

LINKING NEW & OLD COMMUNITIES

Organisations Involved & Contact Details

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Aims & Target Group

Aims:

- The main aim of “Linking New and Old Communities” is to create a model for managing new arrivals in the UK.
- New Link also assists in the integration of new communities to the local area and to address and prevent tensions emerging with long term resident locals.

Target Group:

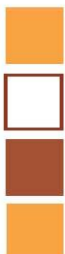
In 2001 there were an estimated 8,000 new arrivals in Peterborough. Many had limited English. The number posed a threat to social stability. It also placed pressure on public services and housing provision. Arrivals granted refugee status also moved to the city. And the expansion of the European Union (EU) in May 2004 saw an influx of migrant workers from the eight new member states.

New Link currently works with the following communities: Daman Community of Peterborough; Ethiopian & Eritrean Community, Peterborough Filipino Association, Kenyan Community Group, Lithuanian Community Group, Peterborough African Community Organization (PACO), Peterborough African Refugee Community Association (PARCA), Peterborough Kurdish Association, The Eagle Polish Society of Peterborough, Roma Advocacy Project, Somaliland Community of Peterborough and the Sudanese Darfur Community Group.

Project Description & Components

There were a number of important issues. For example, Peterborough’s services and communities were unprepared for new arrivals, in terms of numbers and the range of nationalities.

In many cases, local people had little understanding of:





- the entitlements of new arrivals
- the issues faced by those claiming asylum
- the differences between refugees and migrant workers

Long-term residents felt afraid of the numbers arriving over a short time. This was especially the case when new arrivals moved into deprived areas.

These issues are addressed through general services, as well a suite of specific projects:

Living in Peterborough

New arrivals are offered training in citizenship. Rights and responsibilities are outlined. Issues such as houses in multiple occupation (HMO) and driving legislation are also explained. In partnership with Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the city council provides literature for new arrivals. This project also trains volunteers from new arrivals to deliver training to their community.

Training and Awareness

This provides information for service providers and agencies on new arrivals to the UK, and specifically Peterborough. It explains the difference between migrant workers, refugees, asylum seekers and illegal immigrants.

The project challenges urban myths and supports the integration of new arrivals. **It extends to long-term residents and listens to their concerns.** It reports back to the 'Living in Peterborough' project on issues that need to be addressed in the training programme for new arrivals.

Interpretation and translation

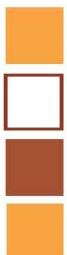
New arrivals (and long-term residents) who have additional languages are offered training and qualification in interpretation. This provides a low-cost service to Peterborough City Council and health service providers. The project also advises locally and nationally on protocols.

Community safety

- Managed by Cambridgeshire Constabulary, this project examines how best to meet the policing needs of new communities.
- Safety information, reporting mechanisms and literature have been produced for new arrivals.
- Recruitment procedures have been amended, resulting in the recruitment of police community support officers (PCSOs) from within the new arrival communities.
- Frontline staff are learning the three most frequently encountered languages spoken by new arrivals in order to improve face-to-face communication.
- The local mediation service provides conflict resolution to reduce tension between communities, especially between new arrivals and local, long term residents.
- The mediation service has also developed a missing person register.
- A local drug advice agency works with off-street Eastern European sex workers.

Community Capacity Building.

Community Capacity work is undertaken by a dedicated Community Development Worker, who is currently working with 15 new arrival community groups. This project supports new arrivals by assisting them to gain contact with people from their own community or to develop





their own community organisations. The New Link Community Development project provides ongoing support and training on how to establish, manage and sustain a community group. Support includes help with setting aims and objectives, creating a committee and constitution and developing business plans and management skills. Training has included fundraising and bid writing, marketing and media skills. As well as providing meeting rooms, telephone, internet and printing facilities the project communicates information on the services, training and conferences offered by other organisations and agencies.

Process

Referrals are made by a variety of sources, such as agencies, long-term residents, local councillors or word of mouth.

Clients generally have a specific need, such as: English classes; Nursery places; Legal advice; Benefits

- If their English is good and they are allowed to work, they may be given the option of training to work as a qualified interpreter.
- If they have children, there are checks to ensure the children are in school, or clients know about childcare opportunities and assisted funding.
- If they are working, there are checks to ensure they are paid the minimum wage.
- If they are in private sector housing, there are checks to ensure they know their rights and have a rent book.
- Where possible, unscrupulous landlords, gangsters and rogue employers are reported to the authorities.
- The centre accommodates outreach workers from more than 20 agencies. They offer advice on health, employment, benefits, unaccompanied minors and other issues.
- Classes on English, citizenship and Living in Peterborough are also held at the centre.
- A dedicated internal website has improved the knowledge of staff about new arrival groups.
- A dedicated community development worker supports new arrivals by putting them in contact with people from their own community.

Outcomes

The main areas through which cost savings can be made are:

- interpreting and translating
- cooperating with partner agencies
- easing community tensions

Groups with which New Link currently works include the African Caribbean Forum, the Lithuanian Community Group Peterborough African Community Organisation (PACO) and Peterborough Kurdish Association.

New Link has also set up a Peterborough Community Group Forum. This represents local community groups collectively. It provides support for community groups and associations to





build a better communication network and create a louder voice between them and other voluntary and statutory groups.

The New Link Partnership Project won three awards at the prestigious UK Housing Awards ceremony at the Park Lane Hilton Hotel in London on Wednesday, 2 November 2005. It won a category award for 'excellence in promoting community cohesion' and received an award for 'outstanding achievement in social housing' for England and another for the whole of the UK.

Challenges & Obstacles

Indigenous residents in the Millfield and New England areas of Peterborough had voiced concerns about their neighbourhoods.

The following were all cited as problems and attributed to the number of new arrivals:

- litter
- parking
- HMO
- fly-tipping
- traditional shops replaced by fast food outlets

The city council launched a study into these concerns during winter 2005/06. It published a report resulting in a council-led improvement plan. This coincided with a large-scale environmental crackdown in the area in October 2006. The council has further tackled untaxed and unroadworthy vehicles and illegal parking.

Funding

The 'New Link' project is funded under the Government's 'Invest to Save' programme. Local agencies working with new arrivals formed a multi-agency group and put a £2.2 million bid to the Home Office. A government grant of £2.2 million was received under the 'Invest to save' programme.

Images

