

# Annual Report

## 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2007

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Registered Charity No 1076393

Operating under Dual Registration  
Charity Number 1117645 & Company Registration 5990592  
With Effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007



Signposts Multi Agency Resource Centre - Annual Report 2006 / 2007  
*“Working to empower the Community”*





**Community Enterprise**

**Information and Advice**

**Supported Housing including Floating Support**

**Multi Agency Resource Centre**

**Family Support**

**Networking to encourage other developments**

**Targeted Work With Young People**

**Social Services HIV (Service Delivery)**



**Lancashire County Council Social Services Young Carers Development Work**

**Pupil Mobility Work (Frequent Movers)**

**Infrastructure and ICT Support Services**

**Travelling Tots Mobile Crèche**

**Provides Services to Voluntary Organisations**

**Farming and Rural Health Project “Wellbeing in Wellies”**

**See [www.signposts.org.uk](http://www.signposts.org.uk) for more information about the work Signposts undertakes**

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## Section One – General

### Signposts – Mission, Aims, Objectives and Vision

#### Mission Statement



**“Signposts – working to empower the community”**

#### The Aims of the Service

Extract from Signposts Constitution:

*‘to relieve the poverty and promote the benefits of the inhabitants of Lancashire and Cumbria with particular reference to those in the area known as the West End of Morecambe, without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, age, race or of political, religious or other opinions’.*

#### Objectives of the Service

To provide services which relieve, support, help and advise:

- those who are poor
- the unemployed
- elderly
- physically or mentally ill or convalescing
- people with a disability
- people who are dependent on alcohol and drugs
- victims of abuse, violence or crime
- families or carers of the above

## Vision

To provide services which relieve, support, help and advise:

- **those who are poor:**  
by working in the most disadvantaged parts of Lancashire and Cumbria including the rural areas, providing a service that is locally based, accessible and accountable
- **the unemployed:**  
by providing information and advice services, access to volunteering, gateways to employment including the opportunity to join the Signposts' team and the provision of high quality training, and the development of social enterprise models
- **elderly:**  
by working in partnership with statutory services and others to enable older people to live independent fulfilled lives in their communities via volunteering, information and advice, alternatives to day-care and health drop-ins and clinic provision
- **physically or mentally ill or convalescing:**  
by the provision of specialist services and encouraging health and wellbeing within the project, within the team and within the community by the provision of groups, access to information, healthy eating, work with carers and respite provision
- **people with a disability:**  
by working within equal opportunities and inclusive practice which seeks to involve everyone in services and at all levels of the organisation, together with specialist provision around access to activities and leisure and young carers
- **people who are dependent on alcohol and drugs:**  
by working in a non-judgemental and inclusive environment which sees the individual rather than their drug or alcohol use and which seeks to make a difference, and by working co-operatively with statutory services to offer community based provision
- **victims of abuse, violence or crime:**  
by working with communities to address the causes and the fear of crime, by working with those who are the victims of crime particularly domestic violence, by providing diversionary activities for young people and recognising that young people are often the victims of crime rather than the perpetrators. By seeking to enable people to have control of their lives and circumstances so they can make positive choices around living in harmony with their family, neighbours and community
- **families or carers of the above:**  
by the provision of specialist family support services, childcare, mobile crèche provision, practical help, advice and information, work with young people and young carers in a non-judgemental way which encourages those who are hard to reach to access services, to feel valued, and to gain control over their lives and circumstances and for their voices to be heard.

## **Foreword**

**By Bob Raby, Chair of the Signposts Executive Committee**

Bob Raby  
Chair of Trustees

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## Summary of Achievements During 2006 / 2007

During the last 12 months Signposts has achieved many things including:

- Dealing with 19,116 (of whom 1000 were children) enquiries through its whole service reflecting the changes that have been made to service delivery
- Implementation of a New Staffing Structure to enable the project to grow and consolidate
- Represented the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector throughout Lancashire as the Communication and ICT Lead
- Consolidation of a Casework Model for working with Adults, Children, Young People and Families with the introduction of an electronic database system
- Development of "Project Milestones" in partnership with Places for People and Lancaster City Council
- Consolidation of our Accommodation Portfolio to include an expansion of provision, consolidation in Preston and better working conditions for our team
- Revision of Governance Structure to include Incorporation and the establishment of a Board, Committee Structure and Stakeholder Groups
- Continued participation in the development of Children's Centres and expansion of Family Support Services
- Continuation funding for "Well Being in Wellies" for three years from the Tudor Trust
- Transfer of the DIY Shop into Community ownership via Community Association of the West End
- Establishment of a Stakeholder Group for Young People
- The development of ICT communication and Website into an Information Resource for Services and Team and provision of laptops and mobile phones which work
- The continued development of Young Carers work and the achievement of a successful review and changes to how we offer this service
- Introduction of Corporate Image to include Polo Shirts and Fleeces
- Delivered an Activities and Events Programme – Cultural Carnforth

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## Introduction & Strategic Overview

**By Pamela Beswick, M.A. (Project Director)**

The initial impetus for the establishment of Signposts was to locate services in an area with particularly high levels of deprivation. Signposts was established because there was a recognition that the West End of Morecambe was particularly needy due to the levels of unemployment, poor quality high density housing, high number of lone parents and lone pensioners, high crime rate, high levels of benefit dependency, high levels of people being accommodated after leaving long stay mental health and learning difficulties institutions and people experiencing health and social problems. It was predicated on a multi-agency partnership working model. This was in 1994 and it is important to note, that whilst some things have changed, the basic need for the Services that Signposts offers has not.

Wherever you find a Signposts service it should be based on the same principles of inclusion and accessibility. It should offer a neighbourhood service to the community which should be friendly, accessible, non-specific and flexible in order to meet the varied needs of that community. The idea is that people can access a range of services at one location and that instead of vulnerable people having to travel to receive services which is time consuming, expensive and frustrating – some of the services would come to them or could be accessed by telephone or letter. This has been extended latterly to include more home visiting and casework.

Two factors affect the ability of people to access services:

- (a) **Physical Access.** The appropriateness of the location of a project, the design of a building, the physical and built environment, sessions that are designed to meet the needs of men, women, families with the provision of childcare and a child friendly environment.
- (b) **Emotional Access.** The ability of a project to challenge discrimination and oppression in all its forms but with particular emphasis on the challenges faced by those experiencing marginalisation or belonging to “hard to reach” groups who may not use services because of a fear of a hostile reaction or because they do not feel “worthy” of a service.

When preparing the Annual Report this year I have revisited these principles and have considered the impact that Signposts has had, and continues to have in addressing the needs of its community. Whilst this is delivered over a wider geographical area and to a larger group of people nevertheless the Service should stand-up to scrutiny against the initial principles.

This has been a particular challenge this financial year because Signposts has grown in size and complexity and the Management Structure and Team have had to respond to this – particularly the challenge of maintaining buildings and accommodation to a high standard which is “fit for purpose”. Signposts moved out of Community Links on Stanley Road, Morecambe, and consolidated its service across

the Lancaster District and Preston. Whilst this was disruptive both to staff and services, the ultimate outcome was a better allocation and use of resources that should benefit the service in the longer term. The need for a Headquarters or Main Office base remains an aspiration and this will form part of the ongoing business planning for the current year.

The question of the changing role for the Voluntary Sector continues to be high on our agenda and the pace of change in regards to commissioning and procurement is speeding up particularly with Lancashire and Cumbria County Councils. Signposts will have decisions to make in the next financial year about how to respond to this changing agenda – and a beginning has been made with the Future Builders Business Plan and a series of Development Days that have been planned.

Signposts has engaged at Strategic Levels both in Lancashire and Cumbria and has engaged with the LAA Agenda particularly in Lancashire. Signposts is represented within the VCFS Consortium Management Committee and remains the lead for Communication and ICT. Signposts has begun to locate its work against the specific LAA targets. This work can be viewed on our website – listed under “Signposts and the Lancashire LAA”.

A major achievement this year was Incorporation – this has been an aspiration for a long time – achievement of Incorporation will strengthen our Governance and this has also been augmented by the introduction of a Board of Directors, Committees and Stakeholder Groups.

I should like to thank the Executive and Team for their continuing commitment to Signposts and to acknowledge all their hard work.

The work continues and the priority areas identified in 2005/06 have been addressed in the following ways:-

**To Maintain current levels of existing funding streams and develop relationships with partners**

The financial strategy of signposts has been implemented across the whole project including the need to increase earned income, maintain existing contracts and SLA's and to move towards a Social Enterprise Model. As we increase in our financial complexity it has been decided to outsource our Accounting Services to include payroll and bank reconciliations. This fits with our business planning where the cost implications of hosting specialist services in-house or out-house was considered in detail.

**To seek new sources of funding to develop work within the Development Plan – this to link with the achievement of a health and social care role in the Locality Footprints (a) Lancaster, Fylde and Wyre (2) Preston, Chorley and South Ribble**

We have achieved significant new areas of work within the Health and Social Care field although this has mainly been within the Lancaster District most notably within

Children's Centres and the 50Forward Project. We have established relationships with Children's Centres in Preston and are delighted to be delivering services against their agendas. Changes to the PCT Structures affected our work particularly with the closure of Morecambe Bay PCT which became Cumbria PCT and North Lancashire PCT. The Footprint model is still in the process of development and this may prove to be of greater significance in the next financial year, although it looks like the Children's Trust and Children's Directorate arrangements will be on a District basis.

A significant development was the beginning of a debate with Lancaster YMCA to see if we can develop closer collaborative working. Funding was received from CAF to appoint a consultant Moira Laws to assist both organisations.

**To prepare a major bid to the Big Lottery Fund and/or Capacity Builders to consolidate and develop Signposts for a longer period of time (3 years) this to link with a sub-regional profile beginning with ICT lead role in VCFS Consortium**

Bids were submitted to the BLF BASIS Fund for ICT Developmental Work across Lancashire and to the Advice Plus Programme. Neither bid was successful. In an increasingly competitive framework and reducing funding streams within this arena the Lottery Fund although one to watch, does not seem to be a likely source of immediate funding. We will resubmit the BASIS Bid in the autumn if this is possible and we will continue to work on the Future Builders Bid.

**To respond to the changing agenda within the Voluntary Sector regarding a possible return to the purchaser/provider model**

This arena is problematic in regards to the appropriate location of Signposts within this changing agenda. We offer a unique service which would roll-out across Lancashire and Cumbria but the dilemma is one that Directors, Team and everyone needs to engage with to ensure that we do not compromise our ideology by delivering services which should be located within the Public Sector. We have been commissioned to deliver services within the Children's Directorate and with Adult and Community Care but this is keenly debated when opportunities arise.

**To prepare an Action Plan for each area of work – and to achieve a consistent professional service to deliver against key strategic national, regional and local strategies in particular ECM, Youth Matters and LAA**

As this report demonstrates Signposts is clear in what it delivers to whom – we have a Business Plan and Action Plan which is closely monitored. We also undertake a Risk Assessment annually which provides an internal audit of methodology and delivery. We have kept a keen eye on developments within ECM, Youth Matters and the LAA and have closely aligned our services to key target areas – whilst retaining our close links and responsiveness to our community. The Operational Management Structure has been strengthened with the introduction of Specialist Lead posts and we have a Strategic Management Team and Operational Management Team who closely monitor work. We need to do better in Action Planning for each area of work

and recognise that within rapid expansion we have been “responsive” rather than “proactive” in our planning.

**To consider the asset base of the Project to see whether increased capital investment in buildings and resources would be beneficial – linked to the development of governance and the creation of a “holding company” and incorporation**

As outlined before we have achieved incorporation and are now a Company Limited by Guarantee. We have invested in our accommodation portfolio and have commissioned new premises at Farringdon Park in Preston, the Rainbow Centre and Heysham Road in the Lancaster District. This remains a key area for development in the new financial year. We have also invested in ICT throughout the Project.

We also worked on the development of a corporate image and introduced polo shirts and fleeces and ID Badges for our team.

**To continue to invest in and develop a responsive, supported volunteer team structure**

Signposts has a long history of providing a supportive, empowering and coherent volunteering structure for our team. As we grow larger as an organisation we must ensure that this element is not lost. Volunteers are important to how Signposts delivers its services and we continue to offer a recruitment, induction and supervision structure which offers support. As we have moved towards a more ICT dependent structure within our organisation training for all is important but particularly for our volunteers. An Annual Training programme is being developed together with a Staff Handbook and we send out a monthly Team Bulletin to keep everyone informed of what is happening. We offered NVQ Training to our Team together with Training the Trainers. Complacency is not an option in this arena and Signposts has a large volunteer team including Directors and we continue to invest in them. We pay travel and childcare and adult caring expenses and introduced a system where we pay for lunch if volunteers work all day.

Pamela Beswick  
Project Director

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## Section Two – Information About Signposts

### The Current Position (as at 1st April 2007)

Signposts works in a variety of ways (see Diagram A) to meet the needs identified by statistical analysis and agency responses.

It particularly targets those who are most vulnerable in the community for a variety of reasons which include mental health, physical and learning difficulties, older people, women and single parents, isolated single men (old and young), young people, families, the unemployed, homeless and roofless people.

It maintains close links with relevant agencies in its area of benefit.

From the beginning it was envisaged that Signposts would have a multiplicity of roles and would respond to the needs of the community as they evolve.

#### Policies

To support this work it has developed the following policies:-

- Equal Opportunities
- Confidentiality (including Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection)
- Information and Advice
- Washer/Drier/Shower Use
- Health and Safety
- Complaints
- Travel
- Contraceptive advice to young people
- Mobile Phone
- Internet
- Lone Working

#### Methods

The project is delivered via:

- Prevention, effective signposting to other services, and the reduction of inappropriate referrals to other agencies.
- Intervention at a low level to identify the correct route into services
- Partnership work with others around casework and ongoing support and intervention
- Empowerment of people beyond crisis
- Empowerment of communities to meet their own needs
- Provision of intervention and support work at a level appropriate to need, providing services below the threshold criteria, and on behalf of, local statutory and public service providers.

## Gateway/Access Route

Via:

Information and Advice, Family Support, Housing Support, Floating Support, Work in the community, Events and activities.

## Access/Resources

Within the whole project the following practical steps have been taken to ensure the project is accessible to all. Individual guidance booklets outline provision at each base:

- Facilities and equipment for people with physical and sensory impairment
- Information in large print, on video, in different languages
- Availability of a Minicom and a loop hearing system
- Men's and women's sessions with childcare (as needed)
- Training crèche (Ofsted registered)
- Shower and washing facilities for homeless people
- Information appropriate for people with learning difficulties
- Services for parents – including teenagers
- Providing a local base for specialist agencies
- Development work with young carers
- Internet access

## Premises



**Community Links**  
**at Farrington Park Community Centre**  
18-24 Thirlmere Road, Preston, PR1 5TR  
Tel: 01772 759413

**Family Links**  
Ingol Community Primary School  
Whitby Avenue, Ingol, Preston, PR2 3YP  
Tel: 01772 734888  
Fax: 01772 734999  
Email: preston.admin@signposts.org.uk

**Main Office**  
58 Regent Road, Morecambe, LA3 1TE  
Tel: 01524 419021  
Fax: 01524 411541  
Email: signpostsmarc@signposts.org.uk

**Information and Advice Service**  
93 Westminster Road, Morecambe  
Tel: 01524 419597  
Email: info.and.advice@signposts.org.uk

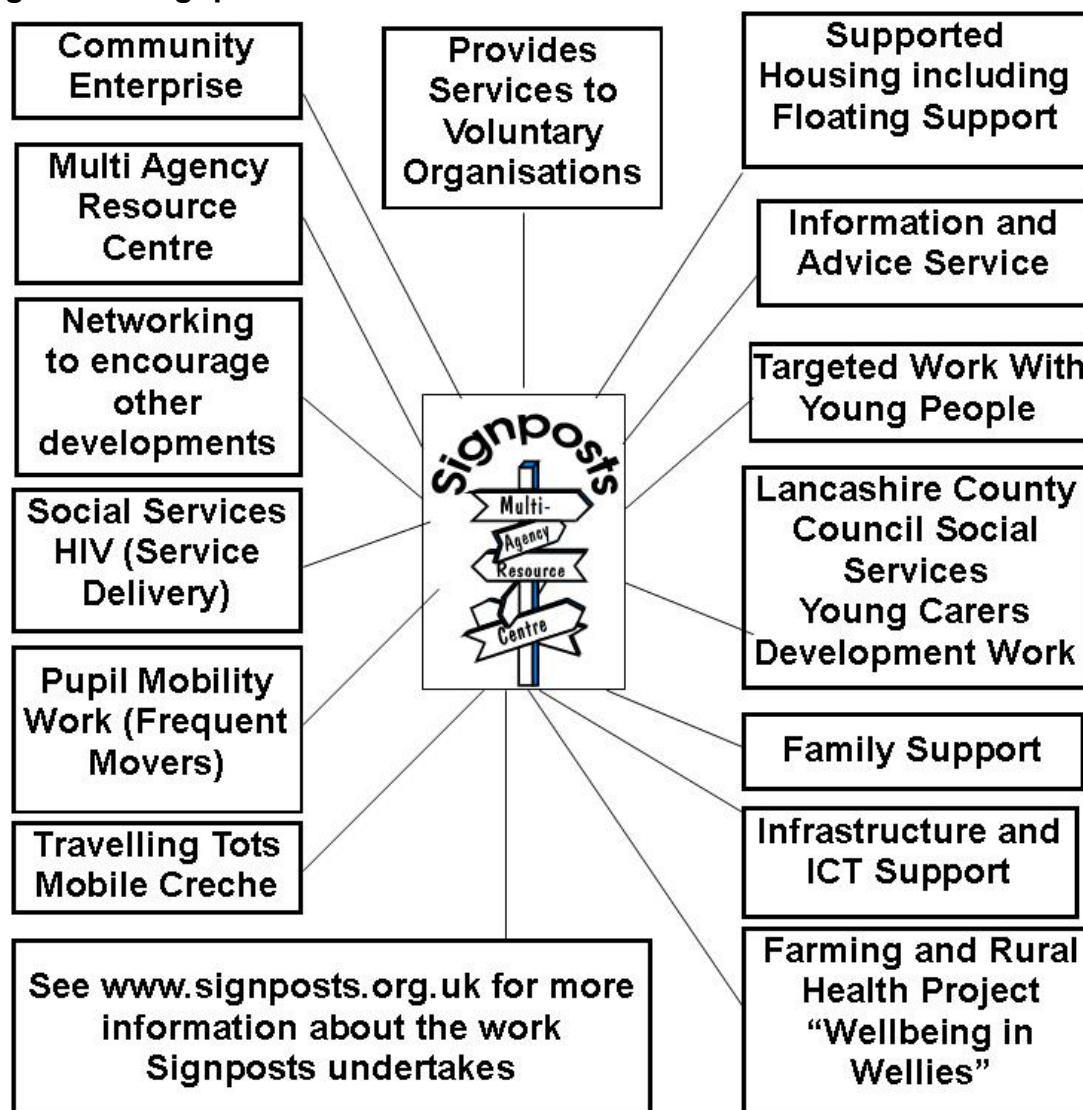
**Family Support Service**  
Tel: 01524 427890

**Community Shop**  
37 Yorkshire Street, Morecambe  
Tel: 01524 413064  
Email: communityshop@signposts.org.uk

**DIY Recycle Shop**  
22A Yorkshire Street, Morecambe  
Tel: 01524 833080

**Signposts Carnforth**  
Parish Hall, Kellet Road  
Carnforth, LA5 9LR  
Tel: 01524 732807  
Email: carnforth@signposts.org.uk

Diagram A - Signposts Roles



Signposts:

- achieved independent charitable status on the 1st July 1999 (Registration Number 1076393)
- is a Member of Advice UK (formerly FIAC)
- was awarded the Quality Mark at General Help level by the Legal Services Commission in November 2000.
- and was awarded the Investor In People award in July 2004

The agreed values on which the Service is based are:-

- everyone should be seen as unique and individual and accorded dignity, respect and status
- service users should be given opportunities to develop skills and capabilities that enable them to make choices and take decisions about their lives
- comments or complaints about services can be used positively to highlight or remedy service deficiencies
- relationships with service users should be conducted in an open manner
- confidentiality is a major right

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## The Staff Team - Who's Who?

### Signposts Executive Committee

At the Signposts AGM 2006, the following people were elected as the officers of the Signposts Executive Committee:

<b>Chair</b>	Bob Raby
<b>Deputy Chair</b>	Julia Swarbrick
<b>Treasurer</b>	Melanie Evans

The following were elected as trustees en bloc:

David Barnes	Janette Carr	Rona Forsyth
Lillian Shaw	Paul Longden	Melody Treasure
Marc Levine	Eric Stead	

### Signposts Staff Team

Signposts recruits, trains and develops volunteers who make a significant contribution to the work of the project. Without their support the project would not be a success.

The staff team during this period were:

Pamela Beswick	Project Director
Sharon Calverley	Project Coordinator
John Heath	Project Coordinator
Susan Edwards	Project Manager – Lancaster District
Susan Earnshaw	Project Manager – Preston
Mandy McKnight	Carnforth Development Worker (until January 2007)
Caroline Beswick	Project Worker – Young People (until March 2007)
Natasha Stanier	Preston Admin Support and Family Support Worker
Susan Arthington	Assistant Project Support Worker
Gilliam Warder	Cleaner (Morecambe)

The Business Administration Apprentice Team included: Louise Gorton (Preston), Katie Smith (Morecambe) Adam Treasure (Main Office), Michelle Wooff (Carnforth)

The Sessional Team included Stephanie Pearce, Marie Warner, Steven Naylor, Jack McKnight, David Hamilton, Pat Williamson, Sasha Lasseter, Natalie McGarr, Angela Dyson, Jonathon Swift, Moira Dyson, Alan Jones, Lisa West, Dawn Mitchell, Lucy Barber, Amy Bigland, Mark Gore, Melanie Guilding, Angela Kirk, Thomas Marshall, Amanda McKay, Ruth Paterson, Elizabeth Shaw, Graham Shippey, Eileen Smith, Natalie Walker

During the year, the project has hosted numerous Youth and Community and Social Work Students, who have all contributed to the development of the project and supported its casework and work with young people.

A programme of training spans the whole project and includes a developed, and standardised induction to the project and ongoing, accredited training.

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## Signposts Customer Satisfaction Survey

### 'Snapshot Week' March 2007 – Responses from all venues

Total Responses: 50

#### 1. How did you find out about Signposts?

A friend/neighbour:	15
Leaflets/posters:	4
When passing by:	10
Newspapers:	1
School:	7
Other:	13

#### 2. How did you feel when you first made contact with Signposts Team?

Very Pleased	10
Happy:	6
Welcomed:	17
No answer:	4
O.K.:	8
Nervous:	4
Relieved:	1

#### 3. What did you expect from Signposts services?

Help and Advice:	19
Good Team:	1
Enjoyable day:	1
Support:	3
Information:	6
Understanding:	2
No expectations:	3
Not sure:	6
No answer:	9

**4. Did we meet your needs?**

Yes: 47  
Maybe: 1  
No answer: 2

**5. Would you change anything?**

No: 43  
Yes: 3  
No answer: 3  
Unsure: 1  
Free tea/coffee: 1  
More phones: 1  
Not specified: 1

**6. How long have you lived in the area?**

0-5 years: 10  
6-10 years: 8  
11-15 years: 5  
16-20 years: 6  
21-25 years: 2  
26-30 years: 2  
36-40 years: 2  
All/most of life: 5  
Work in area: 2  
No answer: 8

**7. Did you feel safe accessing Signposts Services?**

Yes: 46  
No answer: 4

**8. Did you mind doing this questionnaire?**

Yes: 1  
No: 49

## Signposts Snapshot (5<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2007)

This is a snapshot of the work done at Signposts over a given week in March.

<b>Session</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>U16</b>
<b>Morecambe Information and Advice Service</b> including other agencies						
Information & Advice Service	All ages	172	76	45	46	5
1:1 meetings with clients	26-40	7	2	1	4	
Shelter	26 - 60+	3	1	1	1	
CDT	8-18	4	1	1	2	
LCC Housing Support	16-60+	2		1	1	
LDWA	All Ages	2		1	1	
Skerton High School	11 - 16	2			1	1
YMCA	All Ages	2	1		1	
Family Support Meetings	18-60	21			21	
Dad's Group	18-60	9	6	1	2	
Sal's Place	18 - 40	4		3	1	
Skerton High School	11-16	2	1		1	
Health Clinic	All Ages	9	4	4	1	
YOT	11-16	3	2		1	
CAT	18 - 60+	11	6	3	2	
Health Clinic	18-60	16	7	7	2	
Morecambe Homeless Action	26-40	28	15	7	6	
<b>Information and Advice Service Totals:</b>		297	167	100	48	1
<b>Casework</b>						
Lancaster District	All ages	18	4	10	4	
Preston	All ages	13		5	5	3
<b>Work With Young People</b>						
Access To Leisure	under 18	7	3	1	3	
Young Carers Group work	under 18	28	14	8	6	
Young Carers Casework	under 19	2		1	1	
WE Diversity Activities (Regent Park Studios)	under 18	37	20	15	2	
WE Diversity Activities (MMM)	under 18	52	20	30	2	
PHAB	All ages	13	7	3	3	
<b>Travelling Tots</b>						
URC Session	under 18	31			3	28
Poulton Memorial hall	under 18	29			3	26
Poulton Children's Centre	under 18	25			3	22
Training Crèche	under 18	9			3	6
ST Barnabus	under 18	40			4	36
<b>DIY Shop</b>						
Customers & Staff Attendance	All ages	42	20	12	10	

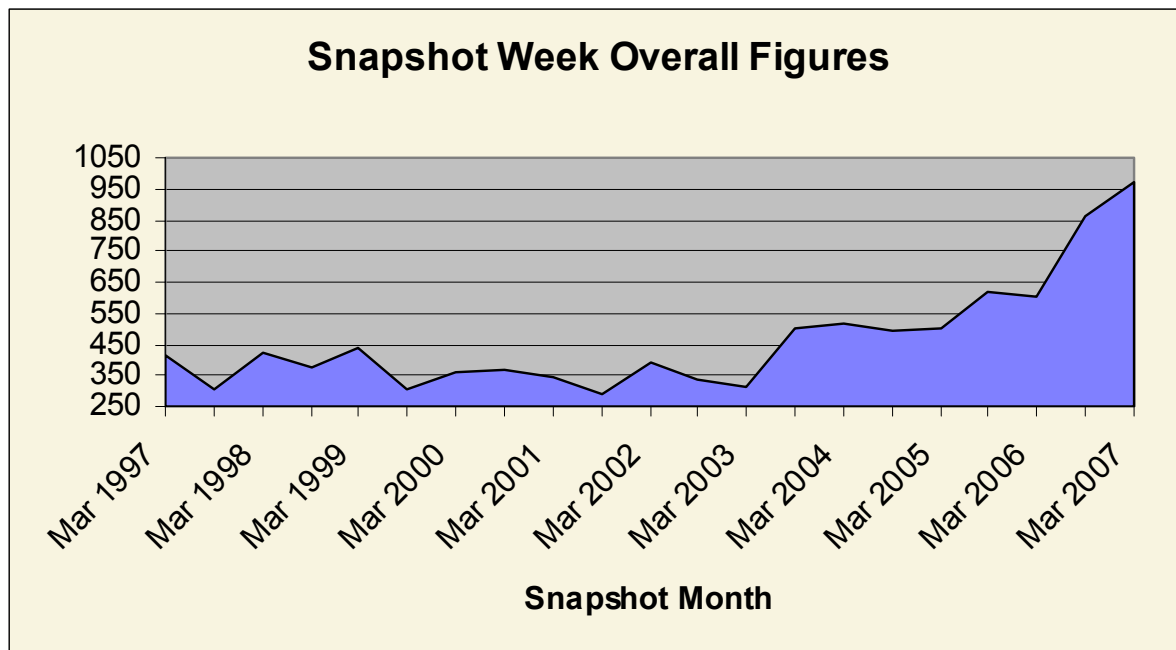
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<b>Signposts Family Links, Ingol</b>						
Staff Attendance/Enquiries	All Ages	27	4	4	19	
Signposts Preston Steering Group - Deepdale	All Ages	10		7	3	
Ashton School Drop In	All Ages	10		3	3	4
Student Supervision	All Ages	2			2	
Petra - Youth Group - Tuesday	8 – 18	23	14	8	1	
Petra - Youth Group - Friday	8 – 18	18	12	5	1	
Petra - Parent and Community Group	All Ages	9		2	2	5
Petra - Grandparents Group	26 – 40	3	1	1	1	
Fun Day Planning Meeting	All Ages	8			8	
<b>Carnforth Office at Our Lady of Lourdes Hall</b>						
Staff Attendance/Enquiries	All Ages	19			19	
Kendal Auction Mart	All Ages	10	10		2	12
Hornby Information and Advice	All Ages	8	6	2	2	10
<b>Community Links at Farringdon Park</b>						
Staff Attendance	All ages	17			17	
Meeting with Children's Fund	All ages	2	1		1	
SMT Meeting	18-26	8			8	
Sunshine Children's Centre Planning Meeting	All ages	6			6	
International Women's Day	All Ages	21		14	2	5
<b>Community Shop</b>						
Staff Attendance/Enquiries	All ages	19	2	1	16	0
Morecambe Bay Credit Union	26-60	4	1	1	2	
Fire/Police	All Ages	11	5	2	4	
Adult College - ESOL Classes	18+	42	6	30	6	
Sovereign Club	50+	4	1	1	2	
<b>Signposts Work Undertaken in Other Venues</b>						
Trustees/Board Meeting	All Ages	10	4	4	2	
Clear Voices for Older People Lancashire Working Group	All ages	9	2	6	1	
<b>Total - Other Services:</b>		<b>672</b>	157	176	197	157
<b>Signposts Project - Overall Total:</b>		<b>969</b>				

Signposts Multi Agency Resource Centre  
Annual Report 2006/2007

Following is a graphical representation of the work of the project on a snapshot by snapshot basis.

Mar 1996	415		
Mar 1997	418	Sept 1997	305
Mar 1998	425	Sept 1998	372
Mar 1999	438	Sept 1999	305
Mar 2000	360	Sept 2000	371
Mar 2001	346	Sept 2001	292
Mar 2002	388	Sept 2002	337
Mar 2003	311	Sept 2003	498
Mar 2004	516	Sept 2004	494
Mar 2005	498	Sept 2005	617
Mar 2006	603	Sept 2006	858
Mar 2007	969		



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## Signposts Enquiries and Statistics Key

We recognise that many of the choices made in regard to monitoring are subjective and our charts are intended to give an indication of the work we undertake at Signposts. We do not claim complete statistical accuracy and recognise that our strength is in service delivery. Every attempt is made to reflect the work as accurately as possible and strenuous efforts are made in team meetings and training sessions to maintain conformity of recording.

The descriptions below act as a key for the following statistic's pages.

- **Signposts Work**  
Enquiries which relate specifically to work that the Project runs itself - i.e. women and families and supported housing work or to specific roles - i.e. recruitment of volunteers and volunteering.
- **HIV/AIDS and Drugs**  
Enquiries which have a direct HIV or drugs component.
- **Housing**  
Enquiries which relate directly to housing that is provided by Housing Associations, Local Authority Housing or Private Housing. This includes those who have no accommodation at all and enquiries which relate directly to Gas, Electric or Water.
- **Poverty**  
This section relates to enquiries which are often multi-faceted but whose root cause is the lack of physical attributes within a person or families life - i.e. inadequate accommodation or short-term accommodation with bed and breakfast situations, lack of physical assets such as furniture, adequate heating and domestic resources together with the suitability of that accommodation i.e. number of stairs, places for children to play, overcrowding.
- **Finances and Benefits**  
Enquiries which relate directly to an enquirers financial situation.
- **Health**  
Enquiries which have a direct relationship with a health provision.
- **Social Services**  
This is where work can be directly attributable to Social Services provision.
- **Legal and Violence**  
Any enquiry which has a legal aspect.
- **Networking and Referrals**  
One of the basic roles of Signposts i.e. that of being a referral point to other specialist provision. It may be that Signposts is a convenient contact point for

individuals and families or that Signposts acts as a conduit for the sharing of agreed information.

- **Other Agencies**  
Enquiries that are undertaken within the drop-in sessions offered by other Agencies at Signposts.
- **Community Shop Drop In's**  
Enquiries that are undertaken within the drop-in sessions offered by other Agencies at the Community Shop.
- **Employment and Education**  
This relates to enquiries from people who may be seeking work, may be interested in obtaining information on employment issues, training courses or further education.
- **Signposts Services**  
This section records the use made of our facilities by others.
- **Work With Young People**  
This heading records our work with young people within the project.
- **Carnforth Development Work**  
This heading records our work within the project developed in Carnforth.

## Enquiries and Statistics – 2006 / 2007

Signposts Work	Total	CC
General	294	1
Administration	119	
Volunteering	49	
Volunteer Support	40	
Local Groups	720	8
Women & Families	843	113
DIY/Recycle Shop	1313	
Carnforth Events and Festivals	1796	22
Work With Young People	3728	
Travelling Tots	1096	
Environmental Issues	313	
<b>Signposts Total</b>	<b>10311</b>	<b>144</b>

<b>Poverty</b>	<b>631</b>	<b>39</b>
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HIV AIDS and Drugs		
Drugs	37	
HIV	1	
Welfare Fund		
<b>HIV AIDS and Drugs Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0</b>

Housing		
Housing Associations	143	4
Local Authority Housing	173	11
Rooflessness	71	1
Furniture	734	71
Utilities	361	19
Miscellaneous	91	3
Washer/Shower Use/Toiletries	539	11
<b>Housing Total</b>	<b>2112</b>	<b>120</b>

Finances & Benefits		
Benefits	1070	68
Council Tax	14	2
Pensions	33	
Finance & Debt	192	5
<b>Finance &amp; Benefits Total</b>	<b>1309</b>	<b>75</b>

Health		
Alcohol	29	
Doctor	178	5
Dentist / Optician	138	5
General Support Enquiries	123	6
Hospital	69	1
Mental Health	34	2
Young People and Sexual Health	20	
Preg / Contraception / Sexual Health	48	
Relationships / Family Support	431	45
Child Health (Baby Milk)	11	2
<b>Health Total</b>	<b>1081</b>	<b>66</b>

Social Services		
General Support	50	5
Contacting Social Workers	58	3
Child Protection	1	
Refer for Assessment	4	
Children In Care	4	1
Carers / Respite Care	5	
<b>Social Services Total:</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>9</b>

Legal & Violence	Total	CC
Domestic Violence	19	1
Magistrates/County Court	67	1
Legal General	100	1
Police	84	
Probation & Prison Service	88	2
Solicitor	92	1
Victim Support	4	
Abusive Behaviour/harassment	4	
<b>Legal &amp; Violence Total</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>6</b>

Networking and Referrals		
Inter-Agency	659	27
Local Information	257	2
<b>Networking and Referrals Total:</b>	<b>916</b>	<b>29</b>

Other Agencies		
YMCA	2	
LCC Housing Advice	46	7
Community Alcohol Team	74	1
CDT & XS	14	
50Forward Employment Project	43	
Child Health Clinic	162	
One Voice	1	
Miscarriage Association	1	
Welfare Rights	27	
C.A.B.	155	
Deafway	29	1
Morecambe Homeless Action	377+48	
LDWA	82	
Shelter	111	36
Youth Offending Team	26	
<b>Other Agencies Total:</b>	<b>773</b>	<b>45</b>

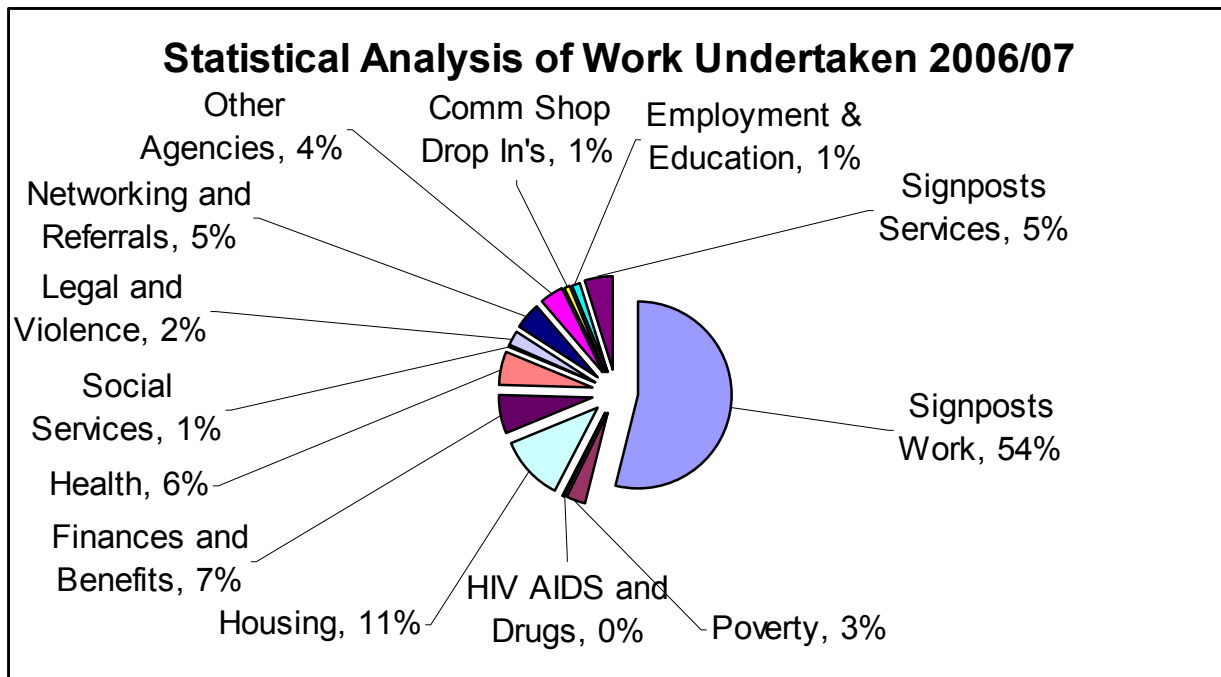
Community Shop Drop In's		
Community Fire Officer	4	
Community Police Officer	10	
Community Wardens	21	
Morecambe Bay Credit Union	27	
Older Persons Health Drop In	85	
Older Persons Drop In	42	
<b>Community Shop Tot:</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>0</b>

Employment & Education		
Seeking Work/Employment Issues	83	2
Education	161	1
Training Courses	25	10
<b>Employment &amp; Education Tot:</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>13</b>

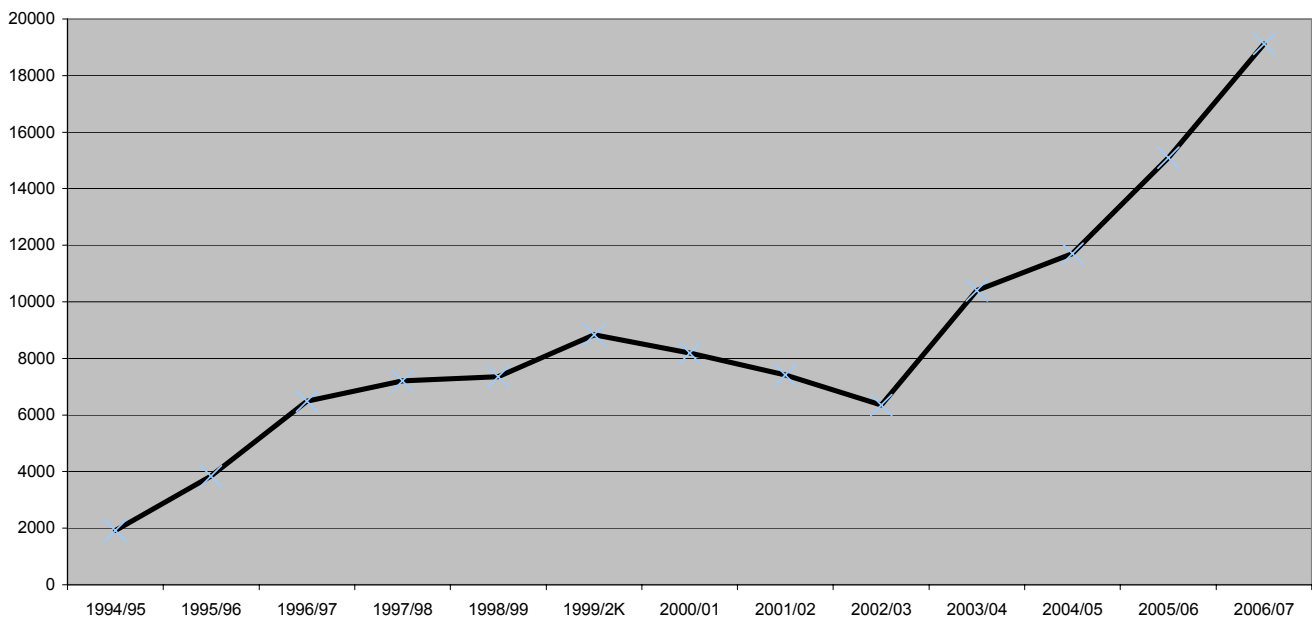
Signposts Services		
Computer Use	23	
Laminating/Fax	76	1
Photocopying	87	1
Room Booking	250	
Internet	471	
<b>Signposts Services Total</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>Total Enquiries for period</b>	<b>19116</b>	<b>1000</b>
<b>Total Adult Enquiries</b>	<b>18116</b>	
<b>Total Child Enquiries</b>	<b>1000</b>	

## Enquiries and Statistics – Graphical Representation



### Total Enquiries - Year on Year



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## Section Three – Our Work

### Operational Overview

#### By Project Coordinators

#### Aims and Objectives

To consolidate the core business of Signposts, to include:

- Information and Advice (One Stop Shop model and Farming and Rural Health)
- Work with Older People (50Forward Care Navigator Element – Linkage Plus)
- Specialist and targeted Work with Young People
- Family Support
- Capacity Building Other Organisations
- Social Enterprise
- Education and training

This has been achieved by:

- A move towards specialist team leads and a move away from geographical implementation of projects to allow knowledge, skills and expertise to be shared project wide
- Delivering a variety of targeted work with young people (see the Work With Young People Section)
- Delivering against five Children's Centres and within the targets of Pupil Mobility Projects in Morecambe Bay and Preston to provide support to children and families
- Involvement in the Lancashire VCFS Consortium linked to ChangeUp with a particular interest in ICT and Communication via leadership of the Lancashire ICT working group linked to ChangeUp
- Implementation of an SLA with Morecambe Homeless action to provide support to their management structure and delivery
- Negotiation of an SLA with Clear Voices for Older People to support working groups and organise seminars and events
- Board Membership of Community Futures and Lancashire Youth Association and involvement as governor of Lancaster and Morecambe College
- The development of a programme for the Community Shop to include community police and fire services, work with older people including nursing intervention, blood pressure checks, work with CAWE and Furniture Matters to deliver electric blanket testing.

- The development and implementation of an electronic database systems for casework and monitoring and investment in the ICT infrastructure of the project to implement these databases.
- Linking with the Lancashire Learning Consortium to support the development of the capacity of the Voluntary Sector to deliver training
- Expansion of a team of sessional and Young Peoples and crèche Workers
- the handover of the DIY Recycle project into community ownership via CAWE (Community Association of the West End)
- Development of the Signposts website

### **Operational Targets for 2007/2008**

- To achieve stability within the current funding climate
- To ensure the project is fit for purpose – provision of quality equipment, resources and venues
- Signposts will continue to be involved in the ChangeUp Programme including retaining leadership in the ICT arena developing expertise as the ICT lead in Lancashire and developing awareness of the work Signposts undertakes across the county
- Signposts will develop an ICT Support Service for Lancaster, Fylde and Wyre.
- To continue to embed the work of the Farming and Rural Partnership, with a clear focus on implementing the Signposts model in partnership with the Steering Group following a successful funding application to the Tudor Trust.
- Signposts intends to create an asset base in the form of the purchase of a building in order to secure its viability into the future – initially via a stage two application to Futurebuilders. Options are still being considered.
- Signposts will, via the Lancashire Learning Consortium, train members of its team to deliver training as part of the core service – completion due June 2007.
- The project needs to fully implement and embed ICT systems across the project.
- Closer partnership working with Places for People Housing via the developing Project Milestones resource at Heysham Road

Sharon Calverley, Project Coordinator

John Heath, Project Coordinator

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## Information & Advice

### Introduction

Signposts Information and Advice provides a service to anyone seeking information and advice whether by personal contact, telephone or letter. The service remains one of the busiest parts of the project and is often the gateway into other Signposts work. It is also the hub for a hub and spoke model service delivery – the initial point of contact for outreach Information and Advice sessions.

### Strengths

- provides a user friendly, easily accessible, non-threatening service
- meets the information needs of individuals, agencies and statutory bodies and the community (in conjunction with the core element of the work)
- able to make appropriate referrals to other agencies and services
- offers an holistic service to enquirers which seeks to address the concerns of the individual rather than provide answers to questions
- offers specialist information and advice both within its own service and by offering space for other services to provide information and advice
- staffed by volunteers from the local community
- designated medical room staffed by District Nurses (Leg Ulcer and Chronic Wound Clinic)
- provision of outreach services
- development of ICT access to information and advice
- reaching out to hard to reach groups and vulnerable individuals and families
- an extremely accessible service

### Weaknesses

- this continues to be a very high demand area of work which places challenges on volunteers, training, maintenance of the building, appropriate ICT
- Work still needed to ensure the service is 'fit for purpose' to support our increasing outreach sessions.
- The extension of the service to provide the hub for outreach information and advice services brings challenges to the existing model.
- Where services are delivered in regeneration areas, particularly in the West End of Morecambe, disruption and displacement can lead to frustration and anger which means that the client group being dealt with can be hard to work with. Again, this is a challenge for resources.

### Agency Sessions

The Information and Advice service continues to provide facilities for other agencies to meet with their clients, either through appointments or as a drop-in service.

Additional regular sessions include:

- Lancaster Homelessness Unit,
- Lancaster and Morecambe College,
- Sal's Place
- One Voice.

The table below shows a typical week for room bookings:

	<b>Am</b>	<b>Pm</b>	<b>EVENING</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelter Housing Advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lancaster District Women's Aid</li> <li>• Community Alcohol Team</li> <li>• Housing Support Team</li> </ul>	
<b>Tuesday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Alcohol Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leg Ulcer Clinic</li> <li>• Welfare Rights</li> </ul>	
<b>Wednesday</b>	NB: The service has been closed on Wednesdays to facilitate group work linked to casework which has included a Dad's Group and Women's Group		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morecambe Homeless Action</li> <li>• Women's Reading Group</li> </ul>
<b>Thursday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sal's Place</li> <li>• Community Alcohol Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lancaster District Women's Aid</li> <li>• Leg Ulcer Clinic</li> <li>• Youth Offending Team</li> </ul>	
<b>Friday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Alcohol Team</li> <li>• Leg Ulcer Clinic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Offending Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morecambe Homeless Action</li> </ul>

### **Activities and Special Events**

The Information and Advice Service has supported several local events providing leaflets, information and signposting. They have also made good use of Signposts badge making machine, which is always a popular attraction on our stall.

#### **'No Justice – Homeless Awareness' - January 07**

'No Justice – Homeless Awareness' event run by the Mustard Seed Group. An opportunity to raise awareness of homeless issues within the Lancaster area and to network with other agencies. Keynote speech was given by Shelter and users of the Mustard Seed service gave an insight into their own life stories.

#### **Community Information Weekend - March 07**

Community Information Weekend – Organised in partnership with Signposts and Sefton Road United Reformed Church the weekend provided information about local services and organisations to the West End community and in particular to the Polish residents. Our thanks go to Sefton Road Church and its members for providing the venue, refreshments and support for this event.

### **Opportunities**

- Develop robust training and induction programme with staff and volunteers across the whole project linking to the annual training programme that is being developed linked to IIP.
- Funding achieved via Tudor Trust to develop a robust, fit for purpose support outreach information and advice service linking to Farming and Rural Health Project – Wellbeing in Wellies.
- Establishing close links with the prevention, low level needs and wellbeing agenda which includes the development of mental health services and community based health services.
- ICT development.

### **Threats**

- Complex, continuing heavy demand on a limited service.
- Changing environment within the voluntary, community and faith sector
- Emphasis on “rights” within advice and information funding
- Complexity involved in stretching service to develop a whole project approach

## **HIV Work**

During the last 12 months Signposts has received a low level of funding from Adult and Community Care Services to provide a core offer to those who are HIV Positive or living with AIDS. It has been acknowledged that this service has been provided within our mainstream services rather than as a stand alone provision.

However, towards the end of the financial year we have been in discussions to reinvigorate our service in the coming financial year in line with the emerging strategy which is being developed as a result of an analysis of services which has been carried out Countywide.

### **The Service is provided by:**

- the collation of relevant materials which are then made available to individuals and agencies
- the production of information materials on local services
- to provision of sexual health materials within Signposts
- the training of the whole staff team at Signposts so that they can respond to day-to-day enquires
- the provision of specialist one-to-one support around HIV issues
- the provision of one-to-one support, advice and information to gay men and men who have sex with men

## **Service Delivery**

This is managed by the Project Director who also undertakes the service delivery due to the low demand and sensitive nature of the work.

### **Aim**

To provide an appropriate service to those who are HIV Positive and living with AIDS

### **Objectives**

- to provide a user friendly, easy access, non-threatening point of contact for those who are HIV+ seeking information and advice
- to provide a co-ordinated care service in conjunction with the Specialist Nurse and Specialist Social Worker
- to provide a Welfare Fund

### **The service is provided by:**

- the provision of one-to-one specialist support
- the administration of the Welfare Fund
- the provision of specialist support on demand

**Pamela Beswick, Project Director**

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## Housing Work

### Aim

To work with local agencies and residents to address housing poverty issues, maintain tenancies and enable people to live independently by providing a professional outreach service.

### Objectives

- Further develop the housing advice within Signposts to include an outreach service
- Develop and maintain close inter-agency links with existing projects, accommodation and service providers, groups and individuals in the area.
- Identify housing needs and inform strategic planning.
- Provide training and support to volunteers and workers.

The Supported Housing work is currently provided through:

- immediate access to information and advice
- referral to specialist agencies and
- on-going support via floating support.

The housing support work is based within the information and advice service, where the majority of issues relating to housing need are dealt with.

### Housing Advice and Information

For clients who access our services for information and advice about housing and homelessness, we can offer:

#### Information:

- Lists of landlords
- Rented housing in the papers
- Morecambe Homeless Action and Lancaster Homeless Action session details
- List of housing associations
- Council housing forms

#### Specialist Advice:

- Shelter case worker on Monday mornings.
- Wednesday afternoon – Lancaster City Council Homelessness Unit.
- NHAS consultancy line.

#### Practical support:

- Use of phones – contacting landlords, housing associations, council
- Shower and washer
- Use of computer

#### Referrals:

- Access to Floating support services via the Housing Support Partnership common referral system.
- Signposts case work (housing support and family support).
- Signposts Young People's work.

#### Benefits:

Access to forms and contacts for:

- Community Care Grant
- Budgeting Loan
- Homeless Prevention Fund

### Homelessness Prevention Initiatives

Prevention Method	Existing Outputs	Action
<b>Information and Advice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lists of property agents and housing associations.</li> <li>• Housing benefit forms.</li> <li>• Council housing forms.</li> <li>• Information on local services for homeless people.</li> <li>• Leaflets about tenants' issues.</li> <li>• Homeless Pack.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continual updating via websites, LCC</li> <li>• Implemented by end of November.</li> <li>• MAM to be introduced January 2007.</li> <li>• Development of website links.</li> </ul>
<b>Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly team meetings.</li> <li>• Training session with Shelter November 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighbourhood Management and Regeneration team, first quarter of 2007.</li> <li>• Training planned with LCC Homeless Prevention officer.</li> <li>• CAB – debt advice and money management.</li> </ul>
<b>Partnership working</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership of Homeless Forum.</li> <li>• Morecambe Homeless Action.</li> <li>• Social Impact Group.</li> <li>• Lancaster and District Housing Partnership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Input to Homeless Strategy Review.</li> <li>• Review SLA April 2007.</li> <li>• Continue membership of group.</li> <li>• Supporting People consortium.</li> </ul>
<b>Specialist services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signposts sessions –</li> <li>• Shelter</li> <li>• LCC Homeless Prevention</li> <li>• Welfare Rights</li> <li>• Credit Union</li> <li>• NHAS Consultancy line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue sessions. Link with Heysham Road project.</li> <li>• Continue weekly sessions at Community Shop. Link with Heysham Road project.</li> <li>• Distribute recent changes in service to team.</li> </ul>
<b>Heysham Road</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership working with Places for People providing accommodation and support for non-priority, homeless people with an emphasis on single homeless women. All nominations to have a West End connection.</li> <li>• Support plans for SP nominees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued development of partnership to include SLA.</li> <li>• Continue to build waiting list.</li> <li>• Development of basement flat to provide continuing support to residents via training sessions, advice and support.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate and consistent monitoring of all housing enquiries across the project including recording of referrals.</li> <li>• Monitoring information given to NHAS to inform ODPM.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MAM to be introduced beginning of December.</li> <li>• Electronic recording of all casework and information and advice enquiries on-going.</li> </ul>

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## **Housing Support Case Work (Floating Support)**

The information and advice service is often the first point of contact for clients who are experiencing housing difficulties. Whilst they can get immediate advice and guidance through the various information systems available and referrals to specialist services, they can also be referred into Supported Housing Work that can provide on-going support for their situation.

Housing Support casework is managed through the floating support service, which has a level C accreditation with Supporting People.

### **Aims:**

1. To provide life skills support to people who are experiencing difficulties with their every day living situation.
2. To prevent homelessness by enabling people to maintain their current accommodation through the setting and evaluation of personal goals.

### **Outcomes**

Signposts Floating Support service has continued to support clients who are experiencing housing poverty and housing. The work has been funded through Supporting People and over the past year the service has worked with 15 clients.

During the year referrals to the project have continued, supported in part by the establishment of the Lancaster District Housing Partnership. This partnership has enabled a common referral system to be put in place across the district.

The needs of the people accessing the service have varied and includes young homeless people; people with disabilities; people with alcohol and drug issues and people with mental health needs.

The support provided by the service has enabled clients to improve their housing situation through:

- developing budgeting skills and setting up payment plans
- increasing access to benefits
- referrals to specialist services
- move to more appropriate accommodation

### **Future Work of Signposts Housing Support:**

The Supporting People funding has, over the past year, been reviewed and the decision was taken to put the delivery of the service out to tender. The tender was successfully won by DISC and as such the future of some of the Floating Support services in Lancaster District is uncertain.

Several months ago Signposts took the decision to finish their contract with Supporting People and as of 30th June 2007 will no longer receive funding to deliver floating support.

However, housing is still a major factor in the majority of enquiries at the information and advice service and is often an issue for family support and 50Forward casework. Therefore Signposts will still play a big part in addressing the issue of homelessness and supporting clients who are in housing poverty through these services. We will also continue to be an active member of;

- Lancaster District Homeless Forum
- Lancaster District Housing Support Partnership
- Voluntary Sector Homeless Forum

### **Project Milestones – Heysham Road**

Signposts, whilst no longer providing floating support services, remains committed to supporting those in housing need and continues to seek innovative ways to address those needs.

A recent initiative has been a partnership with Places for to look at ways of improving a tenanted block of flats on Heysham Road. The flats were having issues relating to anti-social behaviour and experienced a high turnover of tenants. Our role in the partnership is to work with tenants to support their involvement with the local community and to provide training and group work opportunities. To support us in this, Places for People have agreed to give us the use of the ground floor flat in the building, which we hope to develop as an office and training room.



### **Aim**

To contribute to the 'Winning Back the West End' agenda of creating '...an exceptionally good place to live, work and play in..', by developing a safe, supported housing project within an existing accommodation complex.

### **Objectives**

- Allocation management to include a mix of needs.
- Partnership working to ensure appropriate and intensive support.
- Provide on-site access to support services/training/education.
- Move-on to access mainstream services/employment/education.
- Move-on to permanent sustainable accommodation.
- Allocation management to include a mix of needs (50% shared equally between Lancaster City Council and Signposts).
- Signposts allocations with prioritise single homeless women and people with learning disabilities.
- Partnership working to ensure appropriate and intensive support.
- Provide on-site access to support services/training/education.
- Move-on to access mainstream services/employment/education.
- Office and training/meeting room space available to partners.

Signposts feel that this is a great opportunity for partnership working and for people in housing need to be given an opportunity to find suitable accommodation and be a part of their local community. The project was opened by the newly appointed Mayor of Lancaster and is now up and running with a team of workers, volunteers and students based in the basement flat.

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## 50Forward – Care Navigator Project

### Introduction

50Forward is a new project as part of government initiatives, being coordinated by Lancaster City Council with delivery partners including Age Concern and Signposts.

The project is aimed at older adults, which are 50+.

“Our population is growing older and we must turn this into an opportunity, not a threat...we must put older people at the heart of active and sustainable communities. The job is to recognise, support and unlock the potential of older people and tackle the barriers that currently prevent older people having independence, dignity and choice” (David Milliband, former ODPM Minister of communities.)



The project itself is set up to enable older people to retain their independence and to lead worthwhile, enjoyable and creative lives within their communities and access the help they need by retaining their place in those communities and receiving services in a flexible, bespoke way.

Signposts is delivering the care navigator element of the 50Forward package. The project will be ran mainly by volunteers as a result of this it will be a flexible service, for those who are hard to reach that are isolated and in danger of social exclusion.

Signposts role in 50 forward is called the ‘navigator role’ this means Signposts will be:-

- Reaching out to vulnerable hard to reach people who may not respond to other direct publicity and information about services and activities.
- Taking referrals from statutory, voluntary, faith and community sectors and self-referrals from older people.
- Identifying one-to-one the services and activities individual older people are interested in. where the older person cannot express this clearly, a volunteer will help them to do so.
- Removing barriers to older people undertaking activities that interest them. This might include a volunteer accompanying an older person to a new activity/service, helping to overcome practical problems to engagement e.g. transport issues, caring responsibilities, helping the person access the personal care they need away from home, signposting to services that can assist with rehabilitation e.g. when a mobility problem prevents the person accessing mainstream services.
- Working flexibly with individuals to develop services and activities for which there is a demand and which are likely to be sustainable in longer term.
- Assisting older people into volunteering, training or employment.

### **Strengths**

- provides a user friendly, easily accessible, non-threatening service within local communities.
- offers an holistic service to enquirers which seeks to address the concerns of the individual rather than provide answers to questions.

### **Weaknesses**

- Late confirmation of SLA and late start of project.

### **Case Study**

In the role of care navigator of 50 Forward, Signposts has reached out to the vulnerable older adults in our community in order to support and aid them in tackling the barriers that prevent them leading enjoyable independent lives. This case study demonstrates how we are doing this.

X was referred to 50Forward via our information and advice centre. At the initial assessment it became apparent that along with feeling isolated X also had several other problems; very poor mobility; extremely bad eyesight, and being harassed by youths in his home.

A target goal was jointly decided upon by X and the support worker to help unlock his potential. X's goal was to help him lead an enjoyable and active role within the community by identifying and helping him access activities and weekly groups of interest to him.

Now with the support of signposts X is a regular member of the over 50's Sovereign group on Tuesday mornings, he also regularly attends a luncheon club in the community on Wednesdays and takes part in art classes on Thursdays.

To address X's other problems Signposts communicated with other agencies including strategic housing, social services and the police.

It is hoped that X's continued involvement with 50F will provide support for him to find more suitable housing, resolve caring issues and reduce his vulnerability to crime.

### **Opportunities**

- Partnership working to develop wider networks in the area to engage older people and the avoidance of duplication
- As a new project we can shape the way we deliver and be innovative and listen to older people to effectively meet their needs and to empower them to be involved in service design

### **Threats**

- Short term-time limited funding
- Engagement with partners - as a new project it has not always been immediately apparent to partners how they can engage with service delivery.

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## **Farming and Rural Health – ‘Well being in Wellies’**

### **Introduction**

This has been a busy year for the project we have built a rolling programme of monthly advice and information outreach sessions at both Kendal and Lancaster. These have been well received and led to a small amount of ongoing casework.

We have recently extended the monthly sessions to include Hornby community resource centre and the Athenaeum at Leasgill.

The Cumbria and Lancashire operational groups have met 3 times and have informed the work we do and also built links with partners. We have been successful in encouraging partners to deliver and have hosted the environment agency and Heart beat NW in the next 3 months we will host the fire service the police service and the NHS Cancer information outreach service at venues in Cumbria & Lancashire.

### **Background**

The Commission for Rural Communities and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) suggests that 1 in 6 families are living in poverty in rural areas. These families are facing financial exclusion and are dispersed amongst a more affluent population. Individuals from farming and rural backgrounds face several barriers to accessing services and likewise services face barriers in meeting and engaging with this community.

The project has been developed around a cluster model, working primarily within auction marts and their associated geographical communities. The cluster model consists of three main components that provides access to farming communities (via Auction Mart) access to rural communities (via community venues) and access to health and social care through partnership working with primary care services.

### **Delivery Mechanism**

The project currently delivers from two Auction Mart Clusters, which contain one auction mart and one community venue:

- Kendal Auction Mart and Milnthorpe Children’s Centre
- Lancaster Auction Mart and Hornby Institute

### **Overview**

- provides a user friendly, easily accessible, non-threatening service within local communities.
- offers an holistic service to enquirers which seeks to address the concerns of the individual rather than provide answers to questions
- offers specialist information and advice through partners attending outreach sessions.
- ‘One-off’ advice giving by leaflet distribution and face-to-face enquiry.
- Access to further advice through direct contact with Signposts main Information and advice centre.
- Information that requires further investigation, once collected, can be sent directly to enquirer.
- On-going support is provided by referral into Signposts casework where home visits provide opportunity for goal planning and support work to be undertaken.

- Specialist support through referral to appropriate statutory or voluntary organisation.
- a programme of 'themed' sessions attended by partner agencies or where a direct phone contact is available.

### **Events**

The Farming and Rural Health project attended several agricultural shows during the summer of 2006. This included Garstang and Westmoreland where the team promoted the project, networked with other organisations and engaged with local people.

The project has enabled and hosted various agencies to attend the outreach sessions:

1. Heartbeat North West – checking BMI and advice on healthy hearts
2. Citizens Advice Bureau - debt and money advice
3. Environment Agency – waste exemption sign-up
4. McMillan Trust – cancer information and advice
5. Lancashire and Cumbria Fire Brigade – Fire Safety Checks and free smoke alarms
6. Cumbria Police Force – post coding of farm vehicles and machinery to prevent theft

### **Project Development**

1. Successful funding application from Tudor Trust, the project can now expand to include further Auction Mart clusters in Lancashire and Cumbria.
2. The staff team to include two part posts, sessional staff and volunteers delivering:
  - Delivery of advice outreach sessions
  - Casework
  - Recruitment and training of local volunteers
  - Promotion of project – awareness raising with agencies, agricultural shows, local community groups

### **Conclusion**

Key actions are to develop expand the project further:

- Access to accurate and effective advice for isolated rural and farming communities.
- Mental health well-being of farmers – specific to suicide prevention.
- Physical health improved of farming communities.
- Economic well-being of isolated rural communities – benefits and debt advice.
- Access to specialist services via referrals and face-to-face sessions within outreach posts (Welfare Rights; CAB; Social Services).
- Community involvement and cohesion via recruitment of local volunteers; use of trusted venues; partnerships with rural organisations; publicity through local resources.
- Awareness raising of rural issues and barriers amongst statutory and voluntary services.
- Greater awareness of issues effecting farming and rural communities and targeted 'events' developed to avoid having to access specialist services.

## Children, Families and Young People

### including Pupil Mobility Projects, work with Children's Centres and Targeted Work With Young People

Signposts is working within the framework of Every Child Matters and Youth Matters to deliver appropriate Family Support Services, and targeted work with Young People.

## Pupil Mobility Work



The projects are moving towards mainstreaming and the following tables outline how the service has been delivered against the required outputs and outcomes.

A report on actual activity is contained within the following sections of the report.

### Morecambe Pupil Mobility Project

Service Level Agreement Project Performance Indicators	Key Milestones
<p><b>Outputs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80 pupils and their families benefiting</li> <li>• 40 families regularly supported</li> <li>• all schools in Morecambe involved at some level</li> <li>• 10 volunteers involved</li> <li>• 4 family days and trips organised</li> <li>• 10 families provided with practical support including uniform bank</li> <li>• Diversionary activities offered within Activ8 Programme</li> <li>• Links with HLC Work in West End and Poulton</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of electronic database model</li> <li>• Referrals received from partner agencies</li> <li>• Family days organised and delivered</li> <li>• New staffing structure at Signposts implemented</li> <li>• Activ8 Programme Delivered throughout the year</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families will be more in control of their lives and less chaotic</li> <li>• Children will achieve higher attendance levels in schools</li> <li>• Homelessness will be prevented</li> <li>• Children and families will experience social time together</li> <li>• Behaviour will be improved leading to</li> </ul>	

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<p>greater family cohesion and less involvement with police</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The incidence of ASB will be reduced in communities</li> <li>• Communication between partner agencies will be improved leading to greater cohesion in casework</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Levels of provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 hours per week family support (one to one)</li> <li>• 5 hours per week support in schools</li> <li>• 3 hours per week group work and/or detached work</li> <li>• 10 hours per week group work (holiday)</li> <li>• provision of practical support – uniform bank</li> <li>• access to Information and Advice, Housing Support and other Work within Signposts</li> <li>• Support from the Management Team and administration Team at Signposts (main office)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Service Continues to be delivered</li> <li>• The new staffing structure is embedded</li> <li>• YP are involved in Neighbourhood Management in both Poulton and West End</li> <li>• Links with Children’s Centre and Extended Schools Agenda is embedded</li> </ul>
<p><b>Areas of provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morecambe wide</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Service availability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The service will be available 9 – 4.30 Monday to Friday (on a rota planned basis)</li> <li>• weekends and evenings will be provided as required</li> <li>• Activ8 will run during school holidays</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Strategic outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure the Morecambe Pupil Mobility Project is included in the Signposts Development Plan</li> <li>• To ensure the Project is appropriately located within emerging services within Children’s Directorate</li> <li>• To expand Signposts services within the Phase II Children’s Centre Developments – to include mobile crèche – Travelling Tots</li> <li>• To link the work to Homelessness Strategy in Lancaster</li> <li>• To expand service to Rural Areas in Morecambe and Lancaster District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports prepared and approved by Executive</li> <li>• Indicative support given from Childers Directorate</li> <li>• Key meetings organised</li> <li>• Executive to review Development Plan and Vision Document</li> <li>• AGM</li> <li>• Submission of Future Builders Bid</li> </ul>

<p>(within Signposts Development Plan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure continuation of funding within Lancashire County Council and the Lancaster Locality Footprint to include Fylde and Wyre and to achieve earned income and sustainability</li> </ul>	
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**Preston Pupil Mobility Project**

<b>Service Level Agreement Project Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Key Milestones</b>
<p><b>Outputs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 800 pupils and their families benefiting</li> <li>• 40 families regularly supported</li> <li>• all schools in Preston involved at some level</li> <li>• 10 volunteers involved</li> <li>• 4 information and advice outreach sessions delivered per week</li> <li>• 4 family days and trips organised</li> <li>• 10 families provided with practical support including uniform bank</li> </ul>	<p>Introduction of electronic database model Referrals received from partner agencies Information and advice outreach sessions established Family days organised and delivered New staffing structure at Signposts implemented</p>
<p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families will be more in control of their lives and less chaotic</li> <li>• Children will achieve higher attendance levels in schools</li> <li>• Homelessness will be prevented</li> <li>• Children and families will experience social time together</li> <li>• Behaviour will be improved leading to greater family cohesion and less involvement with police</li> <li>• The incidence of ASB will be reduced in communities</li> <li>• Communication between partner agencies will be improved leading to greater cohesion in casework</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Levels of provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 outreach sessions will be delivered</li> <li>• family days and trips will be provided</li> <li>• full-time Project Manager</li> <li>• half-time project support worker</li> <li>• full-time apprentice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing staff are given new JD's and Work programmes</li> <li>• The Apprentice is appointed</li> </ul>
<p><b>Areas of provision</b></p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preston wide</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Service availability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The service will be available 9 – 4.30 Monday to Friday (on a rota planned basis)</li> <li>• weekends and evenings will be provided as required</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Strategic outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure the Preston Project is included in the Signposts Development Plan</li> <li>• To ensure the Project is appropriately located within emerging services within Children’s Directorate</li> <li>• To expand Signposts services to Preston – to include mobile crèche – Travelling Tots</li> <li>• To link the work to Homelessness Strategy in Preston</li> <li>• To expand service to Rural Areas in Preston</li> <li>• To ensure continuation of funding within Lancashire County Council and Preston and to achieve earned income and sustainability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports prepared and approved by Executive</li> <li>• Indicative support given from Childers Directorate</li> <li>• Key meetings organised</li> <li>• Executive to review Development Plan and Vision Document</li> <li>• AGM</li> </ul>

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## Family Support Work

### Introduction

Signposts has developed extensive experience in Family Support Work over a number of years. In Morecambe and Preston, work developed within the 5 – 13yrs. age range is funded by the Lancashire Children’s Fund. This has led to work being developed with older young people via funding from Connexions, PAYP and Youth & Community and (Adult and Community Services) and within the Every Child Matters Agenda and Children’s Centres for the younger age range.

The project is unique in its ability to provide a ‘holistic approach’ within its core business, including Information and Advice. The project enjoys a good working relationship with Social Services and other organisations and continues to update its policies and procedures according to new Government Frameworks and Agendas.

Signposts Family Support Service works with families enabling them to develop strategies and plans to deal with issues such as; parenting, schooling; behaviour problems; debt; housing; mental health; relationship breakdown; benefit support; domestic violence.

The team deliver Family Support in Preston, Morecambe and Carnforth and are currently working with approximately 150 families across the whole project. We work

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in partnership with i.e.: Children's Centres; Social Services; Schools; Health teams; Educational Welfare Service; GRIP; Housing Associations.

The project works in various ways to support families and provide them with opportunities to deal with their issues. These include:

- One to One Casework – setting goals and evaluating achievements
- Referrals to specialist services
- Multi disciplinary working within the team i.e.; Young People's Work; Information and Advice; Social Care
- Group work
- Family Fun Days/Trips



The Signposts Team are continually developing new systems for the service and are currently working towards transferring all client information to an electronic database in line with the Common Assessment Framework.

To help manage the referrals into the service there is a weekly 'referral meeting' where new clients are discussed and allocated to a worker. There is always a strategic senior worker on duty whilst the service is being delivered and we work within a strict lone working policy which covers home visits. In addition. We have a dedicated Family Support Phone Line which comes into the main office in Morecambe and which would act as a "clearing house" for incoming referrals across the whole project, although individual referrals are made to Preston.

Across the project, Case Reviews are held regularly to monitor the casework progression, discuss a new 'way forward' or make a decision to close a case file.

A recent innovation to the project has been the development of a group specifically to support Fathers. The group meets weekly, in Morecambe and has approximately 15 Dads on its membership list. The group develops its own programme of activities, primarily designed to encourage Dads to discuss issues relating to Parenting and to enable them to have a positive input into the lives of their children.

20 Dads [and Families] have been referred onto to the Signposts Dads Worker. Of these, some have engaged long enough to benefit from the advice, guidance and support that had been offered to them, some have not. The issues and difficulties which they have presented with have been many and varied. However, housing has tended to be an enduring issue with most.

The degree of support required and asked for by these Dads varies and some are obviously needier than others.

The Dads Group continues to make progress. Some of the Dads within the Family Support have either not been willing or able to attend the Group's sessions, some have been more so. Some of the Dads attend the group and then move on; some of the Dads are consistent in attending and taking part. There is a core of around six to eight Dads who are keen to take advantage of what the Dads Group has to offer them, which includes getting involved in the process of making things happen.

To date, outcomes which the Family Support and the Dads Group can count itself a party to have been as follows:

- Two of the Dads are now volunteering three days a week at Furniture Matters
- One of the Dads is now working full time on a local building site
- Five of the Dads have been able to access more suitable housing for their needs
- Three of the Dads have been able to access further support through Signposts for the needs of some of their children
- Four of the Dads have been able to receive one to one support and guidance on financial matters through the CAB
- Four of the Dads are now receiving support through CAT
- Two of the Dads are now receiving counselling support through the HLC'S student counsellor
- Six of the Dads have 10 Children attending sessions at Regents Park Studios
- Three of the Dads have been supported throughout issues involving SSD
- Four of the Dads have been supported with specific benefit difficulties e.g. appeals etc
- Three of the Dads have received furniture and household items through Vincent de Paul
- One of the Dads has now joined the British Army

Feedback from the Dads has been very positive. They have tended to recognize and appreciate the benefits of Family Support and the group. They feel that without this type support they would have been less informed and less able to involve themselves and their children in a lot of the things and activities which we have achieved over the last six months. The Dads have voiced their appreciation for this.

Group work continues to be an important part of our intervention work and can provide another avenue of support to our clients, linked with one to one casework. The group work undertaken by the team is intended to support and compliment the individual work done by the Family Support Worker and their client, as well as accepting referrals from other agencies.

**Strengths:**

- We recognise the disadvantages faced by vulnerable people living in our communities.
- We provide practical advice and support to Parents, Carers, Young People and Children.
- We work positively and creatively within a multi-disciplinary team.
- We are innovative and creative in meeting identified need.

- We have the ability to deliver a responsive and reliable service via the 'easy download' of Referral Forms from our website [www.signposts.org.uk](http://www.signposts.org.uk).
- We focus on early intervention and prevention via a 'person centred' approach.
- We help to improve access to other services according to the needs of the family.
- We promote physical health, mental health and emotional well-being by encouraging children and families to develop healthier lifestyles.
- We have Policies and Procedures which are meaningful and 'fit for purpose' and are constantly being updated.
- We adhere to Child Protection Policies (Signposts and LCC Children's Centres Policies) acknowledging the need to not only protect and safeguard all children and young people, but also the staff and volunteers who have responsibility for them.
  - We aim to continue to value and uphold our credibility with our Communities and our partners and celebrate our achievements.
  - The need for stronger management has been recognised with the introduction of the specialist team leader post

### **Weaknesses:**

- Workforce development – the training that has been offered so far, although adequate in terms of curriculum has not been located within the national occupational standards criteria leading to recognised qualification which would both increase the credibility of the service and enable to staff to have qualification that would benefit them.
- Rapid change within the Children's Centre agenda
- The uncertainty around staffing structures and management arrangements within key partner agencies – Early Years and SureStart and PCT – make the development of shared protocols and understanding of roles and responsibilities difficult
- When working with vulnerable families, there is always a tension between addressing need and avoiding dependency. Goal centred casework should avoid this but within a developing service this needs to be more robust.
- When need has been identified the ability to refer on can be limited by the availability of appropriate, relevant and responsive services.
- Within a busy service, the need to celebrate achievements can be overlooked.
- Working within a competitive environment creates challenges when competing with services who may themselves be under pressure and subject to cost cuts.

### **Facts and Figures:**

#### **Morecambe and Carnforth**

Throughout 2006/7 a number of Groups/ Fun Days were developed including:

- Women's Groups
- Girl's Group
- Young Boy's Group
- Dad's Group
- Family Day, Christmas 2006: included Christmas Craft Activities, lunch and a trip to the Dukes Theatre to see 'Charlottes Web'

- Family Trip to Docker Park Farm specifically for families with Children under 5 yrs old.



Signposts have been approached by West End Community Primary School to plan and deliver a Boy's Group within school.

PRIME (Primary Care Mental Health) Team are also planning to work in partnership with Signposts by providing Training on 'Group work', looking at Self-Esteem, Confidence and Anxiety.

The Dad's Group had a 'Day Out' in Regent's Park A range of positive Sporting Activities was provided for the parents and children by staff from the Poulton Children's Centre, Morecambe.

The Group also enjoyed a 'Cook and Eat' session in partnership with the Healthy Living Centre. Dads and children were actively encouraged to prepare and cook the food together. All the Dads felt it had been a positive experience and asked for it to be repeated in the future.

### **Preston**

Throughout 2006/7 a number of Groups/ Fun Days were developed including:

- June 2006 – Community Health & Safety Day – Families joined in the fun on a very warm day. The event was held in the grounds of Ingol C.P. School, Preston. Many organisations displayed Information stands and Ingol Community Organisation provided us with Bouncy Castles and food and drinks throughout the day. It is hoped to make this an Annual event.
- July/August 2006 – Family Trips – The families on the Preston caseload were once again treated to some fun days out during the Summer holidays; funded by the Chronicle Cinderella Fund, they visited Camelot Theme Park and Blackpool Zoo.



- March 2006 –A Family Fun Day ‘Learning Through Play’ in Ashton/Lea area of Preston – This Fun day was held in Lea Methodist Church Hall and Grounds, in partnership and funded by the SureStart West Children’s Centre. This was a fantastic day for the families in the area and over 200 attended. They joined in the wide range of fun activities including: balloon modelling; ‘mad science’; giant games; arts and crafts; non-alcoholic cocktails and a visit by the ‘Deepdale Duck’. A healthy lunch was provided for everyone with a ‘take home’ gift of lovely books for the family to share.



**Feedback from parents/carer’s on the Family Fun Day ‘Learning Through Play’**

“Great day, good turn out. Must happen again.”

“The food was excellent. Very good for all concerned and very well organised.”

“I felt there should be a small contribution from parents, it’s been valuable, to include all ages, amazing day, very enjoyable. Something for everyone.”

“When’s the next one? Very good, thanks.”

Various Group activities have been organised during 2006/7 with the help of all the Students on placement in Preston.

- A GrandCarer’s Group was set up for a 6 week project in the St. Matthews area of Preston. Research was carried out and identified that there are a significant number of Grandparents who have responsibility for Grandchildren from Mon –

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Friday, whilst parents go to work. Although the attendance at the group was low, various issues were raised including; parenting; finance and responsibility.

- A Parent and Community Group has been set up in the PETRA Community building in the St. Matthews area of Preston. This group has been particularly successful in recruiting some parents who would not normally attend a 'group'. The children are able to access activities and the parents can obtain 1-1 Information and Advice from the Signposts staff.



- Signposts Preston has delivered a number of Activity Sessions for parents in Ashton Primary School, working with the school Family Link Worker. A x6 month Service Level Agreement was agreed with the SureStart West Children's Centre. Signposts were able to introduce an Information and Advice service to the families who attended the sessions and several referrals were obtained. We also alerted S/S West to any families, with children under 5 yrs. who were not registered with them.

A new Service Level Agreement was agreed with S/S West in March '07 to continue this work in other schools in the area. The S.L.A. is for a further 12 months to March '08. We have also agreed to help provide staff for a Saturday club in the Children's Centre on the first and third Saturday in the month, and to hold a regular half-hour coffee morning in Ashton Primary School on a Friday morning (term-time).

## **Family Support Outcomes**

The following are examples of outcomes from Signposts Family Support work in relation to the Every Child Matters Framework.

### **Be Healthy:**

- Through one to one work with families and young people we have been able to reduce the occurrence of anti social behaviour.
- Through inter-agency working with CAMHS and a Bereavement Counsellor we were able to reduce the desire of one young person to contemplate suicide.
- We have delivered cook and eat sessions in partnership with the Healthy Living Centre to encourage families to cook healthy meals on a low budget. A number of our groups including the girls and dads group have accessed this session. This has resulted in families having healthier lifestyles. It has also encouraged family cohesion through working together around diet.

### **Stay Safe:**

- Through early intervention in family crisis we have been able to prevent parental splits.
- Through joint work with social services we have been involved in child protection programmes and have thus been able to minimise the risk of child abuse.
- Health visitors are contacted for all under 5's we work with. This ensures no child goes 'missing'. We have also ensured that all families new to the area are registered with appropriate statutory services and that children are registered with appropriate schools. Again we have ensured that children are in appropriate education.
- We have referred young people who have witnessed domestic violence to our young carers group. This results in the young people receiving support for the caring role they may take on due to witnessing domestic violence.
- We have worked in partnership with the fire brigade to fit fire alarms. This has resulted in families having safer homes.

### **Enjoy and Achieve:**

- Through partnership with local schools we have prevented young people from being excluded from school. We have also integrated young people back into school after they have experienced difficulties with engaging.
- Through the women's group we have increased the participants self esteem, resulting in a self-managed reading group being formed. This increase in self-esteem has directly affected the young people related to these women and has resulted in them enjoying and achieving more.
- Also through the women's group one woman has gone onto to a college course. This was a direct result of her self-esteem being increased through the group. Again this has resulted in the related young people having a positive role model around education and has encouraged them also to actively engage in education.
- Through our parenting course we have equipped parents with greater confidence and new skills in dealing with their own children.

- We have provided a space to allow a local high school to tutor an excluded pupil. This has resulted in this young person continuing to engage in education, even though they are not attending school.
- Through referrals into our young women's group we have prevented young women from being excluded from school.
- All our staff are trained in positive parenting skills and this has allowed us to provide families with advice and support.

#### **Make a Positive Contribution:**

- We have referred young people to our boys group dealing with anger management. This has resulted in parents seeing a noticeable change in young people's attitude and anger.
- Through our multi-disciplinary approach we have referred young people to our Activ8 project. This has resulted in young people who attended the project participating in less anti-social behaviour and contributing to the improvement of the local community. This has led to young people taking more ownership of the communities they live in.
- Through our girls and boys group we have encouraged a mentoring system. We have produced an empathetic environment in our girls and boys group, resulting in a change in behaviour and a more supportive environment.

#### **Achieving Economic Well-being:**

- Through our multi-disciplinary approach we are able to support different members of the family to move forward.
- We have successfully obtained discretionary housing payments for a family for short-term support for their tenancy. This resulted in the family not becoming homeless.
- We have supported families whilst they were in temporary accommodation, thus diverting a crisis and ensuring that they remained housed.
- We have delivered a number of family days providing positive activities on a low budget. This resulted in empowering the families to access activities independently. This has started to happen, with a number of families accessing activities independently.
- We have increased family's economic well being by identifying benefits they are entitled to.
- We have encouraged our families to use the credit union. This resulted in a reduction in the number of 'risky' loans families were taking out and also encouraged families to be financially stable.

#### **Case Studies linked to the outcomes of Every Child Matters:**

##### **Case Study 1: Be Healthy**

We received a referral to Family Support for a young woman who was contemplating suicide. A support worker met with the young woman and discussed with her issues relating to her current situation. After these discussions it was apparent that she needed to seek support via her GP to address how she was feeling. The support worker was able to accompany her to an appointment and to support her to discuss her needs.

Through this, the GP and support worker felt that a referral to CAHMS was the most appropriate course of action. Once the referral had gone into CAHMS, we then set up immediate counselling support for the young woman.

The result of this case was that the young woman did not make any further attempts on her life and is now seeing her counsellor on a regular basis. The service were able to close the case, with the client feeling much more positive and looking forward to her future.

### **Case Study 2 - Stay Safe**

A family was referred to Family Support via the local district housing partnership. The family were in danger of losing their tenancy through non-payment of rent due to the loss of the dad's job.

An initial visit revealed that the dad's self-esteem was very low due to unemployment and he was reticent about having to claim benefits. He discussed his feelings with the family support dad's worker and said that he was considering leaving the family. The worker supported the dad to address the following issues:

- Negotiate with landlord and secure housing benefit and discretionary housing payment.
- Investigate local job agencies for work.
- Develop a positive relationship with his son.

Several weeks of support with the family to secure their home and build on positive activities with dad and son began to see an improvement in the relationship of the whole family. The worker also identified a benevolent fund linked to the dad's previous career that enabled him to access funds for training.

The dad is now a regular member of the dad's group where he gets support from other dads and has also attended day trips with his son. His relationship with all his family has improved and he and his wife are still together.

### **Case Study 3: Enjoy and Achieve**

The family was referred to Signposts with issues around their son who had ADHD and was participating in criminal activity. Initially work looked at referring the son to GRIP, YMCA and XS and Young Carers for the siblings. These organisations were involved and we then began to work one to one with the son to address his behaviour and how this was affecting those around him. Whilst we were working the young man received an ASBO for his criminal activity.

We then looked at his school attendance, as he was regularly being excluded. Along with the son we felt that school was not an appropriate place for him and that college might provide a better opportunity. We set a number of goals including:

- To attend a college course.
- To adhere to his SABOT conditions.
- To work on his relationship with his mother and stepfather.
- To get involved with PAYP and Activ8 over the holiday period.

Through our work we managed to move the son forward. The outcomes of the case included:

- He has gained weekend employment.
- He is attending a course at local sixth form college.
- He has adhered to his SABOT conditions.
- Has been involved with PAYP activities through Connexions.
- His mother and stepfather feel their relationship with him has vastly improved and that he is a calmer young man.

#### **Case Study 4: Make a Positive Contribution**

The aim of the 'Young Lads Group' project has been to find ways of helping the young people involved to look at issues of anger and the behaviours, which stem from it.

We have approached this problem with the use of various work sheets e.g. anger management diaries; Feedback sheets detailing recent incidents e.g. shouting, swearing fighting etc, Group activities and discussions.

The aim of all these things has been to allow the young people to think about, write down and hopefully recognise where their anger comes from, its effects and its consequences.

One young lad was one of four young people who consistently attended all six of the group sessions. He completed all his anger diaries and worksheets including those, which he had taken home with him and returned the following week. He seemed very keen to take part in all the work and activities of the group and made friends with the other members. He could have a tendency to lose his concentration and easily became bored, which would tend to result in a bit of playful misbehaviour.

He got on well with all the members of staff and said he had enjoyed the sessions and would be keen to join the next 'Young Lads Group' that we hold. His parents felt that being involved in the young lads group had played an important part in his improved behaviour both at home and at school.

#### **Case Study 5: Achieve Economic Well-Being**

A family was referred to the service. They were living in temporary accommodation waiting to be housed by the local authority. The family consisted of a lone mother and two children under 5 and were in danger of being evicted due to rent arrears. Should this have happened the family would have been homeless without a duty from the local authority.

The family support worker liaised with the local authority and the landlord and secured a re-payment schedule for the mother in order to secure the tenancy. Alongside this, Signposts worked in partnership with the local social services family support team and supported strategies and plans to enable the mother to build her confidence in relation to parenting and independent living. Once permanent accommodation became available, we supported the family to move and settle into their new home by obtaining a community care grant; referral for furniture from a local voluntary organisation and setting up utility payment schemes.

The family now have permanent accommodation with the local authority and are continuing to maintain the tenancy.

**Opportunities:**

- To prepare for the Commissioning process and 'market' our service accordingly.
- To focus the work and establish within Every Child Matters; Local Area Agreements targets.
- To establish further partnership working opportunities i.e.: children's centres; extended schools
- To continue to deliver a proven, reliable service.
- To engage in new training opportunities.
- To recognise the skills within the team and use accordingly.
- To continue to work co-operatively in partnership and build on our reputation to deliver a quality service.

**Threats:**

- Competition from partners.
- Funding – National organisations tendering for local work
- Constant need to 'keep up with changes' – not to get left behind.

**Conclusion**

Good quality Family Support requires a well-trained, focused, enthusiastic team who can respond to a referral within 48 hours and begin to actively work with the family on a regular basis over a specified time scale.

Levels of available funding determine the service that may be offered.

The most effective way to support 'families in need' in the short term is to be responsive, sensitive, professional and caring.

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## Work With Young People

Signposts has developed a programme of targeted work with Young People which includes the following activities:

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### (a) Young Carers

#### Aims

To maintain Signposts Young Carers Project in Morecambe, Lancaster and the rural areas, enabling young carers voices to be heard within relevant planning structures and providing recreational and educational activities offering respite from their caring roles.

#### Objectives

1. Facilitate and support Young Carers Groups within the Project to :
  - Support Young Carers aged from 5 to 18 years of age.
  - Provide information on services available.
  - Provide an advocacy role in supporting young carers to access services.
2. To work with young carers and their families and relevant agencies.
3. To liaise with other professionals.
4. To raise awareness amongst the community with regards to young carers issues.
5. To organise, facilitate and evaluate recreational and educational activities including residential weekends.
6. Establish and deliver a pack for awareness raising
7. Attend County Young Carers' Workers meetings and relevant training.

The Young Carers project has been embedded in the work of Signposts, to ensure maintenance and inclusion.

#### Delivery

At the end of the financial year the project had 56 Young Carers 'active' on the database, and the number of Young Carers accessing the service has fluctuated throughout the year, reaching 86 at its peak. The project has continually developed in order to meet the needs of these Young Carers and at the end of this financial year is preparing to implement a revised delivery plan which will promote empowerment of Young Carers and contribute to the achievement of the Every Child Matters five outcomes.

Throughout this year the 'regular' provision has included:

- ❖ A Morecambe Primary Group (Group A and Group B) meeting on Mondays from 4:30 – 6pm at Morecambe Youth & Community Centre
- ❖ A Lancaster Primary Group meeting on Wednesdays from 4:30 – 6pm at Lune Park Children's Centre
- ❖ A Carnforth & Rural Group (5 – 18yrs) meeting on Thursdays from 4:30 – 6pm at the Civic Hall, Carnforth

- ❖ A Secondary Group – this group continues to develop and change, with the service being shaped by the Young Carers. The group organise monthly activity meets, which have recently included bowling, music gigs and ice skating. They have also developed discussion group meetings, enabling the group to explore topics such as health, DIY and first aid which are relevant to them as Young Carers.

As part of this regular contact the group have also begun to explore their identity and rights as Young Carers. This began by first exploring their Young Carers group, and what was unique about them coming together. Eight members of the group went on a residential to Arnside to work on this concept, devising a Young Carers definition and producing posters and video advertisements about what makes their group unique. They also took part in fun activities such as climbing and abseiling and a trip to Lakeland Wildlife Oasis.



The group preparing to climb!



Relaxing at Lakeland Wildlife Oasis

The group have developed their ideas throughout the year and have also attended the Young Carers Festival in Southampton, meeting over a 1000 Young Carers from across the Country. This was their first step in identifying with Young Carers issues on a wider scale, outside of their local group.



Enjoying the sunshine!



Taking part in the procession

More recently a successful bid to the Youth Opportunities Fund enabled the group to complete the first leg of a residential exchange with another Young Carers Group – Crossroads Young Carers in Gateshead. This was the first time the group had worked with another group directly, and begun to explore the issues which are common to all Young Carers. As well as the issue based work, the group relish the opportunity to have some time out from their caring responsibilities, and have some fun together as a group!



Both groups Snow Tubing!



Archery!

The group hope to complete the return leg of the trip in Summer 07, building the confidence to challenge factors affecting their lives both locally, and nationally.

➤ One to One Support

The project also takes part in the Lancashire Young Carers Forum. This brings together Young Carers from the seven projects within the County, and provides a forum where Young Carers can shape and influence the Carers Strategy. Signposts hosted this forum in October. This year the Young Carers Forum have approved a new information and assessment form, which will be used by all seven projects. This will ensure consistency across the County and Signposts has implemented this new process in its referral and assessment practice.

As part of National Carers Week the project delivered a Young Carers Seminar which was aimed at professionals. The seminar was delivered by Young Carers and allowed them to highlight some of the positives and negatives of being a Young Carer and discuss what services can do to better support them.

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<b>Service Provision</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Provision of Young Carers Development project including 6 hours, administrative support.	Project managed by the Project Coordinator Young Peoples Project Worker Co-ordinating the delivery of services Young Carers Sessional Team delivering face to face work Administrative support provided Accommodation at Community Shop and Main Office, with use of Community Buildings for delivery	Young Carers more in control of their daily lives through support provided
Identification and support of young carers;	Referral process in place Regular contact with schools, EWO's and Social Workers	Young carers and siblings recruited to the project and therefore supported
Provide short breaks from caring to young carers, through activities with individuals and with groups;	Four groups provided located across the District Trips out Residential weekends One to One work	Young Carers receive appropriate respite
Enhancing the profile of young carers by establishing relationships with commissioners and providers of social and health care, education professionals and the youth service;	Representation at Children and Young People Multi-Agency Forum. Young Carers Seminar County Young Carers Worker Meeting Representation on Young Carers Strategy Group Young Carers Forum Young Peoples Stakeholder Group	Issues pertinent to Young Carers raised with key people who have the ability to bring about change

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<b>Service Provision</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Promotion and advertisement of the service in the most appropriate ways in line with the aim to develop a clear identity for carers services;	Information Pack Leaflet Work With Young People Update Signposts Information Pack Website	Clear pathways into the system created and awareness of issues raised within the district
Referral of young carers and their families to statutory agencies in accordance with Lancashire's assessment procedure, in line with the guidance 'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' issued under section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970;	Relationship established with local services	Young Carers receive appropriate statutory services
Support local involvement in the 'Lancashire Carers Forum' and supporting carers input to relevant planning activities;	Young Carers Seminar Young Carers Forum Links with Lancaster & District Carers Forum	Specific issues raised via local and county forums
Organisation of regular meetings for young carers for use as a forum for information exchange, debate and mutual support;	Four Young Carers Groups Residential Exchange Young Carers Festival Young Peoples Stakeholder Group Links to District Youth Forum	Youth Forum feeds into carers forums and raises issues to bring about change and awareness
Availability of carers and officers from relevant voluntary organisations to assist with training of Social Services staff as and when appropriate;	Information Pack Social Work Students on placement with Young Carers Project	Appropriately trained Social Services staff enabled to support young carers and their families more effectively

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<b>Service Provision</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
To produce and distribute a regular newsletter for young carers and relevant professionals four times a year;	Information circulated to database of young carers Work With Young People Report distributed to professionals quarterly	More information available to young carers and their families
Maintenance of a database of young carers which complies fully with data protection legislation;	Contact database in place Case Work database being developed	Information stored and shared appropriately
Provision of a dedicated telephone help/information line for carers which is staffed, at a minimum level, between 10am – 3pm weekdays. An answer phone service is to be available at all other times;	Via contact with Signposts (and via mobile phone to facilitate text contact)	Young Carers able to access the service (clear pathway)
To work with the Carers Strategy Officer and other Young Carers Development Workers across the County to share knowledge and skills and contribute to work on shared projects through regular attendance at Carer Development Worker meetings;	Attendance at Development Worker Meetings Attendance at Development Worker Away/Training Days Attendance at Young Carers Strategy Group	Communication with workers leading to increased training and shared knowledge Contribution to Young Carers Strategy
Establish a clear identity for the carers project, including its own name, letterhead etc, which contributes to the positive identity of carers services across Lancashire.	Individual logo (designed by Young Carers) Leaflet	Unique publicity materials created to raise profile of Young Carers

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## **(b) Access to Leisure Project**

### **Aim**

To increase the number of children and young people aged 0 – 17 with significant disabilities to access leisure and out-of-school activities to enable them to be included within their community and wider society, thereby engendering social cohesion.

### **Objectives**

- ❑ To promote the development of new activities
- ❑ To encourage clubs and activity providers to develop inclusive practice
- ❑ To raise awareness amongst children and young people about leisure activities available
- ❑ To encourage children and young people to participate
- ❑ To co-ordinate volunteer involvement
- ❑ To provide a sustainable business plan for the project to secure longer term funding
- ❑ To embed the project within the Signposts methodology and work programme

The project has 16 young people on file:

- 5 are actively engaging in leisure provision with the support of a volunteer.
- 6 young people now access activities independently
- 1 young person is waiting for their activity to restart.
- 1 young person is waiting to move house
- 1 young person is awaiting a decision on the progression of their support.
- 2 cases have been 'closed' at the request of the family

The project presently has 8 volunteers supporting the young people.

### **Case Study**

G is a 14 year old boy with dyspraxia and Aspergers syndrome who is home schooled and who wished to access a football group in the Morecambe area. When I first met G he appeared to be shy but willing to have a go at football. G was matched with Chris a retired volunteer who had a passion for football. G and Chris began to access a local football group together on a Friday night. When I first spoke to Chris he said that G was well behind the rest of the group in terms of ability and fitness but was still enjoying it. After a month Chris stated that G had vastly improved and even the coaches had commented on how much he had improved. Over the coming months Chris commented that the change in G had been amazing and that the rest of the group had really taken to him and encouraged him to join in. Chris was then picked for the team on several occasions and scored a number of goals. The other young people in the group have welcomed G and involve him in their pre-session kick around. G has grown in confidence so much that he now joins in this kick around straight away and does not have to wait to be asked.

Through his experience at football, G has gained the confidence to return to school and is now attending full time. This is a major achievement, as G had been home-schooled for around 4 years. Another outcome has been that one of G's coaches has also decided to leave his job and work with young people with disabilities through meeting G.

Overall the whole experience appears to be very positive and real example of how effective Access to Leisure can be.

### **Strengths:**

- Links created with local leisure providers
- Raising the awareness of young people with disabilities accessing mainstream facilities
- Challenging assumptions around disabilities

### **Weaknesses**

- A lack of suitable activities for young people in villages to access
- Small budget for delivery of project

### **Opportunities**

- Signposts to take referrals directly
- Development of CRB checked activity providers database in partnership with Cultural Services.

### **Threats**

- Shortage of volunteers to support the young people
- Funding related targets

### **Key actions:**

- Recruit more volunteers
- Widen database of activities

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## **(c) Young Roots**



### **“Through the Window – A stained glass view of Morecambe”**

Young People have researched entertainment in Morecambe, looking at past, present and future, and exploring what young people could do. The information has been collected and collated by oral history, photograph, music and exploration of archive and has formed the basis for a Stained Glass Panel made from glass held by the Lancaster



Museum. The Exhibition was launched at an event in July, with the first showing of the Stained Glass Panel and documentary, and live music performance from a range of Young Bands.

The project has enabled Young People to engage with the Regeneration Plans for the local area and create an artistic expression of what it is to be a Young Person living in Morecambe today, that can be reflected upon for years to come.

### **Heritage Focus**

The project related to the cultural heritage of the area in relation to the decline of the area as a Holiday Resort, with attractions for tourists and visitors which were also used by local people. Many of these historic buildings have been demolished, are in decline or used for other purposes. The Area also has a rich heritage of stained glass within the Victorian built environment which is also disappearing within regeneration initiatives and demolition. The Museum Service is based in Lancaster and although it does have exhibits on Morecambe there is a lack of local archive and currently Morecambe does not have a public display space for local history other than within the Resource Area at Morecambe Library.

The Project has collected oral history, photographs, artefacts and has researched the archive of the Local Museum and Library Services. This has increased the knowledge of young people about the history of where they live and they have been able to make connections with the present. The emphasis on the stained glass has enhanced the project and has conserved the collection of stained glass that the Museum currently holds by the creation of a new window/panel using some of the glass that was retrieved in 2003 from the annealing kiln area of the former Shrigley and Hunt stained glass manufactures at Castle Hill in Lancaster. It has also added to the current exhibition material held by the Museum.



### **Working in Partnership**

Signposts Multi Agency Resource Centre  
More Music in Morecambe  
Lancashire County Museum Service  
Lancaster City Council Cultural Services  
Folly  
Lancaster City Council Arts Development Team within Cultural Services

## (d) Other

### Activ8

The Activ8 Project runs during school holidays, and aims to engage Young People in positive 'tasks' within their community for which they then receive a reward/treat.

The role of Activ8 includes:

- Offering diversionary activities to Young People who may at risk of committing crime, 'hard to reach' or marginalised.
- Enabling Young People to take part in positive activities.
- Building a sense of ownership and pride within Young People for their community.
- Enabling all members of the community to positively engage with Young People, and to see Young People contributing to their community.

Recent tasks have included:

- working on a Community Allotment with Morecambe Healthy Living Centre
- producing a Mural in a local Primary School
- litter picking and recycling
- painting a local play park
- producing window boxes for community members to display
- cleaning up a bus shelter and creating a Mural
- gardening
- firework safety workshops
- work with local Police Community Support Officers
- painting adventure tyre sculpture at local Primary School



Young People taking part in the Activ8 Project are consulted on the reward/treat they would enjoy. These have included:

- Ice Skating,
- Bowling,
- Stunt Skills,
- Archery,
- Canoeing,
- Music Workshops and so on.

Signposts has run 6 Activ8 Projects in this financial year in the following areas:

- ✓ West End of Morecambe: Younger (8-12yrs)
- ✓ West End of Morecambe: Older (12-18yrs)
- ✓ Poulton (Morecambe) (8-12yrs)
- ✓ Branksome/Westgate (Morecambe) (8-12yrs)
- ✓ Carnforth (12 – 18yrs) – working in partnership with LCC Youth & Community and the Police
- ✓ Galgate (12 – 18yrs) – working in partnership with LCC Youth & Community

### **Sports For All**

This funding stream ceased in December 2006 and the work undertaken in this period focused on developing the positive relationships with new and existing young people established during previous years, and strengthening links with partner agencies and leisure providers. The aim of this was to create a sustainable impact from the project beyond its finish date of December 2006, with:

- Young People having the information and knowledge of what activity provision is available to them locally – this may be in the form of leisure providers or local parks and green spaces
- Young People having the confidence to access leisure provision and make healthier choices within their lives
- Partner agencies and leisure providers increasing their 'reach' in terms of Young People's access and embedding work with Young People in to their practice

The detached youth work enabled the team to maintain contact with between 80 and 100 Young People in the West End of Morecambe. Detached youth work has been a valuable tool in 'reaching' a wide range of Young People who may not have otherwise come in to contact with the project. The project also delivered some specific activities including a football skills project run in partnership with the local Police. This involved 15 Young People aged 8 –12 years and took place at Woodhill Lane Youth and Community Centre. The focus of the project was on developing new skills linked to football, but also team work and communication. The project also provided a valuable opportunity for the local Police to build positive relationships with Young People, linking with the wider Community Safety agenda.

The resource portfolio, which was developed as part of this project, has again been put to good use, enabling a range groups such as PHAB, Young Carers, Access to Leisure, Activ8 and Family Support to increase physical activity participation within their regular sessions.

Resources include outdoor clothing, a circus skills box, footballs, badminton, hockey, and boccia set.

### **Diversionsary Activities**

Signposts has been involved with the delivery of a 'diversionary activity' programme in the West End of Morecambe which has been co-ordinated by Cultural Services. The project was funded by the Community Safety Partnership and aims to provide Young People with the opportunity to take part in positive activities during times where high incidences of anti-social or nuisance behaviour have been known to occur - in the West End of Morecambe the programme has been delivered on a Friday evening between 6 – 9:30pm.

Regent Park Studio's and More Music in Morecambe provided a range of activities, and Signposts Young Peoples team supported the activity providers and Young People to engage in sessions. The sessions also provided an opportunity to engage in discussions around alcohol awareness, personal safety and stereotyping of Young People. The total number of Young People attending the activities averaged at between 80 – 90 per night.

### **PHAB**

Signposts has continued to support the work of Morecambe & District PHAB Club. The group meets on a Saturday morning from 10:30 – 12:30pm at Morecambe Youth & Community Centre on Woodhill Lane. The sessions offer families who have a child with a disability or special need the opportunity to take part in activities together. It's a great way for families to have fun, as well as providing the opportunity for parents to gain support. The group is relaxed and friendly, and open to new members.

### **Young Peoples Sexual Health Service**

Signposts operates the C-Card system when distributing condoms to under 18 years. Young People can access this service from Signposts during its normal opening hours of 10 - 12:30pm and 1 – 4:30pm, Monday to Friday (excluding Wednesday). After an initial assessment a Young Person is issued with a C-Card which is simply presented at subsequent visits. Young People who have already been issued with a C-Card can also access condoms from workers out on detached. This system is co-ordinated by Sue Horn (Young Peoples Outreach Nurse).

### **Young People Stakeholder Group**

The development of a Young Peoples Stakeholder Group was identified as a priority for Signposts this year. The group work alongside Signposts Executive Committee, contributing to the direction and vision for Signposts work, particularly focusing on the work with Young People and contributing to bid writing.

The group was established in October, and much of the initial work focused on developing communication skills, and the process of discussion and debate when exploring complex or sensitive issues. This saw the group attend 'Be My Baby' at the Dukes Theatre and engage in a discussion around teenage pregnancy.

More recently the Stakeholder Group have been working on a funding bid to upgrade the facilities at the Community Shop, and create a more welcoming environment for community groups and young people to meet. The group also attended Signposts regent EGM, and contributed to group discussion and planning.

### Multi Agency Forum – 0-19's

The advent of the Local Strategic Partnership Building Block for Children and Young People led to an analysis of all the groups currently meeting which perhaps overlapped and which were attended primarily by the same people. Signposts currently provides administrative support for the Multi-agency Form for 0-19s which includes the Lancaster Children's Fund Locality Group.

The reconfiguration of services for Children and Young People within Every Child Matters will continue to have an effect on how services are structured and how communication between services is managed.

This is an expanding area of work for Signposts.

### Work With Young People and Youth Matters

The following table outlines the links between the five outcomes of Youth Matters and the targeted work Signposts undertakes with Young People

Be Healthy	Stay Safe	Enjoy & Achieve	Make a Positive Contribution	Achieve Economic Well-being
Young Carers Activ8 Sports for All Diversionary Activities PHAB Access to Leisure Sexual Health	Young Carers Activ8 Diversionary Activities	Young Carers Young Roots Activ8 Sports for All Diversionary Activities PHAB Access to Leisure Young People Stakeholder Group	Young Carers Young Roots Activ8 Sports for All Diversionary Activities Young People Stakeholder Group	Young Carers

### Work With Young People and the Youth Offer

<b>Places to go-</b> a network of safe and enjoyable places in which to spend time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the Community shop- With the YOF Bid. To create a more young people friendly space.</li> <li>• Positive activities to be provided in accessible locations</li> <li>• Effective supervision of young people during</li> </ul>
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	<p>sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operate sessions in accordance to Signposts Policies and Procedures.</li> <li>• Ensuring all staff are confident in understanding child protection procedures.</li> <li>• Working to build up relationships with the community through developing positive perceptions of young people. Provided through the Activ8 Project, Intergenerational work, Cultural Carnforth, diversionary activities</li> <li>• Coherent communication between staff and young people to maintain effective relationships.</li> <li>• Food for thought? Juice bar</li> </ul>
<p><b>Things to do and opportunities which promote personal development &amp; learning-</b> access for all young people to a range of positive activities, volunteering opportunities and to a range of learning opportunities which meet their individual needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide young people with a programme of activities designed to meet their needs. – Young Carers, Access to leisure, Summer Support Scheme.</li> <li>• Build on our links with partner organisations, to allow young people information and access to a wide and diverse range of activities in the community</li> <li>• Development of the Activ8 project across all localities to implement change and new creative ways of working</li> <li>• Work with partner organisations to develop creative and artistic positive activities. –WWYP in Carnforth</li> <li>• To offer accreditation across all our work with young people programme.</li> <li>• To provide quality assurance and health and safety standards to guide all activities.</li> <li>• Record and Monitor all levels of activity with young people and feedback in accordance to SLA from funders.</li> <li>• Develop a curriculum approach – young peoples sexual health and issue based work</li> <li>• The development of Diversionary Activity work as way to engage young people deemed ‘at risk’ of becoming involved in anti social behaviour.</li> <li>• Challenge negative attitudes by young people and communities through encouraging achievement and personal successes.</li> <li>• Provide ways for young people to take responsibility for their own personal development- by encouraging evaluations and honest feedback.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Engagement-</b> a real voice for young people in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on the Young Peoples stakeholder group in Morecambe, develop groups which represent</li> </ul>

decisions and service development	<p>WWYP in all our geographical locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage these groups to work in partnership with Signposts staff and board of trustees to develop a clear voice for young people within Signposts.</li> <li>• Engage young people with the planning and evaluation of project work.- Implement time into sessions to allow this</li> </ul>
<b>Confidential and impartial information and advice-</b> support in dealing with personal issues and challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have accessible information and advice available for young people to access, on a wide range of issues relating to young people.</li> <li>• Have staff who have/ or working towards a recognised qualification for work with young people</li> <li>• Ensure prompt referrals in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.</li> <li>• Refer and link with appropriate services.</li> </ul>
Specialist guidance on jobs, skills and the labour market- helps to access employment, training and learning opportunities and start and adult working life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with young people on the Activ8 project to promote positive behaviour and for young people to see the benefit of accessing training and learning.</li> <li>• To provide accreditation and relevant information on further opportunities</li> <li>• Awareness in sessions surrounding individual needs and advice to young people.</li> </ul>
Targeted support for young people in need- support for young people with particular needs and giving priority to meeting these needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To work on a referral model for young people to access particular project work.</li> <li>• To develop interventions and activities relating to sexual health, single gender work, Work with Young people with Disabilities, Young Carers and young people at risk of anti social behaviour.</li> <li>• Liaise with families and carers.</li> </ul>

## Executive Summary

### Development of work in Preston

Young People's Work is also being delivered in Preston i.e.: 'Activ8' during the School Holidays and a project funded by the Local Network Fund offering a group of Young People the opportunity to develop and distribute a 'Newsletter for Young People in Preston', using Arts/Media/Graphics and to develop a Stakeholder Group to inform Signposts on future services for Young People. These activities are presently located within the Farringdon Park area of Preston.

Caroline Beswick  
Project Worker (Young People)

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## Community Development Work

### (a) Community Shop

#### Aim

To provide a service to the community which promotes health and wellbeing, a space for community groups to meet, opportunities for leisure and social activities, a venue for work with Older People (55+) and Young People.

#### Objectives

- To provide space for Older Persons Drop-in
- To provide space for Community Access by Fire and Police Services
- To provide space for Credit Union
- To provide space for Community Association for West End and Allotment Society
- To provide space for group work with young people
- To provide a venue for Health Displays and Leaflets
- To provide relaxation and stress reduction activities
- To provide a space for smoking cessation groups

The community shop continues to open via volunteer rota and the programme has been developed to link closely with work with older people and the Morecambe Bay PCT Choose Health agenda.

The Community Shop has seen several changes over the past year and thanks to a few dedicated volunteers it has remained opened for most of this time.

The shop has also been a base for some of our Young Peoples' work. It has been the main space for the Young Roots Project and is regularly used by the Activ8 team.



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As well as being open to give information to the local community, the shop provides a space for activities and for other agencies to provide advice and support. The shop is now open five days a week and supports the following sessions:

	MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING
<b>Monday</b>	Information Drop In	Information Drop In	Young Peoples Stakeholder Group  West End Arts Development Group  Signposts Board Meeting (ad hoc)  PACT Group
<b>Tuesday</b>	Adult College 9am till 12pm  Sovereign Club 10am till 1pm	Older Persons Health Drop-in	
<b>Wednesday</b>	Information Drop In	Information Drop In	YC group work (secondary) 3.30pm till 6.30pm  Adult College 5pm till 8pm  Reading Group (monthly)
<b>Thursday</b>	Morecambe Bay Credit Union 10am till 11am	Adult College (ESOL Workshop) 12pm till 2.30pm	YC group work (primary) 3.30pm till 6.30pm
<b>Friday</b>	Adult College 9am till 12pm	Information Drop In	

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## **(b) DIY Recycle Project**

### **1: The Need**

Within a community that has many social problems and neglected property, the community have identified the need to develop a project that helps individuals to help themselves and creates a better environment for them to live in.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that many of the people who move from flat to flat do so because of the condition of the property they are living in and it no longer meets their family needs. The occupiers of this type of accommodation are on low incomes or benefits and therefore are not able to afford D.I.Y. materials, and do not always have the skills to carry out basic improvements to their homes.

### **2: The Aim of the Project**

To create a more active community through working with local residents, including older people, people with disabilities, women and young people, to develop a sustainable Community D.I.Y. Recycling Service, which will stimulate the local economy, create employment and develop community cohesion.

### **3: Objectives**

The key objective for 2006/07 was to transfer the project into community ownership whilst working towards the following ongoing objectives:

1. To set up a community enterprise in the form of a D.I.Y. Recycling project.
2. To work in partnership with Furniture Matters
3. To provide a workspace for the local community to gain hands-on decorating and use of tools experience, whilst generating further interest in the recycling shop.
4. To provide a library of information on how to carry out D.I.Y. tasks.
5. To make the project accessible to all sectors of the community.
6. To provide affordable D.I.Y. materials and knowledge of how to use them.
7. To encourage people to be proactive in developing the skills to bring their homes up to a standard that meets their individual needs.
8. To raise awareness of the benefits, both local and global, in recycling materials.
9. To develop links with businesses:
  - who are interested in donating end of stock materials
  - to support the recycling project and the development of environmental issues within the community.

The transfer of the project into ownership by the Community Association of the West End (CAWE) has been planned for and implemented during they year with a final handover of responsibility wef 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007.

Signposts has an ongoing commitment to support CAWE to achieve the outcomes of the project.

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## **(c) Work in Carnforth**

### **Aim**

To increase access to services in Carnforth, thereby building the capacity of residents to achieve solutions to local problems and join in with their community.

### **Objectives**

- To provide a base for access to services providing support, information and advice
- To link with other local services
- To provide volunteering opportunities
- To provide local information
- To facilitate participation in local regeneration activities
- To provide a Tenants Information/Rights campaign
- To provide a family support service
- To provide a rural outreach service encompassing the above

The following Objectives were outlined in the bid to the Francis C. Scott Charitable Trust for a 3-year Development Plan for Carnforth:

We continue to build the Carnforth project and this report outlines some of the achievements to date:

- Identify suitable premises to provide a Carnforth base for the Signposts Team and Partner Agencies
- Provide an annual Tenants Information/Rights campaign (and resource an Information and Advice Service based on the Signposts model)
- Provide an information service to enable residents to participate in regeneration activities (based on the Community Shop model)
- Provide Family Support (based on Signposts Family Support Service)
- Provide Young People's work including staff time, detached work, outreach work to encourage young people to access services including sexual health, activities to provide diversion from nuisance and anti-social behaviour (specifically the Activ8 Project), and to enable young people to participate in regeneration
- Provide a revenue budget for resources and curriculum materials including condoms
- Investigate a model for community involvement/ownership e.g. community association

**Identify suitable premises to provide a Carnforth base for the Signposts Team and Partner Agencies**

We continue to follow up any new options for a base in Carnforth suitable for Signposts longer term vision for the project - to include a one-stop-shop approach to service delivery as well as admin space. Signposts still works out of the office at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Hall. We are looking at investing in alterations to the main hall, which would increase the capacity of the office and include a meeting space for partners and ourselves. Father Bernard has kindly made available the annexe in his own home, which allows Signposts staff to hold small meetings and is also used as a quiet space to work.

We continue to run a half-day session a week from the CARP Office in the town. We also provided an information table with leaflets in the foyer of the building this proved very popular and we used it as a tool to monitor types of information taken. We responded by supplying further relevant information e.g. we monitored take up of information leaflets about bladder & bowel incontinence. We responded to this by displaying local surgery clinic details regarding continence & health support.

**Provide an annual Tenants Information/Rights Campaign (and resource an Information and Advice Service based on the Signposts model)**

Information and advice is being given via the session at the CARP office and by contact with other professionals working in the area. We continue to access information from Shelter in particular for tenant farmers rural communities and family support.

We provide outreach advice and information sessions in local Auction Marts and rural venues on a regular basis in addition we ran a week long housing rights road show in the area covered by the Carnforth regeneration partnership

Julie Oram & Amy Harle Social work students on placement organised the road show, which they took out to community venues. Contact was made with 31 people in total and follow up work was done for some clients.

**Provide Family Support (based on Signposts Family Support Model)**

We have worked with partners to support families in a variety of ways we provide an excellent one to one service, which is well received, by families. We refer into our own service e.g. the young carers and Activ8 project. Statutory partners also appreciate our family support model they refer families to us and seek our input at case reviews and child protection conferences.

Pat Williamson has joined the team and is working on family support she works 2 sessions a week .The Morecambe team have been delivering presentations to partners to promote the work across the project. Social work students on placement have undertaken casework. We have 12 closed files and 7 active cases. We passed on alcohol information leaflet, which Our Lady of Lourdes primary school sent home with each pupil. We gave information to the toddler group which led to a successful bid for the Lonsdale District Carers time for me fund

Home-Start have just secured funding to work in the Carnforth area, children's centre will be delivering services by April and the new community resource centre should be built by April 2008

Provision in Carnforth is beginning to meet the needs of the Carnforth area.

### **Provide Young People's Work**

Activ8 continues to work with young people in Carnforth and in the summer they worked with the environment agency. They made bird boxes and put them up in the woods they also visited the Salvation Army. They plan to re visit the boxes in February half term and plans are being made for some work at the primary school in the Easter break. The project is still supported by partner agencies including the local Police force and Youth and Community.

A developing piece of work is the Young Roots project. After running a very successful project in Morecambe a decision was made to support young people in the Carnforth area to submit a bid to the Heritage Lottery fund. The bid has to be led by young people if successful the project will work with 13 – 19 yr olds and will explore the heritage & History of the Carnforth area.

### **Provide a Revenue Budget for resources and Curriculum materials including condoms**

We continue to work closely with Youth & Community, connexions, educational welfare officers, school nurse, health visitors and the police service. We attend the annual year 11 health fair at the high school to provide information to young people. We deliver Activ8, young carers sessions and young roots sessions

### **Investigate a model for community involvement/ownership e.g. community association**

Networking with a number of organisations and groups, including, Children's Centre, CARP, Salvation Army, Education Welfare Services. Social and health care organisations, education providers and voluntary groups.

Carnforth Interagency group continues to be well attended

We were invited back to provide an information stand for the High School at the Annual Year 11 Health Fair.

Regular contact with professionals is also raising the profile of the project this contact has resulted in referrals to Activ8, Young Carers and Family support

The Signposts Project Director is a member of the CARP executive and is bringing the knowledge and experience gained in this arena to the project, and informing the strategic thinking of the group with on the ground experience.

### **Future Development Plans**

Contact is ongoing with professionals and the CIG meetings have provide an opportunity to promote the service further at the key operational level.

Further funding was achieved to deliver the events and family support work

We continue to seek premises to deliver a service accessible to the public and will continue to follow up all available options.

We have 3 new volunteers who are at the moment going through our recruitment procedures

### **Conclusion**

Our work continues to be well received by the community and partners we have gained a good reputation for delivery of services and as the team has grown capacity to deliver is greater.

The issue of premises still holds us back from having a town centre presence this however, has not been a barrier to our delivery.

### **Future work**

- To continue to promote the family support work
- To continue to facilitate the Carnforth Interagency group meetings
- To promote and expand the Information and Advice Session
- To continue to work with young people in Carnforth
- To continue to expand delivery in rural areas
- To recruit volunteers and offer placements
- To find a central base for Advice & Information Service/community Shop
- To build on the Festival and Events work
- To support young people with the heritage lottery bid

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## **(d) Carnforth MTI Events and Festivals Programme**

Festivals & Events in the Carnforth Area have become a focus for the Signposts team. Carnforth Area Regeneration Partnership have funded Signposts via funding they administer which has been awarded to them by The North West Development Agency Market Towns Initiative funds.

### **Introduction**

Signposts is very clear that the project has been extremely successful, given the delayed start and a low baseline, however it is clear that further development is needed.

### **Strengths**

- Building on existing partnerships
- Creative opportunities to try new work
- Building on existing programme of activities and events in Carnforth
- Excellent attendance at most events with some exceptions
- Raised profile for Carnforth across Lancaster District
- Bringing arts organisations into Carnforth where work had not happened before.
- The establishment of a film festival theme which runs through the whole programme
- Links with local organisations and businesses
- Increased economic activity evidenced (1) increased footfall through Carnforth Visitor Centre, (2) increased activity for Café
- Young People and families visiting visitor centre for the first time
- Links established with the developing youth and children's centre
- Links developing with Chamber of Trade
- Apprentice recruited – linked to job created output
- Job safeguarded – Mandy McKnight
- Michelle Wooff – from Crag Bank – assisted to get a job.
- MTI funding - £25,000 secured for 07/08

### **Weaknesses**

- Delayed start to the project due to the offer letter not being signed until July 2006
- Programme so far has had a Carnforth town centre focus – more work needed in the hinterland
- Partnership working has not always been easy to establish e.g. Farmers Market
- Publicity and Promotion has been limited (1) due to the difficulties in establishing a corporate brand – a key year two priority, (2) lack of existing networks and website in Carnforth to plug into.
- People assisted to get a job – one output not claimed – to be carried into 0708
- The Adults undertaking work based training target has not been met – one output to be claimed at the end of Michelle Wooff's apprenticeship (Nov 07) – other to be carried into 0708
- Vocational Training has not taken place – target transferred into 0708

## Facts and Figures – Programme to Date

### Events so far

#### **30<sup>th</sup> of October Halloween film night 40 adults**

Folly organised a Free Halloween film night at the Furness and Midland Hall at the visitor centre on platform one. They showed a selection of international short films.

#### **November the 4<sup>th</sup> Celebrate Carnforth Event 26 adults & 30 Children 11am-2pm then 60 + for the closing performance**

We organised an event with music craft and performance this was well attended and received. Press coverage was excellent with photos appearing in 4 papers

#### **11<sup>th</sup> of November Wartime Weddings 25 adults and 6 children**

A great performance about a land army girl. We booked this to coincide with Armistice Day. The audience enjoyed the show in particular the Wrens who recognised the plot from their own wartime experiences

#### **6<sup>th</sup> of December Carnforth lights switch on**

We added to this event by promoting it widely and organising a choir who sang Carols at the Furness and Midland hall. We also provide peripatetic performers who went around the town in the afternoon handing out flyers for the evening event and the farmers market whilst entertaining shoppers

#### **15<sup>th</sup> December Country & Western dance 29 adults**

Attendance was a little low but those who came enjoyed the fun. We were well supported by the local line-dancing club who danced the night away

#### **17<sup>th</sup> December what the Dickens 33 adults and 22 children**

This very interactive show was well attended and enjoyed by adults and children alike

#### **10<sup>th</sup> February - Short Film Workshop (Folly) 9 attended**

#### **14<sup>th</sup> February - Folly Valentines Film Night 31 attended**

#### **17th March - The St. Pats weekend - fun day 28 attended**

Good attendance considering the amount of similar events on within the area, that same weekend. The Carnforth Station Café also reported increased sales for the day, which was very well received.

### **Opportunities**

- A full programme for 0708 is currently being devised.

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## Infrastructure Support and Service Delivery

Signposts Multi Agency Resource Centre provides a range of services to support to organisations within the sector both at a grass roots and infrastructure level, and other direct service provision.

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### (a) Administrative Services & CRB

#### Clear Voices for Older People

Signposts provides administrative Support to Clear Voices for Older People in Lancashire and Cumbria as follows:

- the provision of administrative support to include the creation of a logo, letterhead, and business card
- provision of email contact via Signposts
- a mobile phone
- links to the Farming and Rural Health Partnership via involvement in the Strategic Group for Farming and Rural Health Project.
- travel expenses for approved journeys related to the project
- facilitation to allow the recruitment of representatives for a Strategic Group across Lancashire and Cumbria - who will then link to all relevant Partnership Boards for Older People
  - To co-ordinate an Advisory Group which will meet quarterly
  - Manage a membership database (larger network)
  - the creation of networks where they do not exist (via Age Concern and Help the Aged - who have been funded to do this)
- the provision of a section of the Signposts Website to allow access to information on the project
- organise events and seminars “get togethers” 4 times throughout the period of the agreement (North Cumbria/South Cumbria/North Lancashire/South Lancashire
- to provide a newsletter 4 times a year – text to be provided by Clearer Voices for Older People

Highlights during the year have included:

- the bringing together of Older Peoples Forums in Lancashire to look at issues including A New Ambition for Old Age (Department of Health), strategic changes within PCT's and their effect on consultation with and involvement of older people, transport infrastructure and to plan a seminar bringing together the forums with key strategic managers, and;
- working with existing networks in Cumbria to consider the Department of Health's Local Involvement Networks (LINKS) – a developing initiative in Cumbria and mapping activity.

### **Morecambe Homeless Action**

Signposts also supports Morecambe Homeless Action on both a strategic and operational level as follows:

**Accommodation:** Provision of space within Regent Road to deliver two evening drop-ins and the opportunity to offer a Saturday lunch time drop in if required. It is planned to move this service to the Community Shop during 2007/08.

Provision of a hot desk and access to services including telephone, ICT, photocopier, training room for meetings etc, and resources.

**Development Plan:** Time given from Susan Edwards and Pamela Beswick to consider the Development Plan for Morecambe Homeless Action.

**Training:** Morecambe Homeless Action are invited to join in with training at Signposts for the whole team and also Trustee training

**Administrative Support:** Morecambe Homeless Action are provided with support the facilitation of their meetings including minute taking.

**Volunteers:** the management of volunteers including CRB checks.

### **Criminal Records Bureau Umbrella Service**

Signposts is an Umbrella Service for the Criminal Records Bureau currently providing a service to organisations in the Lancaster District and South Cumbria.

Once registered, organisations employing staff (whether paid or voluntary) can use Signposts to clear their team via the CRB Disclosure process. Signposts cannot clear those who are self employed.

Please see our paperwork and policies online at [www.signposts.org.uk/services.html](http://www.signposts.org.uk/services.html) for further information. Signposts makes a small charge to cover the administration cost of this service - fees are outlined in this documentation.

Signposts hopes to develop a relationship with Lancaster District CVS to facilitate the checking of documents in the Lancaster District.

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## **(b) Food for Thought**

During the year Signposts has maintained an interest in the activities of Morecambe Healthy Living Centre and as part of the exit strategy for the Healthy Living Centre expressed an interest via a tendering process to take on the development and management of Food For Thought – the community café and outside catering element of Morecambe Healthy Living Centre.

Signposts was successful in its expression of interest and will be negotiating with Morecambe Healthy Living Centre during 0708 to identify a way forward.

## (c) ICT Support Service

As part of Signposts work within Communication and ICT, as part of the Lancashire VCFS Consortium, the project is working with a small working group and MA System Solutions (a local Private Sector ICT provider currently working with the voluntary sector) to develop an ICT support package for the voluntary sector across Lancaster, Fylde and Wyre, and a second service within the East of Lancashire (Clitheroe and surrounding area).



The services are in the development stage currently but it is anticipated that within Lancaster, Fylde and Wyre a tiered approach will be offered which will include flexible approaches to ICT support:

- Pay as you go technical support (by telephone)
- Prepaid technical support (by telephone)
- (Unlimited telephone) support to solve an issue
- On-Site Visits

Commissions and contracts would also be considered as part of the service.

## (d) Communication and ICT

Signposts is the strategic lead for ICT and Communication for the Lancashire VCFS Consortium and is working towards the following objectives:

Objective	Outcome
ICT Strategic Development	Strategic ICT Development project to ensure all VCFS organisations have an ICT Plan which fits with their business plan.
Provision of timely, affordable and appropriate Technical Support to voluntary and community organisations in Lancashire	Talk to/ visit contacts. Decision on the way forward. Production of a business plan. Identify funders for initial two year project. Prepare bid.
Technical Training	Collaboration and co-operation between organisations to fulfil some of the support needs of the VCFS in Lancashire.
Digital Media	Reduction in the number of VCFS groups with no access to ICT.
Communication	An empowered community which is information rich and proactive to opportunity.

These objectives meet the Consortium's Strategic Aims as follows:

Strategic Aim	Delivered by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>target investment in ICT infrastructure by coordinating delivery of ICT funded projects across the sub-region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective 1 and 2</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improve community access to ICT by securing further funding for frontline organisations and rationalising communication networks e.g. websites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objectives 1,2,3,4 and 5</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support innovative use of ICT by continuing to monitor strategy and build on audit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective 4</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure other funding to establish ICT support networks and opportunities for income generation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective 2</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assist the coordination of communication systems for the Consortium</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective 5</li> </ul>

## (e) Travelling Tots – Mobile Crèche



### Background

The project links to collaborative working and development of sustainable childcare to involve local people and social and community enterprise via Poulton Children's Centre.

### Aim

To provide a high quality mobile crèche facility to support Children's Centre activities.

### Objectives

- To deliver a high quality childcare service to Children's Centre standards
- To provide a high quality play and learning environment
- To increase parent / child bonding and relationships
- To provide information and advice on parenting skills
- To increase parents' understanding of their child's development and the value of play
- To develop links between Children's Centres, Nurseries, the extended schools programme and holiday clubs to deliver comprehensive childcare support to families.

### **Methodology**

The project is based on the Social Enterprise model. The crèche facility has been set up in line with the Ofsted National Standards to ensure safety, care and good practice with particular attention paid to staffing qualifications and staff / child ratios. Unqualified staff i.e.: volunteers from the community will be encouraged to access work opportunities within the crèche, subject to an enhanced CRB check. Training will be given 'in-house' and a route into a Childcare NVQ qualification actively encouraged.

The start-up funding has been provided from the SureStart, Early Years and Childcare service: Toys and equipment have been purchased. A van has been hired for the transportation of the mobile crèche.

### **Scope**

To provide a range of activities to include:

- Traditional crèche service to allow parents to attend training sessions
- To provide "Stay and Play activities with the crèche workers teaching parents "play skills" with young children.
- To establish a credible bank of equipment which will enable the mobile crèche to widen its opportunity to operate in a more corporate arena.
- To continue to purchase additional equipment and resources
- To take a lead role in the development and incubation of a District – wide Social Enterprise business.

Travelling Tots opened its van doors for business last year, covering crèche sessions for courses put on by Community Learning Network for parents to attend. It has built from this and towards the end of last year successfully started to work with the new Children's Centre at Poulton to attend group sessions every day of the week, as the Children's Centres vision is to encourage the parents to run their own groups and with their own nursery opening, we now do less within the centre itself and more with local groups in the community supported by the centre.

### Strengths

- One of our successes is the Jelly tots session on a Tuesday at the Poulton Memorial hall, we work in conjunction with Chatterbox, a local parents group and the Healthy Living Centre, this has not been without it's teething problems, with some differences between agencies but is now steaming ahead with attendance averaging 30 children every week.
- This happened when Chatterbox initially stepped in to take over the running of the sessions, with the guidance of the Children's Centre. We were involved in discussions (these are still on going) with them and the parents to come up with a room plan that would suit all, so as issues arise we all have our input to solve these.
- We are hoping to extend to Weddings, Christenings and other social events. We are presently holding crèches at conferences in Lancaster and Blackpool.
- We also have a curriculum plan for the year around the four seasons, which is working well and a good way for us to encourage parental involvement. The equipment has been fully stocked up for this, when the team came together one evening to sort and box up, ready to put this into practice.
- We now have taken on a team of drivers for transporting the van to and from sessions, so as to relieve the pressure on the childcare staff.
- We have also taken on new members of our childcare team.

### Weaknesses

- We have had some issues around the starting up of the rotas system, which is being changed to a different format.
- Some of our West End sessions have been put on hold by the Children's Centre due to Health & Safety issues, so hopefully these will be up and running again soon.
- So therefore our staff have not had as many sessions as we would have liked to offer but as stated above, we are expanding our range of work areas.

### Conclusion

Signposts extensive experience in the delivery of services to families, children and young people using an holistic and multi-agency approach will ensure a unique childcare service.

Signposts has its own qualified Childcare staff who have a wide range of experience in differing childcare settings plus a qualified A1 Assessor in Early Years Childcare and Education.

Travelling Tots delivered its first session at a Children's Centre fund day on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2006

Signposts offer a well trained, focussed and enthusiastic team which will reflect positively in the quality of any childcare service they may offer.

We are continuing to deliver our services to families in the community using a holistic and multi-agency approach with our unique childcare services.

We have a good mix of qualified and unqualified staff that have a wide range of experiences and ideas for sessions.

We are continuing to offer training for our dedicated, enthusiastic staff, which will reflect in the childcare services that we offer.

### **Future Developments**

Signposts will:

- continue to embed and promote Travelling Tots as an income generating Social Enterprise
- continue to be involved in the development of Children's Centres in the Lancaster District

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## Section Four

### Conclusion

#### Looking Forward from the Annual Report

As this report demonstrates Signposts is a complex organisation which is constantly changing to meet the needs and demands of the people it aims to serve. This has expanded during the financial year and Signposts is now a larger organisation and a financial strategy is essential for the continued success of the project. It is also essential to have a clear idea of vision and strategic and operational targets which support and take this vision forward.

We are now in the throes of major change within the Voluntary Sector towards Commissioning and the delivery of public services. This debate continues but could impact in the next financial year.

The Development Plan for Signposts for the next five years includes the aspiration to expand the Service within a defined model to other parts of Lancashire and into Cumbria.

The Project has an increasing assets base and the success of funding bids would indicate that it has a good reputation with funders – every effort is made to maintain good relationships with partners and funders and to communicate effectively with them both formally and informally. There is an increasing burden on accountability with the consequent need to increase financial and administrative support. This has been recognised within Governance and we have now arranged to outsource our financial services. We also introduced 4 Business Administrative Apprentices into our staffing establishment.

This could also be the year when we decide to extend our Area of Benefit to National – increasingly organisations are being encouraged to do this – many funding opportunities now specify a requirement to be national.

We are also looking forward to the receipt of an Independent Review of our services funded by CAF undertaken by Moira Laws which should inform our thinking and also consolidate our discussions with the YMCA and others on closer partnership working.

The move to low-level prevention and well-being is also an important agenda for us to engage with.

It is the intention currently to:

#### **Strategic Targets:**

- Maintain current levels of existing funding streams and develop relationships with partners
- Consider the expansion of the Area of Benefit to National.

Signposts Multi Agency Resource Centre  
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- Continue to consider the development of an asset base for the project linking to the Accommodation Portfolio and the aspiration to purchase premises
- Consolidate the role of Signposts as a learning provider
- Consolidate the new Governance structure following Incorporation and the development of the Stakeholder Groups
- Consolidate the earned income capacity of the organisation with the continuation and expansion of our social enterprise
- Engage with the low level prevention and well-being agenda
- Increase our capacity and robustness to be “fit for purpose” now and into the next financial years by investing in our team and our infrastructure

The report represents a great deal of hard work by the whole team and we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has worked with, or helped the project, in any way during the last year.

If you would like further information or would like to visit Signposts please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Pamela Beswick  
Project Director  
On behalf of the Executive Committee