt that a second venue would enhance the service..

A doctor's surgery in Upton Rd was approached and would have been a suitable, however despite considerable efforts to secure this, it never came to fruition. This was in part due to the Practice Manager leaving during the negotiations.

Marketing

There were a number of mechanisms used to market the outreach service including the following:

- Sharing posters and emails with other voluntary sector organisations
- Attending parent and baby/ toddler groups in and around West Watford (approx. 10 visited)
- Using Children's' Centre networks to publicise with all local schools
- Asking local Drs surgeries to display poster of service

Ward Councillors were contacted in Nov and Dec via email asking for their assistance in engaging the community as the take up of the project had been slow. There were no responses. However one councillor did agree to meet with us after the CAB Chair spoke to him at an unconnected event. A further email was sent to the councillor suggesting suitable dates but no reply was forthcoming.

Service Statistics for the Outreach Project

The project was operational from September 2012 (following the 'set up' period) until July 2013.

Number of sessions held	76
Total number of clients	38 (one per week the project was available) see below
Number of full appointments	30

Client demographics

- 60.5% were from West Watford
- 92% from Watford (as some people living in other local boroughs attended Westfield Children's Centre
- 84% were women
- nearly 8% disabled
- 47% were from non-White ethnic backgrounds
- 26% were from non-White British backgrounds.

Potential reasons for low take-up

- The Muslim Community Project continued to operate a service until March 2013. Users from that part of the community who would have accessed the Muslim Community Project would not have necessarily needed to have used the services of the CAB outreach project during the same period
- Location was a factor and will be key in future outreach initiatives
- The constraints of having a time limited project which had to be operational in a short timeframe had an impact due to the lack of time for robust planning and preparation

Future Outreach Projects – Lessons Learned and Future Considerations

- It is worth taking more time to source multiple venues at the start of a project
- Considerable time and effort is needed to be spent publicising the project and venues
- Significant resources are needed to engage with the community and develop awareness and trust
- The reputation of the project is focused on the workers delivering it and must be of the highest quality
- The resources taken away from Bureau activities to support the project may be greater than might be expected

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