

‘Let’s Talk...at The Link’

**Report of ‘Let’s Talk...at The Link’
Friday 18th March 2011**

Forum4Age working together with Neighbourhood Care Network
project & Oldham Community Leisure Ltd
Oldham Council/Age Concern Oldham/OCLL

April 2011

Background

The 'Let's Talk' event held at The Link Centre is part of an ongoing programme of awareness-raising events jointly co-ordinated by Forum4Age, Neighbourhood Care Network, and Oldham Community Leisure Ltd (OCLL). The event was an opportunity to provide information about ***The Cuts – the national perspective*** and the **Future of Forum4Age**.

Consultation with older people has told us that:

- Services do not 'talk to each other' or share information effectively.
- There needs to be more effective signposting and support to help older people to find the services and activities most appropriate for their needs.
- Older people do not always know what services there are and how to access them.
- Older people want to be involved in the development of local services.

Therefore, the aims of 'Let's Talk' events are:

- To raise awareness about local activities and borough-wide services.
- To provide a platform for services to inform the public about what they do.
- To offer an opportunity for consultation about locally relevant issues and/or the chance for service providers to consult about their project developments.
- To create dialogue between people and service providers.
- To provide a mix of interactive activities and development activities to appeal to a wide audience.

About the event

Approximately 61 people attended the event. Oldham Council's Deputy Leader and Champion of Services for Older People, Councillor Jackie Stanton attended the event to deliver the welcome speech. Councillor Stanton was also available to answer questions.

The main aim of the event was to provide information to forum members on the future of forum4Age and to provide a national perspective on the Cuts. The Cuts! Presentation was delivered by John Chapman from Oldham Link. Carl Bell, Head of Community Services Oldham Council provided an overview of the situation in Oldham and Forum4Age developments for moving forward.

Programme

- 10.30am** **Welcome & Housekeeping**
Christine Wilson
- 10.45am** **Welcome**
Deputy Leader - Cllr Jackie Stanton
- 11am** **The Cuts! What's happening?**
The National Perspective
John Chapman – Oldham LINK
- 11.30am** **Future of Forum4Age**
Carl Bell – Oldham Council
- 12.15pm** **Questions**
- 12.30pm** **Lunch**

Future of the forum and next steps

Forum4Age has been taken forward into the re-alignment of services in Oldham Council's Community Capacity Team. Although the Co-ordinator post is safe, from April there will be no running costs attached. We are therefore looking at ways to develop the forum to enable the good work to continue. At the meeting we discussed the situation and have agreed to start to work on how the group might move towards independence.

The next steps will be to set up a steering group made up of forum members to look at constituting the group.

Feedback

(42 responses)

Feedback from evaluation forms

People were asked to complete an evaluation form regarding the event.

What were the good bits?

- I thought that all of the speakers were very good. It is difficult to anticipate what questions would be asked.
- All of it.
- Very relevant questions and answers. The presentations were very informative. The lovely lunch.
- John's explanation of the deficit was excellent.
- John Chapman's informative presentation. Carl Bell's explanation of the present situation. Vis-à-vis OMBC position and how it may affect organisations such as Forum4Age.
- Attendance indicates interest – publicise group and its meeting dates in local press, talking newspaper etc.
- A resumé of the national financial situation. Local issues and future of Forum4Age.
- The views of our representative were very good. I think we all agree with them. Good work Ron.
- Ron's information. More please. Carl's information.
- Carl Bell's interesting information. Wrong question put to him after. Carl wants volunteers to keep forum going.
- Talk by Carl Bell very interesting. Trying to get over that he needs people to volunteer to keep forum going.
- Talk by John Chapman very interesting. Question and answer session.
- Was very interesting. Liked how you went at the group's pace, you answered all the questions asked possibly honestly.
- The continuation of Forum4Age and its current staff who have provided an excellent service.
- Glad to hear Forum4Age will continue.
- I really always enjoy attending these meetings. I find them very

interesting.

- Informative.
- Coffee and lunch.
- Putting us in the picture regarding how our money is spent.
- Some very good points raised.
- I enjoyed John Chapman. Found it very interesting, learned things I didn't know about.
- Received much information. Very interesting. Well presented.
- Friendly and amusing. Well presented. Delicious lunch. Good venue.
- At last the finances were made clear by John Chapman (well done)
- Good services happening in Oldham.
- Councillor Jackie Stanton. Explained what is happening in Oldham.
- Today's meeting was informative and well presented.
- LUNCH. Keeping us informed at all levels from the 1st stage to the end product.
- The presentation about the financial situation.
- Meeting other people. Information of finance (reason for cuts). Information of help.
- A welcome with refreshments and mix with others.
- Presentation. Intelligent questions and answers. Quite interesting throughout.
- I found the speakers tried hard to give information. But I feel it doesn't help because there was nothing definite of facts given. Everything is still in the air.
- It was all good and found the afternoon talk very enlightening.
- The questions being asked quite a good number.
- Everything was explained in a language we could understand.
- The question and answer session at the end. The presentation to do with why Britain is in its current financial mess.
- Having a voice. Keeping fun in the serious subjects.
- Information about friends and neighbours scheme. Meeting new people and seeing some old faces. Good that old people can have a voice.
- There were good speakers and questions.
- Clear information, good presentations.

Is there anything we can improve for our next event?

- Collect pens after meeting – it costs a lot to provide them and people were taking them home.
- Not really. Just keep up the good work in this building.
- At next event publicise dates of future meetings in order to save postage.
- Better use of microphones when people are discussing issues away from speaker.
- Better use of microphone please. Can't always hear the questions people ask, many of which are not able to be answered.

- At question time could question be addressed by person standing to “all” so that we understand what the speaker is answering and possible feedback from original question “i.e. chit chat” follow up, i.e. better use of microphone.
- You have done a good job again.
- No you all do brilliant.
- No
- My first time here so couldn't say at this moment in time.
- Involvement of forum members in future developments.
- More information of forum members.
- Please continue to let us have feed back from questions asked.
- Update due to development. Regular feed back.
- Improvement for hard of hearing.
- No babies nor children to be allowed to attend. Although the baby here today (18.3.11) wasn't naughty. It was still distracting. More efficient microphones please.
- Stronger microphones.
- Everything very enjoyable.
- Make sure all use the mike so everyone can hear.
- No.
- At some events have service user's presentations. We need to use the Oldham Centre for Independent Living more.
- Stop people grinding their axes and trying to be comical.
- Information re Ring-A-Ride. Reason for cuts of lunch clubs (finance?).
- Although good points were mentioned, more facts from speakers are to be known before asking questions. Please to hear more information of different groups. I.e. friends and neighbours
- I really enjoy the meeting but it will be great if speakers could be a bit more positive !!! Then something can be done for all of us.
- Yes, make sure we make our voice heard, when we are kept informed.
- Email addresses. Save on postage. (I know some people don't have them) A list of self help groups so word of mouth gets passed around.
- Try to have right information for the questions people asked. Thought Carl dodged some questions, why come but not answer truthfully.

Any other feedback

- I do not think that Forum4Age is well publicised also, a lot of people are of the opinion that the Link Centre is only for people in wheelchairs.
- This is my first meeting. Found it very informative. Look forward to attending many more and I am prepared to help in any way I can
- Very useful and informative. Welcoming as usual.
- I look forward to the next Forum4Age meeting.
- Perhaps volunteers to help with basic admin – addressing and stuffing envelopes etc.

- Why not keep the Link as it is. Other names could be added as being used at The Link after all the Link does just that Links everything together.
- Look forward to the next event. Thanks for everything. Look forward to lunch.
- Look forward to our next event. Thank you for the lunch.
- Lunch very surprising. Thought we were only getting tea and biscuits.
- Really enjoyed it as I said it was my first time here and I tried to be open minded. Will go away and reflect on what I have heard. Perhaps could have some discussion re health issues what the government intend to do.
- More specific information from the council when funds are available and for financial information to be available to all groups in the public domain.
- Everyone very welcoming.
- I think that perhaps Forum4Age should advertise in the free papers, libraries, community centres and shops etc.
- Enjoyable and informative.
- Save costs of postage to give the list of dates per year.
- Thanks for the information we would not have access to if we did not have a Forum4Age.
- Please when someone talks please use microphone.
- I feel that the name 'Link Centre' should be kept, as most people know it as this.
- We need to use co-production for promoting the Oldham Centre for Independent Living with Oldham LINK.
- Minimum mention of auditing or maintaining the services provided. No mention of the incompetence of communication.
- Very pleasant staff. Interesting speakers.
- Interesting meeting, questions asked etc. Friendly atmosphere and staff very friendly and willing to listen and give information concerning the cuts.
- The staff are always kind and helpful. The refreshments were good as always.
- We want the Link building well advertised and better known.
- We all mostly have questions on specific subjects that may be worrying us. Could there be meetings or questions so that these worries could be discussed.
- Carl described how he envisages money coming to LAs for projects via the local authority. Does this mean that VAO who currently have a block of money for which community groups can bid, will no longer exist?
- We need to be kept up to date.
- I was really pleased I took the time to come to this meeting.
- Keep the name Link Centre as the people of Oldham know this name and venue. The new name is too long winded.
- We think the name the Link is better as it is as it rolls off the tongue easy. The other words are too long winded.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all participants of the event, our partner agencies for their involvement in the event, and the Deputy Leader and Champion of Services for Older People for showing their support. We would also like to thank all our speakers.