



Cllr Jeff Edwards, Carl Sargeant AM, Ian Davy and Samia Saeed Cwm Taf Health Board

Snowy but Successful AGM

Despite an unexpected heavy snowfall, more than 80 representatives of third sector organisations across the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough attended VAMT's AGM at the Bessemer Hotel on 2 December 2010.

They heard keynote speeches from the Minister for Local Government and Social Justice, Carl Sargeant AM and Gareth Chapman, Chief Executive of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. The Minister also launched the three Codes of Practice which have been adopted under the Merthyr Tydfil Compact.

During his speech, Mr Sargeant gave his personal commitment to the continuation of Communities First in some way after 2012. He said "at the moment I have 800

Communities First staff in Wales. We have invested in people who are changing lives in our communities. We cannot turn our back on the most deprived communities. Post 2012 there will be a Communities something. . . while I am in charge, Communities First will not be closing in 2012, there will be something to replace it".

Meanwhile, Gareth Chapman spoke of the increasing importance of the third sector at a time of public sector cuts. He said "we need to ask if the council needs to provide every service, or can we do it better with our third sector colleagues? Partnerships in the third sector in Merthyr Tydfil are already good and we need to build on that foundation".

The three Codes of Practice which were launched relate to Volunteering, Partnership Working and Mediation and Disputes Resolution.

The Compact is a partnership agreement between the voluntary sector and the public sector in Merthyr Tydfil as represented by Merthyr Council and Cwm Taf Health Board. It provides a structure which will assist the ability of public and voluntary sector partners to improve the quality of life for the people of the County Borough.

**Forsythia Youth
Project success**

See page 5

Welcome

... to the February edition of Inform in 2011. Our aim is to provide our members with up to date news and information and we welcome contributions and feedback from all readers of the newsletter.

This month, we have updates on:

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YOU can be a part of this magazine too!

If you would like to include an article, news item or focus on your group in the next edition (April 2011) contact VAMT enquiries by 5 March for more information. Contact details, tel: 01685 353900 or e-mail: enquiries@vamt.net

Adverts/Leaflets Policy

In each Inform we are able to insert adverts and up to 5 different leaflets from member or private organisations. We have a rate card for private agencies who wish to advertise or place inserts in Inform, prices start from £25. There is a rate card for voluntary organisations for charges covering pre-printed inserts and inserts that need to be copied. Contact VAMT enquiries on 01685 353900 or enquiries@vamt.net.

VAMT's Board

Brian Lewis	Chair
Eric Leslie	Vice Chair
Paul Gray	Treasurer
John Meredith MBE	
Dr Arthur Jones	
David Guard	
Jenny Ludlow	
Helen Thomas	
Nicola Mahoney	

Our offices

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OFFICE STAFF

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Laura Johnson	Admin & Finance Officer
Tanya Price	Clerical Assistant
Derek Emanuel	ICT Officer
Nikolai Batowski	VITAL Clerical Assistant
Lesley Dobson	Communities First Programme Manager
Elaine James	Evolve Project Co-ordinator & Carers Strategy Development Officer
Nicola Sofianos	Evolve Support Officer
Margaret McLaughlin	Commissioning Policy Development Project Officer
Sharon Richards	Health & Social Care Facilitator
Caroline Jones	Expert Patient Programme Co-ordinator
Alison Harris	Partnership Development Officer
Carol Van Den Berg	Engagement Gateway Local Liaison Officer
Pam Lucas	3-2-3 Project Officer
Karen Foley	Volunteering Officer
Frances Barry	Youth Volunteering Advisor /Volunteering Officer
Sarah Farr	Volunteer Clerical Assistant
Michelle Powell	Town & Park Communities First Co-ordinator
Rhonda Braithwaite	Town & Park Communities First Development Officer
Clair Houston	Town & Park Communities First Development Officer
Nicola Davies	Town & Park Communities First Administrative Assistant

Trefechan Communities First Office

Number 16, The Flats, The Green, Trefechan CF48 2EU
Tel: (01685) 383758

Alyson King	Community Development Co-ordinator
Sally McIntyre	Community Development Officer
Louise Saunders	Development Support Officer

Dowlais Community Development Forum

20-20a Spring Road, Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 3RR
Tel: (01685) 389445

Jonathan McLoughlin	(Acting) Communities 1st Co-ordinator
Lisa Toghill	Communities 1st Co-ordinator (maternity leave)
Cheryl Sneddon	Temporary CF Development Officer (maternity Cover)
James Hawker	Youth Inclusion Worker
Linda Bevan	Administrator (maternity cover)
Hayley Jenkins	Communities First Development Officer
Caroline Jones	Temporary Communities First Development Officer
Helen Lewis	Community Support Officer

Focus On

Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO)

VOLUNTARY
ACTION
GWEITHREDU
GWIRFODDOL

Registered Charity Number 1015581

'Improving Lives in Coalfield Communities'



CISWO was established in 1952 to provide welfare provision for the men and women who worked in the nationalised mining industry. Despite the demise of the industry CISWO is still very much operational and currently serves former mineworkers and their dependants throughout former coalfield areas.

CISWO has a number of functions, but is primarily a service-providing charity. It operates a home-visiting social work service, where trained and experienced staff offer advice and support in relation to:

- Financial assistance for those suffering from financial hardship
- Benefits advice
- Bereavement support and counselling
- Help with independent living and convalescence

CISWO has access to funds unavailable through any other source and is actively seeking out mining beneficiaries who can benefit from their service. If you are aware of anyone who may need our help please get in touch. CISWO also administers the Court Royal Convalescent Home in Bournemouth. The home acts as a charitable organisation offering subsidised accommodation for former South Wales mineworkers and their wives/widows wishing to enjoy a break in the seaside resort.

CISWO also helps support the network of miners welfare organisations in South Wales. One such Welfare still active in the borough of Merthyr Tydfil is Bedlinog Miners Welfare Association. CISWO has been instrumental in helping regularise the affairs of the association, bringing on board new trustees and gaining charitable status whilst helping engage with the local community to revive the fortunes of the Welfare.



Court Royal

A Social Inclusion Officer is employed, part of whose role is attending social groups and OAP clubs to talk about CISWO services. CISWO would welcome invitations from groups, especially those with a large mining related contingent. To view all of CISWO's services in the South Wales area please visit www.minerswelfare.org which is a one-stop-shop for information and services available to mining beneficiaries in South Wales.

CISWO, Unit 5, Maritime Offices,
Woodland Terrace, Maesycod,
Pontypridd CF37 1DZ

Tel. 01443 485233

Email: SouthWales@ciswo.org.uk

Website: www.ciswo.org
or www.minerswelfare.org

NEWS

Alarms for a safer Trefechan

A Communities First Trust Fund grant of £4800 has enabled the Wednesday Club of Trefechan to purchase and fit 50 home alarms to prevent vulnerable people from becoming victims of opportunist burglars, who attempt to gain entry to homes via open doors or windows. Safer Merthyr Tydfil has been installing these alarms with assistance from the Communities First team in the area. One person who has benefited is Mrs Tracey Powell, parent and resident of Trefechan who said "As a parent

with young children the alarm alerts me when the children answer or open the door",

Nigel Roberts of Safer Merthyr Tydfil said: "Trefechan is a low crime area and safe to live in. Burglary campaigns and the alarms project are both helping keep Trefechan safe."

For more information on alarms and home safety please contact Safer Merthyr Tydfil on **01685 353999**.



Trefechan's Wednesday Club



Local Parkinson's UK Support Group Meeting

Parkinson's UK – the support and research charity – is passionate about finding a cure and improving life for everyone affected by Parkinson's. The Merthyr Tydfil Group offers information, friendship and support to local people with Parkinson's, their families and carers to make sure that no one has to face Parkinson's alone. You can be assured of a warm welcome. Members have said that joining this group has been of enormous benefit to them and that from going to the monthly meeting they have gained friendship, support, information and reassurance.

PARKINSON'S^{UK}
CHANGE ATTITUDES.
FIND A CURE.
JOIN US.

If you would like any further information about the group please contact **Clair Houston** at Communities First Town and Park on **01685 353944**.

The next Meeting of the Merthyr Tydfil Parkinson's Support Group is on **Wednesday 2nd March, 2.30pm** in the John Meredith Room at Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil.

Forsythia Youth Project Win National Award



Forsythia Youth Project were advised that they were regional finalists in the Philip Lawrence Awards back in November last year and were invited to attend a star studded award ceremony in London on 7 December 2010.

The ceremony was hosted by Trevor McDonald at the British Academy of Film and Television Art (BAFTA). At the ceremony it was announced that Forsythia Youth Project had won a prestigious national award in recognition of their inspiring achievements within their community.

Representatives of the young people of Forsythia Youth Centre received their award from Frances Lawrence, widow of Philip Lawrence, and the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, the Secretary of State for Education. Eight young people attended the ceremony with Terry Bence, the Chair of the 3G's Development Trust, Forsythia Youth Centre staff and Darrren Bird, Chief Executive of Funky Dragon.

Other guests at the event included Katharine, Duchess of Kent, Will Young, Home Secretary Theresa May and Baroness Newlove who mingled with the award winners.

The Philip Lawrence Awards happen once a year in December. They celebrate groups of young

people who are making a difference in their communities – breaking down barriers, tackling issues, strengthening communities and making lives better for themselves and others. The Philip Lawrence Awards were set up in memory of Head Teacher Philip Lawrence who was killed outside his school in 1995 after going to the aid of a pupil who was being attacked by a gang. Philip believed in the huge potential of young people to make a difference and to achieve great things.

Forsythia Youth Project are a huge credit to the 3G's area and are showing the nation a positive image of Merthyr Tydfil. Forsythia Youth Project will now become part the awards fellowship which means they will be on the judging panel for future awards and ambassadors for young people leading the way in making communities stronger and safer.

More information on the Philip Lawrence Awards and images and videos of the National Award winners and award ceremony can be found at **www.philiplawrenceawards.net**

For further information on Forsythia Youth Project please contact **Geraldine Maddison** on **01685 384428**.

NEWS

CRUSE Bereavement Care Training on Offer

CRUSE Bereavement Care are seeking participants to take part on their next volunteer training course. After training people become trained Bereavement Support workers, which is a really worthwhile thing to do. Volunteers can make lots of new friends and receive on-going training to help with the work.

The deadline for applications has been extended until the end of February. Application forms can be obtained from the office at Cruse Bereavement Care, 3, Cannon Street, Aberdare.

Tel. **01685 876020** or

via **Merthyr.rct@cruse.org.uk**

New Health Board Chief Executive

Mrs Margaret Foster, Chief Executive, is retiring from the Health Board after many years service in the NHS and the Cwm Taf area. A recruitment process was undertaken in November/December, involving a UK wide advertisement. **Allison Williams**, currently the LHB Director of Primary Care and Mental Health, has been appointed as the new Chief Executive, and will take up post at the beginning of March.



New Website Launch for Merthyr Tydfil Community Safety Partnership



Merthyr Tydfil Community Safety Partnership is a multi-agency partnership working together to reduce crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour in Merthyr Tydfil. The Partnership is committed to making the borough a safer place to live, work and visit.

The website at **www.mtcsp.org.uk** allows visitors to find out about past community safety initiatives and current projects, access useful publications and keep up to date with news and events, as well as enabling the public to contact the Partnership about any community safety concerns.

The Partnership is keen to know about issues which face local communities and to work along

side communities to resolve them. Some of the ways they are doing this are through working with local Councillors, local PACT (Partners and Communities together) Meetings, Crime Stoppers (0800 555111) Neighbourhood Watch (07830 525398), and Safer Merthyr Tydfil (01685 353999)

For more information visit the Partnership's new website, or email **info@mtcsp.org.uk**

Did you know that charities now need to apply online to register with the Charity Commission?

The online registration system is quick and easy to use. All that is needed is an e-mail address and password which can be ordered from the Commission's website. It is possible to save an application and return to work on it later.

Using the Commission's website makes it easier, faster and more convenient for charities to deal with them online. Registration is a good example of this. They can, on average, process applications submitted online in half the time of those on paper and now nearly two-thirds of all new charities apply to register online.

As well as online registration, the Commission also has a new range of online forms – in Welsh and English – designed to help trustees manage their charities more easily. These forms include:

- Applying to vest charity land in the Official Custodian;
- Letting them know that one or more charities have merged; and
- Removing a charity from the Central Register.

The Charity Commission is continually seeking to improve its online systems to meet charities' needs, and are constantly upgrading the system in response to feedback from charities. Their aim is to have all services online by 2012.

Cancer Aid Charity Shop has Moved

Cancer Aid Merthyr Tydfil have merged their two highly successful charity shops. Their new premises, to be officially launched later this year is at Unit 1, Y Ganolfan, North Street, Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil CF48 3LT, telephone **(01685) 371848**.

Changes to the Housing Benefit system

The Government has announced many changes to the current Housing Benefit System. The first changes relate to Local Housing Allowance claimants as they will no longer be able to receive a 'top up' payment. Also the maximum room rate will now be restricted to that of a 4-bedroom property regardless of the size of the family. A lot of claimants living in Merthyr Tydfil will be affected by this change. All affected claimants are being written to personally to advise them of the changes. Information will shortly be available on the authority's website and also in the local press & Contact magazine.

For further details, please contact the **Benefit Section** direct on **01685 725116** or email at **benefits@merthyr.gov.uk**.

Dementia Forum

Alzheimer's Society | Leading the fight against dementia

Cwm Taff Alzheimer's Society held its first Dementia Forum in December. These will be a regular event taking place in both Merthyr and RCT. These forums are a way of people who are affected by Dementia gain information on development of services, and also give them a chance to express their own views.

For information on further Forum meetings, contact **Helen Abberley** on **01685 353919**

VAMT NEWS

Staff Changes

In December and January we said goodbye to **Kristopher Wise**, **Lee Price** and **Richard Williams**, while in December, **Nikolai Batowski** joined VAMT as VITAL Clerical Assistant, all as part of the Future Jobs Fund scheme.

A new volunteer, **Simon Williams**, has been welcomed into the VITAL ICT project, while **Caroline Jones** has been appointed temporary Development Officer based at Dowlais Forum.

Important - Changes to Inform Circulation

From April 2011, Inform will only be distributed to member organisations in both the interests of economy, and also to encourage more non-member organisations to join VAMT. So, if you want to continue to receive your copy of Inform and find out what's going on in the sector, please contact us for a membership form, or visit our website at **www.vamt.net**

Membership is free of charge. If you are uncertain as to whether your organisation is a member or not, please contact **Laura Johnson** on **01685 353902** or email her at **laura.johnson@vamt.net**

New "Service Providers Network"

In October, VAMT held a conference entitled "The Big Challenge" looking at collaboration, efficiency and innovation in the face of public service cuts. The event was jointly organised with VAMT's sister CVC, Interlink, in RCT. The event heard presentations on how the Third Sector can respond to cuts in public expenditure, how to develop opportunities through social enterprise approaches and heard case studies on impressive work in Gellideg and Penrhys.

During the event a Merthyr Tydfil-focussed discussion group was held which was helpfully joined by Gareth Chapman, the new Chief Executive for Merthyr Tydfil Council. As third sector organisations it was agreed to do some thinking on what public services the third sector might be interested in providing in future. It was

agreed to hold a follow up meeting to look at establishing a "Service Providers Network" in Merthyr Tydfil and the first meeting was held in December. The offer to meet with Gareth Chapman was accepted and in order to prepare for this meeting a questionnaire has been issued to organisations asking them what services they currently provide to the public, what services provided by the Council might they be interested in providing and how they currently measure the added value of their services? The responses to the questionnaires are currently being compiled.

About 35 service providing organisations have been invited to the meetings. If you wish to be added please contact Ian Davy on **ian.davy@vamt.net** or by telephone on **01685 353912**.

Celebrating Merthyr's Volunteers – VAMT Voluntary Action Awards 2011

Preparations for this year's annual celebration of volunteers in Merthyr Tydfil are already underway. The event will once again recognise the many volunteers who give their time and energy to community groups and projects throughout the county borough.

This year's categories for the Outstanding Achievement Awards are:

- Adult Volunteer of the Year
- Young Volunteer of the Year
- Group/Organisation of the Year
- Adult Learner through Volunteering Award of the Year
- Young Learner through Volunteering Award of the Year
- Adult Carer of the Year
- Young Carer of the Year
- Volunteering into Employment Award of the Year
- Trustee of the Year (this category includes management committee and board members)

There will also be a new Award Category supported by South Wales Police. Please support the awards and volunteers across the borough by making a nomination.

Further information will be available in April's edition of Inform, but if you have any queries, please contact **Karen Foley** on **01685 353913** or **Frances Barry** on **01685 353902**.



VAMT Award Winners 2010

Alzheimers Society Seek Volunteer Befrienders

Earlier this year Befriending Manager Kathy Jones Williams started a befriending service which has been very successful, but our need for more volunteers is growing. Volunteer Befrienders are placed with people who have similar interests as themselves. This gives a person living with dementia independence and helps build their confidence.

For further information please contact **Kathy** on **01685 353919** or one of VAMT's Volunteer Centre staff.

PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORK NEWS

Children and Young People's Partnership

The consultation period had now begun for the Merthyr Tydfil Draft Children & Young People's Single Plan 2011-14. The consultation period ends on 22 March 2011, and the Children and Young People's Partnership would actively encourage you to feedback your views as they are very interested in what you have to say.

VAMT will hold a consultation session on **Wednesday 16th Feb 2011 10am – 12pm** at the **Voluntary Action Centre** where you will be able to feed your views into a collective response.

The CYP Partnership Planning Team will collate

all responses and pass them onto the Children and Young People's Partnership Board for consideration. The final version of the plan has to be approved by the County Borough Council and will be formally adopted during April 2011. It will then be published on the MTCBC website.

An Executive Summary and a Children & Young People's Friendly version is also available through the medium of English & Welsh. For copies, please contact the Partnership Planning Team on **01685 724687**. The Plan and a short questionnaire are also available on our website **www.vamt.net**

Public and Third-Sector Scrutiny

At Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council members of the public have been co-opted onto the Council's Scrutiny committees. The Council has 4 Directorate aligned Scrutiny Panels. Each of the 4 Scrutiny Panels has 2 non-voting co-opted members who have been appointed following advertisements in the local paper and Contact magazine.

A very new development is that the Council has been working with VAMT to appoint Third Sector Representation to each Scrutiny Panel. It has been agreed that VAMT manage the process of selecting and supporting the third sector co-optees. The process is similar to that of the Council in that the places are advertised through Inform, Network News and email, and interested applicants are sent an application form. The applicant has to be connected to a VAMT member organisation and link to VAMT Forums. This is to ensure the wider connection between the co-opted representatives and the third sector in Merthyr Tydfil. We are also working with the Council, and the Scrutiny Committees and the Co-optees, to develop strong links with the VAMT forums, networks, and members. This will enable the voice of service users to be included in the whole process.

We now have a Third Sector co-opted member (non-voting) to each Scrutiny Panel, listed below in addition to the two public appointed co-opted members. They are:

Nicola Mahoney (Safer Merthyr Tydfil) - *Chief Executive and Corporate Centre Scrutiny Committee*

Debra Roberts (Merthyr and the Valleys MIND) *Social Services and Social Regeneration Scrutiny Committee*

Teresa Bradley (SNAP Cymru) *Schools, Governance and Technical Services Scrutiny Committee*

To date all co-opted members have contributed greatly to the scrutiny process and fully participate at meetings, including taking the lead role in task and finish groups and providing specific information to committees where their background and experience has been relevant to the review being undertaken.. There is still have one Third Sector place available on the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee. If you would like more information or an application form please contact **Alison Harris** on **01685 353915** or email **alison.harris@vamt.net**

Localities Vision for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf

Earlier this year the Minister for Health and Social Care published ‘Setting the Direction: Primary & Community Services Strategic Framework’. The premise for ‘Setting the Direction’ is to move away from the traditional silos of care towards an integrated model built around the needs of our citizens.

The Health Board and Local Authorities have commenced work on scoping this change.

It is proposed that co-ordinated health and social care services are organised within 4 Localities - Merthyr Tydfil, Cynon, Rhondda and Taff Ely. These localities will be the core structural building block of community services. Having populations of circa 55-60,000 (which is considered to be critical mass for locality areas), the crucial concepts relating to localities are that :

- their boundaries are agreed between health and social care, and be meaningful in terms of geography, natural communities and functions such as patient flows;
- their focus is primarily on the citizen (and relevant agent/advocate) rather than on professionals and organisations;
- they are of a population size which enables effective and efficient delivery of community services;
- they are led by multi-sector locality leadership teams which will include clinical lead and social services members, who will drive locality service planning and be responsible for service delivery.
- they are able to utilise the full community based resource, responding to local needs and, where appropriate, create truly integrated multi-professional teams across health and social care
- they utilise joint leadership to lower the boundaries between and within organisations and professional groups;

- they have clearly specified budgets and resource availability and move towards joint accountability for performance and resource utilisation;
- they build up a network of health, social care and third sector services, driven by the needs of each locality area;
- they actively strive towards developing improved communication mechanisms between organisations;
- they engage with others (e.g. WAG) to establish an evidence-base for what works and what does not work in integrating health and social care and managing changes appropriately.

Services will be brought together across health and social care in phases. The aim is to create integrated, citizen-focused teams of workers from adult social care and community-based health staff in the following client areas and in the following order:

- People with a physical disability or chronic condition (principally older people)
- Mental Health Services (including older people’s mental health); and
- Learning Disability Services

The localities will have a single line management model (which could be drawn from any one of the partner agencies or professions). Clinical and Professional Social Care leadership will be built into the structure and is an important aspect to ensuring the successful implementation of the Localities model. As the locality development progresses the role of the Third Sector will become clearer.

Jenny Ludlow is a Third Sector Independent member of Cwm Taf LHB and contributes news to each edition of Inform.

PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORK NEWS

Partnership Rationalisation

There could be lots of changes afoot in the 'partnership arena'! Along with the development of a new Community Plan, we are now in a consultation period for the update of the Children and Young People's Plan and the Health Social Care and Wellbeing Plan. With all of this happening in a short space of time, there has been also been some discussion about aligning some of the Partnerships and subgroups more closely together. We don't have any more information at this point in time but as soon as we know we will pass on the information. Watch this space for updates!

Commissioning Policy Development Project

As reported in the last issue of Inform, Commission Accomplished: the Public Sector Code of Practice for Commissioning Third Sector Services in Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf was presented to the joint meeting of the two Local Service Boards in November 2010. The Code of Practice was approved by the meeting and is now in the process of being adopted by partner organisations.

It is planned to hold an event in June 2011 to launch the Commission Accomplished Code of Practice and website. Also look out for workshops to raise awareness of the Code of Practice and training to support its implementation.

Project updates including On a Mission Briefings can be found on the VAMT and Interlink websites www.vamt.net and www.interlinkrct.org.uk

Third Sector Mapping to Inform Cwm Taf Communications Hub

Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT), together with Interlink in RCT are currently undertaking a mapping exercise to create a directory of services which will inform the Cwm Taf Health Board Communications Hub. The Hub will be the one-stop shop for all health and social care services in the Cwm Taf area and will be accessed by professionals and the public alike.

Call handlers/Care 'schedulers' in the Hub will be receiving care plans from clinicians and social workers and will match patients' needs to available services.

In order for them to refer to YOUR services, they need to be held within the Hub database! That can only happen if you complete the questionnaire which is on our website and return it to us!

The data will then be compiled by VAMT and Interlink to inform the Communications Hub, which is due to become fully operational from April 2011. We value your support with this project which will further help to raise the profile of the Third Sector in our area. If you have any query in relation to the mapping / Communications Hub then contact

Sharon Richards on **01685 353932** or sharon.richards@vamt.net

Community Transport Forum

We have had a request to extend membership of the Merthyr Tydfil Community Transport Forum to Community Transport providers in RCT. The purpose of this is to promote better co-ordinated services across both County Boroughs particularly around transport to health journeys.

Please contact **Alison Harris** on 01685 353915 or email alison.harris@vamt.net for further information.

Lloyds TSB Foundation Update

While the budget for the main Community Programme has yet to be confirmed, during 2010 a total of £1,148, 700 was awarded to charities in Wales. In addition £508, 100 was secured via their Criminal Justice System – Mental Health grant programme (now closed).

Lloyds TSB Foundation funding between 2007 and 2010 has been analysed by geography and by issue, in order to ensure that areas targeted in 2011 will be those that have been under-funded. However, charities across Wales who work with disadvantaged people are encouraged to make an on-line enquiry. Primarily grants will range from £10,000 to £20,000 but there can and will be exceptions.

The Foundation are specifically interested in smaller and medium sized charities with a turnover of less than £500,000 although they will consider local, area and regional organisations with a turnover of up to £1M. Charities are encouraged visit their web site **www.lloydstsbfoundations.org.uk** and complete the initial online enquiry when they have a firm proposal to present.

Eligibility criteria are available on the website. The main points include:

- Registered charities with a financial track record, including independently examined or audited accounts of at least one year registered with the Charity Commission
- Charities work must address their mission statement (enable disadvantaged people to play a fuller role in the community of their choice) and look to deliver services and activities that produce the following benefits:
 - Improved social and community involvement
 - Improved life choices and chances
 - Helping people to be heard
- In terms of `geography`, work primarily within the most deprived areas e.g. LSOA's in the top 20% or in terms of `communities of interest` clearly specify the disadvantaged client group and the evidence of need.
- Charity Commission returns are up to date and not overdue

VAMT Capital Small Grant successes

The following groups were successful in their applications for funding at the first closing date for 2010-11:

- Cylch Meithrin Beddllwynog
- Cymdeithas Gymraeg Beddllwynog/Bedlinog Welsh Association
- Merthyr Care and Repair
- Merthyr Youth Creative Development Project
- St John the Baptist Church
- Merthyr Sensory Group
- Cylch Cyfansawdd Treharris
- Georgetown Boys and Girls Club
- The Willows Centre

The second, and final, round for the year closed on 31 January 2011.

We are awaiting confirmation of any monies which will be available to us for 2011-12.

Total Care Support Solutions (TCSS)

A wholly owned subsidiary of Crossroads Care Cwm Taf

Crossroads Care Cwm Taf provides practical support to carers throughout Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taff. Our aim is to relieve the pressure on the carer, to allow them time to be themselves and avoid a breakdown of care. Trained care support workers look after the cared for in their own homes for an agreed regular period of time.

Some of our projects are funded by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and referrals are made through social workers. However our services are available to purchase on a private basis and we would be pleased to provide you with a quote. Our care team is based in Pontypridd and can be contacted on **01443 480484**

Our subsidiary company, TCSS, was set up as a result of regular requests for services which Crossroads Care did not undertake or from people without carers. Initially we referred on to other agencies but eventually decided that we should set up a community interest company to carry out these jobs.

With the assistance of grant funding we were able to employ two staff, one handyman and one

cleaner. We started to advertise our services and two years later have a database of over 100 clients.

Today we have one full time handyman and three part time cleaning staff. To date the most common type of jobs we have carried out include gardening, decorating, handyman services, cleaning and other domestic tasks, shopping, escorting to hospital appointments, picking up and returning inpatient washing, taking people shopping and numerous other things. We are happy to undertake the small jobs that no one else will do.

As TCSS is a separate company it is not restricted to any geographical area and our clients do not have to be, or have, a carer. All services are chargeable and the profit goes directly back to Crossroads Care to support our primary services of caring for carers. Our prices start from £10 per hour for cleaning and larger jobs are priced separately with a fixed quote provided.

TCSS is wholly by the Crossroads Care Cwm Taf charity, is covered by the full range of insurance cover and follows the Association's policy and procedures. Please call us on **01685 382366** with your requirements and we will be happy to give you a price.

Merthyr Valleys Homes hamper help

Merthyr Valleys Homes spread Christmas cheer over the festive period, by delivering more than 250 food hampers to its tenants.

Hard-working staff distributed the hampers after Kings Church Newport approached Merthyr Valleys Homes with a request to participate in their hamper scheme, where tenants can obtain a hamper filled with brand food to the value of £25.

Mrs Diana Lyons, a Merthyr Valleys Homes tenant said: "I had recently broken my ankle and was house

bound until Christmas, so the items in the hamper came in very useful. My grateful thanks to one and all involved."

Merthyr Valleys Homes regeneration manager Sally Richards said: "Christmas can be a difficult time for people for many reasons. We are delighted this hamper offer benefited so many of our tenants and we hope to continue our involvement in such schemes."

ENGAGEMENT GATEWAY

New contracts delivering for 2011!!

Several organisations have been awarded contracts to deliver activities under engagement gateway. So if you're aware of someone who is unemployed or economically inactive check out the contracts awarded below as they may be interested in participating in the activities on offer

Adref

Adref's Aspire project is an education, training and employment scheme which offers confidential, flexible, individualised information, advice, guidance and support so if you're looking for help with:

- Finding, applying for and getting employment
- Identifying, applying for and getting into further education or training
- Finding out how voluntary work can help you get experience, training, references, confidence
- Finding out about and securing funding
- Or if you don't know what to do or where to start and you need help with life planning

Please contact **Dawn George** on **01685 378304** or **dawn.george@adref.org.uk**

MTIB

The Employability Skills project is a programme that focuses on developing hard and soft employability skills, delivered through a mixture of face to face learning, discussion and group work, whilst providing practical experience of work at their onsite facility.

For details of when the next programme starts or for more information contact **Gemma Thomas** on **01685 370072** or **gemmathomas@mtib.co.uk**

Elite Supported Employment Agency

The project will enable individuals with disabilities, living in Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr Tydfil county boroughs, aged 16-64, to engage in vocational opportunities by utilising an individualised pathway approach of one to one training/support. The project also enlightens individuals of local employment via structured training, building confidence, self-esteem and aspirations.

Please contact **Kathy Rivett** on **01443 226664** or **krivett@elitesea.co.uk**



Training

An Introduction to Safeguarding Children and Young People

21 February 2011 9:45 – 12:45

Cost: **£10**

Venue: **Voluntary Action Centre, Merthyr Tydfil**

This is an interactive half day session which will highlight the recent changes in Legislation for Safeguarding Children and Young People. It is aimed at Trustees, volunteers and staff who need a basic understanding of the legislation.

Safeguarding Children and Young People - Policy and Procedure

28 February and 7 March 2011 9:45 – 4:00

Cost: **£60** (includes lunch)

Venue: **Voluntary Action Centre, Merthyr Tydfil**

An interactive two day session, targeted at enabling organisations to prepare their own Safeguarding Children Policy and procedures. Please note participants must attend both sessions.

Trustees and Management Committees

22 March 2011 9:30-4:00pm

Aimed at anyone who sits on a Management Committee, this day session will focus on:

- Understanding the concept of governance
- Being aware of the key principles of governance
- Understanding how trustees are collectively responsible and accountable
- Being aware of key governance documents

For more information visit **www.vamt.net** or see the flyer enclosed in this edition of Inform

This newsletter has been published by Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil,
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The views expressed in this edition of Inform are not necessarily those of Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil.

Croesawir erthyglau nail ai'n ddwyieithog neu'n uniaith Gymraeg.

The closing date for articles for the next edition (April 2011) is **5 March 2011**.