



Annual Report

1st April 2007 to
31st March 2008

Registered Office:

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Charity Registration 1117645

Company Registration 5990592

Registered in England and Wales



Signposts Multi Agency Resource Centre - Annual Report 2007 / 2008
“Working to empower the Community”





Community Enterprises:

- Travelling Tots
- Mobile Crèche
- ICT Support
- Food for Thought Café & outside Catering



Multi Agency Resource Centres

Networking to encourage other developments

Social Services HIV (Service Delivery)

Inclusion and Engagement

Provides Infrastructure Services to Voluntary Organisations

Family Support

Information and Advice Service including Homelessness Prevention

Targeted Work With Young People

Lancashire County Council Social Services Young Carers Development Work

Work with Older People

Farming and Rural Health Project “Wellbeing in Wellies”

Visit www.signposts.org.uk for more information about the work Signposts undertakes

Contents Page

SECTION ONE – GENERAL	3
SIGNPOSTS – MISSION, AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND VISION	3
FOREWORD	5
SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2007 / 2008.....	6
INTRODUCTION & STRATEGIC OVERVIEW.....	8
SECTION TWO – INFORMATION ABOUT SIGNPOSTS	12
THE CURRENT POSITION (AS AT 1ST APRIL 2008)	12
THE STAFF TEAM - WHO’S WHO?	16
SIGNPOSTS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY	17
SIGNPOSTS SNAPSHOT (10TH – 16TH MARCH 2008).....	21
SIGNPOSTS ENQUIRIES AND STATISTICS KEY	23
ENQUIRIES AND STATISTICS – 2007 / 2008	24
SECTION THREE – OUR WORK.....	26
OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW	26
INFORMATION & ADVICE	28
HIV WORK	30
HOUSING WORK	32
50FORWARD – CARE NAVIGATOR PROJECT	34
FARMING AND RURAL HEALTH – ‘WELL BEING IN WELLIES’	36
CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE	39
PUPIL MOBILITY WORK.....	39

FAMILY SUPPORT WORK.....	41
DADS WORK	42
PARENTING.....	43
WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE	44
(A) YOUNG CARERS.....	44
(B) ACCESS TO LEISURE PROJECT.....	45
(C) OTHER	46
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORK.....	51
(A) COMMUNITY SHOP.....	51
(B) WORK IN CARNFORTH	52
(C) CARNFORTH MTI EVENTS AND FESTIVALS PROGRAMME ..	53
(D) PRESTON COMMUNITY CENTRES	56
INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT AND SERVICE DELIVERY.....	58
(A) ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES & CRB.....	58
(B) FOOD FOR THOUGHT	60
(C) ICT SUPPORT SERVICE.....	62
(D) COMMUNICATION AND ICT.....	63
(E) TRAVELLING TOTS – MOBILE CRÈCHE	64
(F) BME MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORK	65
(G) WORKING TOGETHER.....	66
SECTION FOUR - CONCLUSION	68

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 Board of Directors

I am very proud to present for you the SIGNPOSTS ANNUAL REPORT for 2007/08.

It has, yet again, been a very busy year for the whole of the SIGNPOSTS team.

This was our first full year as a charitable company. I must thank our TREASURER, and her team, for the excellent work successfully transferring the financial information to our new accountants and for the continuing work completed throughout the year on the accounts.

My praises and thanks go to our DIRECTORS (TRUSTEES) for their expertise and time given for our Board and other Committee meetings throughout the year.

Extra thanks must go to the whole staff team for their hard work absorbing the reorganizational and funding changes throughout this year. This also goes to all the volunteers, without whom we could not have functioned.

My special thanks go to our PROJECT DIRECTOR (now CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER), Pamela Beswick who has managed, with successful funding applications, to keep our projects running throughout the year.

I hope you will all read our ANNUAL REPORT and appreciate the depths and spread of our many and varied projects.

I look forward happily and hope to be with SIGNPOSTS for many more successful years.

Summary of Achievements During 2007 / 2008

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

- Dealing with 27,401 (of whom 7,669 were children) contacts through its whole service reflecting the changes that have been made to service delivery and continue to be made
- Consolidated the Management and Staffing Structure to introduce a Specialist Lead Level
- Continued to represent the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector throughout Lancashire as the Communication and ICT Lead
- Worked closely to the aspirations of Every Child Matters and Youth Matters throughout our work with Children, Young People and Families
- Hosted the Parenting Strategy Co-ordinator post for Lancaster District
- Established a Young Researcher Network Group in partnership with the National Youth Agency Young Researcher Network
- Achieved 3-year Funding for Young Carers Work
- Finalised the Cultural Carnforth Beyond A Brief Encounter 2 Year Programme with some very successful outcomes – most notably the Christmas Lights Switch On
- Consolidated and invested in the Team to develop a robust Team List and Team Bulletin Circulation to 120 people including paid staff and volunteers
- Achieved efficiency within the Organisation with advice from an Organisational Review Health Check undertaken by Moira Laws for CAF
- Developed our Portfolio of Work in Cumbria with the successful tender to deliver Working Together for 50+
- Mainstreaming of both Pupil Mobility Projects on the conclusion of funding from Lancashire Children's Fund

Every Child Matters
Change For Children



Supported by
Northwest
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



INVESTING IN
englandsnorthwest



THE ADULT COLLEGE
LANCASTER
Lancashire Adult Learning



Children's Fund

- Transfer of the management of three Community Centres in Preston to Signposts
- Incorporation and the strengthening of Governance Structures and achievement of Company Limited by Guarantee Status and more robust financial systems
- Farming and Rural Health achieving a strengthened delivery model
- Transfer of Food4Thought Community Café and outside catering social enterprise from Morecambe Healthy Living Centre to Signposts
- Summer Programme for Young People with Disabilities
- Extension of Information and Advice Service to deliver outreach support
- The consolidation of the Care Navigator Service and Model within 50Forward
- The delivery of Travelling Tots Mobile Crèche Service
- The development of a VCFS ICT Support Service in partnership with MAS
- Investment in the Community Shop to deliver work with Young People via a Youth Capital Fund grant
- Delivered sessional Family Support Work and Dads Work in partnership with Children's Centres in Morecambe, Westgate and Heysham
- Delivered sessional work with Families, Children and Young People in partnership with Sure Start West and Sunshine Children's Centres in Preston
- Delivered sessional work with Children and Young People in partnership with Milnthorpe Children's Centre in Cumbria
- Delivered a successful project "Stuff" funded by Lancashire Local Network Fund in Preston
- Being commissioned to host BME Community Development Worker post by North Lancashire PCT
- Renewal of Investor in People Status



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Introduction & Strategic Overview

By Pamela Beswick, M.A. (Chief Executive Officer)

Another year has passed at Signposts and it has been very eventful and full of challenges and success stories – see Achievements 2007/08 which provides an extensive but not exhaustive list of what we have been doing in the past 12 months.

The Annual Report also contains a wealth of information on activities and outcomes and what the team have achieved. We continue to be very busy and are careful not to equate busyness with being effective and are aware of the need to be outcome driven and to be able to explain and demonstrate the benefits of our service to individuals, children and families and communities.

Partnership working is as ever the key to everything. We have established partnerships which have worked for us for many years and which we value enormously. We have also established new ones and continue to invest in these relationships to deliver services which are affordable, accessible and appropriate. The range of services that Signposts offered has expanded particularly with the development of Social Enterprise initiatives and the ability to generate earned income which can then be invested back into the Service.

Change has been a constant factor and in some ways change is the only certainty and we have adapted a way of working and an ethos and understanding which allows us to be flexible in our approach without straying from our basic mission and principles. This is something which the Board is very keen to maintain and our work is closely scrutinised by them and they are actively involved in business planning and development. We have benefited from external analysis within an Organisational Review Health Check undertaken by a consultant in partnership with the YMCA which was looking at co-operative working arrangements, and also Investor in People where we achieved registration for a further 3 years.

We continue to expand our geography and have invested in our ICT capabilities to ensure we can communicate across the whole organisation.

We have also continued to be creative in our approach particularly within project work to include Cultural Carnforth and our Work with Young People. Engagement and Community Cohesion is something that we aim to achieve and events and activities can contribute to this.

Equal Opportunities and Access continue to be key themes in our work and in my Introduction last year I considered the factors which enable people to access services – Physical Access and Emotional Access and this continues to be important. We have noticed that the communities we work with are becoming increasingly diverse across all our geography and we must strive to be inclusive and anti-oppressive in our practice.

Ensuring that our Service is fit for purpose has been the subject of internal management and team meetings and awareness raising and training has been

achieved via the Team Bulletin, Full Team Meetings, Events and Activities and via specific Training Events.

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

The work continues and the priority areas identified in 2006/07 have been addressed in the following ways:-

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

The financial strategy of Signposts continues to be implemented across the whole organisation including the need to increase earned income, maintain existing contracts and SLA's and to move towards a Social Enterprise Model which has all been achieved in 2007/08 whereby funding levels were maintained and major funding streams were successfully exited. We were able to take on new areas of work and achieve a robust financial position. This was particularly challenging during 2007/08 as many funders were changing how they fund and moving from a grant making regime to a Commissioning Model and this meant that many funding streams in 2006/07 were for one year only, or extended by one year and this led to a major cliff edge at the end of the 2007/08 funding year – one which was successfully negotiated.

The pressure on the organisation and staff team cannot be underestimated by short-term funding and annual funding rounds. We have been fortunate to retain our staff team and impetus – many organisations have not been able to do so.

The next financial year should see some changes to this whereby funding will be confirmed on a longer term basis and contracts achieved by tender can be for more than one year funding.

Consider the expansion of the Area of Benefit to National

This continues to be an aspiration or area to consider. The expansion of Signposts within the existing Area of Benefit gave the organisation sufficient challenges for the current financial year and work was not done on this.

Continue to consider the development of an asset base for the project linking to the Accommodation Portfolio and the aspiration to purchase premises

The development of the Accommodation Portfolio continues to be a challenge and Signposts has a varied and interesting portfolio of rented accommodation which ranges to shared space within buildings, leased Community Shop, leased Information and Advice Service and the new acquisition of three Community Centres in Preston on 25 year leases. The purchase of property continues to be something that the Board would like to achieve and there are opportunities which are currently being explored. As the thinking on this develops then there could be a rationalisation of premises to meet the needs of the organisation. There is a need to identify premises in Cumbria to establish a base there.

Consolidate the role of Signposts as a learning provider

Signposts has a varied programme to achieve this:

- Training for the team
- Training for the Board and Trustees
- Provision of Social Work and Community Youth Studies Students Placements
- Provision of Apprenticeships
- On-the-job Training
- Training the Trainer Training
- Youth Work Training

This was delivered throughout the year and the hosting of students within the organisation means that we benefit from their knowledge and enthusiasm.

Consolidate the new Governance Structure following Incorporation and the Development of the Stakeholder Groups

This was a major area of work in the current year and we achieved the closure of the old Charity and the Incorporation of the new Charity and Company Limited by Guarantee which necessitated changes within our organisation and structure. This has proved to be very positive and has enabled us to be more innovative in our approach to new work and to evaluate risk within the new Company status. We have attracted new Board Directors and the Governance arrangements continue to be robust and interesting.

With the exception of the Young Person's Stakeholder Group which has achieved great success – we did not establish other Stakeholder Groups and this continues to be an aspiration as we need to listen and be aware of what our partners, communities and stakeholders think of our Service. We do invite feedback but this is an area of work which needs to be strengthened.

Consolidate the earned income capacity of the organisation with the continuation and expansion of our social enterprise

This has been an area of work which has achieved success in the year with the consolidation and expansion of Travelling Tots, the transfer of the Food4Thought Café and Outside Catering enterprise to us, and the development of the VCFS ICT Support Service. We also continue to offer CRB checks and hot desks and administrative support and have generated management fees with the hosting of various posts.

Engage with the low level prevention and well-being agenda

Throughout the year Signposts was involved in debates and discussions around the Help Direct Gateway Service which has been designed around the low level prevention and well being agenda and we have been actively engaged with partners in considering a response to this. We are likely to be delivery partners with others in Lancaster, Fylde and Wyre and in Preston during 2008/09 and this has been a factor in the development of all our work.

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

This was an area of thinking that was assisted by the Organisational Review and Investor in People Process as we had the benefit of external evaluation to challenge and stretch our ways of working. We identified that by Fit for Purpose we meant:

A Service that is:

- Meeting an identified and quantified need
- Delivering to quality standards and good practice
- Has motivated and well managed staff
- Has staff with appropriate knowledge and training
- Is accredited
- Managing resources effectively and efficiently
- Monitoring and recording work
- Is willing and able to be scrutinised
- Involving volunteers
- Listening to and including people in receipt of the service
- Adheres to all our Policies

In this context action taken included:

- A review of Policies and Practice
- Development of the website
- Investment in Repairs and Renewals
- Investment in ICT and Photocopiers
- Introduction of an Internal Telephone System
- Achievement of Renewal of Investor in People
- Organisational Review and Health Check
- Investment in the Team
- Governance, Personnel and Finance and Resource Committee meetings
- Health and Safety Risk Assessments
- Development of an Environmental and Sustainability Policy
- Robust HR and Personnel Procedures and Policies
- Outsourcing of Financial Systems and Accounts
- Change of Auditors
- Engagement with LAA and LSP arenas
- Participation in Young Lancashire
- Participation in Third Sector Mental Health Consortium
- Participation in VCFS Lancashire Consortium
- Progression in the organisation for Senior Staff

Section Two – Information About Signposts

The Current Position (as at 1st April 2008)

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

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

Key Facts

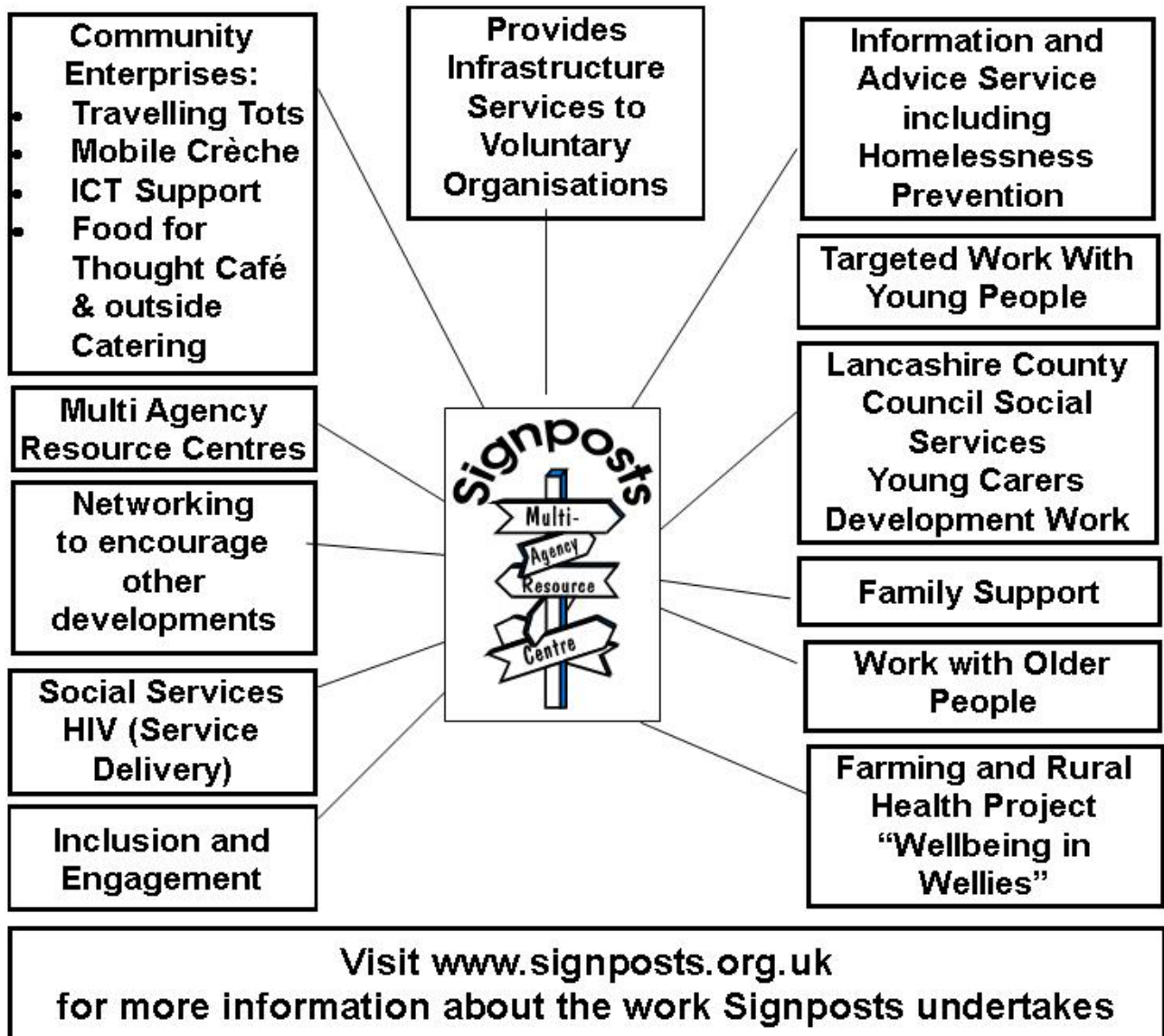
Signposts:

- incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee (05990592) with registration as a charity (1117645) on 31st March 2007
- 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, renewed July 2007

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

Diagram A - Signposts Roles



Premises

	<p>Main Office 58 Regent Road, Morecambe, LA3 1TE Tel: 01524 419021 Fax: 01524 411541 signpostsmarc@signposts.org.uk</p>
	<p>Community Links at Farrington Park Community Centre 18-24 Thirlmere Road, Preston, PR1 5TR Tel: 01772 759413</p>
<p>Information and Advice Service 93 Westminster Road, Morecambe Tel: 01524 419597 info.and.advice@signposts.org.uk</p>	<p>Community Shop 37 Yorkshire Street, Morecambe, LA3 1QF Tel: 01524 413064</p>
<p>Signposts Carnforth Parish Hall, Kellet Road Carnforth, LA5 9LR Tel: 01524 732807 Email: carnforth@signposts.org.uk</p>	<p>VCFS ICTS—ICT Support Service Tel: 01524 427788 Email: support@vcfs-icts.org.uk Web: www.vcfs-icts.org.uk</p>
<p>Project Milestones 19a Heysham Road, Heysham, LA3 1DA Tel: 01524 413376</p>	<p>Signposts at The Rainbow Centre Clarence Street, Morecambe Tel: 01524 413967</p>
<p>Food4Thought Poulton War Memorial Hall, Church Street, Poulton, Morecambe, LA4 5QA Tel: 01524 416481 Email: f4t@signposts.org.uk</p>	<p>Farrington Park Community Centre 18-24 Thirlmere Road, Preston, PR1 5TR Tel: 01772 703018</p>
<p>Grange Park Community Centre 2-4 Hazel Grove, Ribbleton Preston, PR2 6PT Tel: 01772 653539</p>	<p>Tanterton Community Centre Kidsgrove, Tanterton Preston, PR2 7BX Tel: 01772 723329</p>

The Staff Team - Who's Who?

Signposts Executive Committee

The following people were elected as the officers of the Signposts Board:

Chair	Robert Raby
Deputy Chair	Julia Swarbrick
Treasurer	Melanie Evans

The following acted as trustees:

David Barnes	Paul Longden (until December 2007)
Lillian Shaw	Eric Stead
Mark Levine	Rona Forsyth
Janette Carr	Melody Treasure (until September 2007)

During the year the following were also elected:

Noreen Haselden (from December 2007) Amanda McKnight (from December 2007)

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 core staff team during this period were (new titles wef 1st April 2008)

Pamela Beswick	Project Director (Chief Executive)
John Heath	Project Coordinator (Deputy Chief Executive)
Sharon Calverley	Project Coordinator (Project Director – Community Development/Inclusion)
Susan Edwards	Project Coordinator (Project Director – Adults and Older People)
Susan Earnshaw	Specialist Lead – Family Support
Ruth Paterson	Specialist Lead – Casework
Marie Warner	Specialist Lead – Young Persons Work
Pat Williamson	Specialist Lead – Older People
Stephanie Pearce	Specialist Lead – Childcare
Val Macconnell	Specialist Lead – Farming and Rural Health
Dawn Lambert	Specialist Lead – Catering
Dawn Mitchell	Volunteer Specialist Lead – Information and Advice
Terry Graham	Volunteer Specialist Lead – Volunteering
Susan Arthington	PA to the Project Director

Signposts has a team of Business Administration Apprentices and Sessional staff working with Young People and Childcare.

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.

Signposts Customer Satisfaction Survey

'Snapshot Week' March 2008

For the first time Signposts tried a new way of evaluating customer satisfaction based on a model created by BASSAC – known as ChangeCheck – the results are shown below.

For information on ChangeCheck visit www.bassac.org.uk/pages/changecheck.html

Personal Details

Year of Birth:

- 1940's - 2
- 1950's - 7
- 1960's - 13
- 1970's - 14
- 1980's - 15
- 1990's - 3
- Unspecified - 12

Gender:

- Male - 27
- Female - 27

Unspecified - 12

Signposts Service Accessed

Please tick the appropriate box:

- Advice and Information – 60
- Food 4 Thought – 3
- Family Links – Preston – 3

How did you find out about Signposts Services?

- A friend - 21
- Leaflets/posters - 12
- When passing by - 18
- Newspapers - 1
- School - 1
- After Care - 1
- Furniture Matters – 1
- Job Centre - 1
- Connexions - 1
- Town hall - 1
- Lancaster & Morecambe College - 1
- Outreach worker – 1

How long have you lived in the area?

- 0 – 5 years - 20
- 5 – 10 years - 17
- 10 – 15 years - 8
- 15-20years - 5
- 20-25 years - 5
- 25-30years - 2
- 30+ - 6

How much has Signposts made a difference to you?

Issue	Level of impact			
	Major impact	Substantial Impact	Some impact	No or little impact
<i>Community involvement, e.g. helping me to have a say about local issues and helping different groups get on together</i>	15	10	11	14
<i>Crime and Safety, e.g. lowering crime and making the area safer</i>	5	15	12	19
<i>Life-long learning, e.g. providing training and support</i>	9	18	9	17
<i>Culture and leisure, e.g. providing leisure facilities</i>	10	15	11	15
<i>Economic, e.g. helping me to get a job or start a business</i>	7	12	9	23
<i>Environment, e.g. helping me to improve the area</i>	9	9	11	23
<i>Health and social wellbeing, e.g. helping me to live a long healthy life</i>	12	10	12	17
<i>Housing, e.g. improving the quality of local housing</i>	14	13	13	12
<i>Transport & access, e.g. improving local transport and access to services, shops, and schools</i>	8	11	12	19
Other issues:	5	1		

What impact has Signposts had on you?

- Access to phones – cancer counsellor and alcohol problems
- Given experience and opportunities
- Providing access to IT and printing
- Very friendly service
- Helps me by allowing me to use the phone to call my children
- First time I have used the service – not able to contact people otherwise
- Affordable furniture
- Signposts have helped me by letting me use the phone to get back home after I had a fire
- Made me cleaner and happier
- Friendly patient service
- Helped me keep in touch with family and fill in forms
- Helped me in an area which I had difficulty would have had problems without Signposts
- Helped me to gain furniture for family
- Confidence that problems will be dealt with
- More confident and healthier and fitter
- Listening to my problems and allowing me to shower
- Use of phones
- They have offered me Family Support
- Has helped me fight decisions I was given by authority about housing
- Became a member of Furniture matters and used the phone for housing issues.
- Helped when I came out of prison with housing issues and using the phone
- Reassurance that I can get info and advice when needed
- Help me clean and wash
- Feel more part of a community. Food for thought caters for dietary requirements.

How do you think we could improve our services to have an even greater positive impact on your life?

- Continue as doing
- Everything is good
- Stay the same
- In my case Signposts could not improve the service is excellent
- More phone and washing machine
- More rooms and computers
- When using the phones I think people should have a 5/10 minute limit then if they need it for longer get back in the queue and keep the queue flowing.
- More training for staff
- More help with housing issues
- More drop ins and set key workers
- More financial help from Signposts
- More help for the homeless
- Opening at weekends
- Perhaps an element of self service

In what ways has Signposts helped you to get involved in your neighbourhood, in local groups, or having a say about local services?

- I know more about what happens in the West End
- Visited allotments twice and accessed the dads group
- Helpful in local groups and alcohol rehab
- Helped my friend children through troubled times helped with extra advice
- Friendly place to go and you feel safe
- It has brought people together
- Giving me information on required activities/events
- My signposts support worker got me involved in lots of local groups and parenting forum.
- I am enjoying the development of the F4T Garden and am looking forward to sampling the very local produce.

In what ways has Signposts made a difference to you?

- Brought information to my community - 30
- Helped to build my self-confidence - 14
- Valued me as a person - 27
- Recognised my needs - 35
- Valued my strengths and skills - 12
- Helped me to build my skills for community action - 7
- Helped me to do things myself - 25
- Valued my culture and background - 8
- Helped me to feel less excluded - 13
- Supported me to work with other people - 6
- Helped me to get along with people from different backgrounds - 8
- Helped me to understand the neighbourhood better - 15
- Supported me in challenging discrimination - 4
- Helped me to take a stand - 7
- Helped me to understand how decisions are made locally - 13
- Helped me to have a say about decisions that affect me - 10
- Gave me the information I needed - 39
- Gave me new opportunities - 21
- Introduced me to new networks - 14
- Encouraged me to question things - 12
- Supported me to take action to change things - 15

Signposts Snapshot (10th – 16th March 2008)

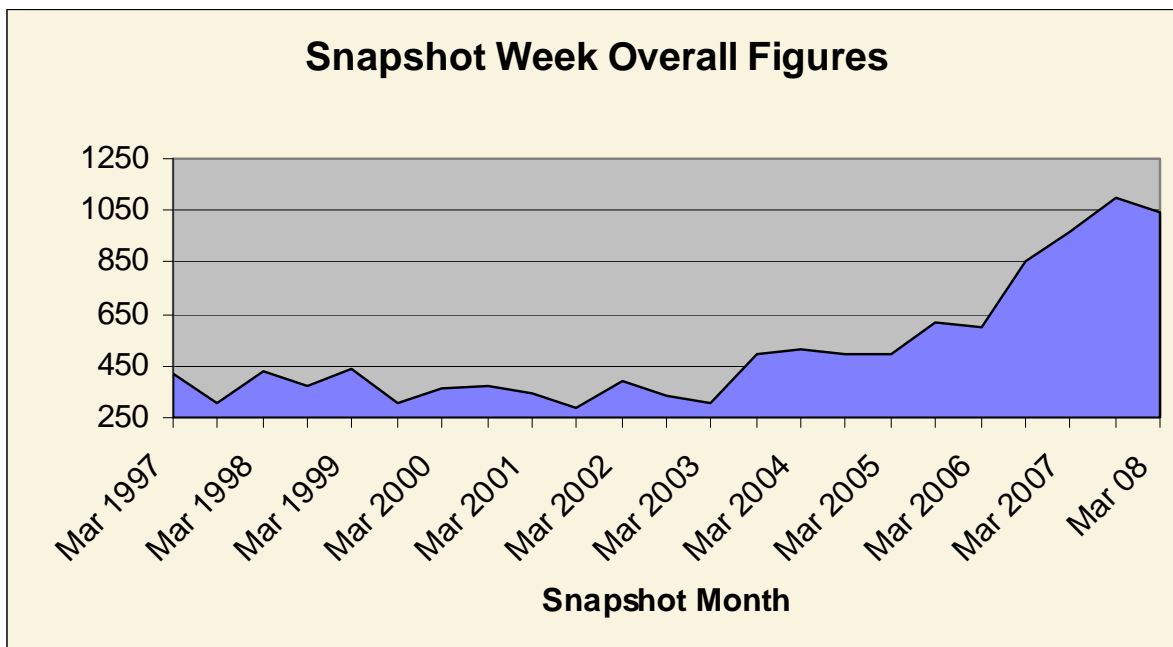
This is a snapshot of the work done at Signposts over a given week in March.

Venue	Session	Age	Total	Male	Female	Staff	Under 16
Morecambe Information and Advice Service including other agency Work	Signposts Sessions & Staff Attendance	All ages	152	58	46	48	
	Leg Ulcer Clinic	60+	12	6	3	3	
	Young Peoples Sexual Health Clinic	under 18	7			3	4
	Inward House	26-60	5	3	1	1	
	Shelter	40-60	5	3		1	1
	Welfare Rights	18-60+	5	1	3	1	
	CAT	18-60+	19	9	6	4	
	Youth and Community Placement Viva	18-26	6			6	
	Victim Support	18-26	4	1	2	1	
	YMCA	26-40	3		2	1	
Total - Information and Advice Service:			218	81	63	69	5
Casework	Client Contacts/Staff Attendance	All ages	267	37	73	110	47
Work With Young People	Young Carers	under 18	66	1		8	57
	Access to Leisure	under 18	18			9	9
	Preston Activ8	under 18	17	8	7	2	
Travelling Tots	Carnforth MTI Creche	under 18	2			2	
	Sefton Road - Baby & Toddler Group	under 18	22	2	7	2	11
	Sefton Road - Baby Zone	under 18	27	3	6	3	15
	Jelly Tots	under 18	41	4	11	4	22
	Healthy Eating Course - Creche	under 18	7			4	3
	Stay & Play - Platform	under 18	47	7	15	2	23
	Music Time	under 18	9			4	5
	Parenting Forum Creche	under 18	7			4	3
Heysham Stay and Play	under 18	14		4	3	7	
Rainbow Centre	Signposts Staff Attendance/Enquiries	All Ages	12			12	
Heysham Rd	Signposts Staff Attendance/Enquiries	All Ages	4			4	
Food4Thought	Signposts Staff Attendance/Enquiries	All Ages	47	9	18	20	
Signposts Carnforth	Signposts Staff Attendance/Enquiries	All Ages	9			9	
	Digital Media Event	All Ages	57	20	15	7	15
	Personnell Committee	All Ages	6	1	3	2	
Preston	Signposts Staff Attendance	All ages	54	1	13	32	8
Community Shop	Signposts Staff Attendance	All ages	16			16	
	Social Work Student Group Supervision	All ages	7			7	
	Family Support Meeting	All ages	6			6	
	Morecambe Homeless Action	All ages	47	30	11	6	
	NYA Meeting	11-16	15			4	11
Total - Other Services:			824	123	183	282	236
Signposts Project - Overall Total:			1042				

Signposts Multi Agency Resource Centre
Annual Report 2007/2008

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	Sept 2007	1103
Mar 2008	1042		



Please note:

Whilst the most recent Snapshot shows a slight fall in numbers we acknowledge that our statistical information can never be 100% accurate.

There have been issues of capacity during the last six months of the period and an emphasis has been placed on delivery rather than back office to ensure targets were achieved which we interpret as being the reason behind this decline in numbers.

Work is now underway to ensure effective monitoring of work undertaken is achieved across the organisation.

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. 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.

We do not claim complete statistical accuracy and recognise that our strength is in service delivery.

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.

Enquiries and Statistics – 2007 / 2008

Signposts Work	Total	CC
General	86	28
Administration	68	1
Volunteering	108	13
Volunteer Support	76	
Local Groups	1674	77
Women & Families	5088	2677
Carnforth Events and Festivals	3130	662
Group-Work With Young People	2405	2405
Travelling Tots	4401	
Environmental Issues	216	11
Signposts Total	17252	5874

Poverty	526	272
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HIV AIDS and Drugs		
Drugs	23	
HIV (as presenting issue)	2	
Welfare Fund		
HIV AIDS and Drugs Total	25	0

Housing		
Housing Associations	299	38
Local Authority Housing	243	45
Rooflessness	110	8
Furniture	363	20
Utilities	338	9
Miscellaneous	270	18
Washer/Shower Use/Toiletries	426	9
Housing Total	2049	147

Finances & Benefits		
Benefits	1222	79
Council Tax	26	1
Pensions	59	
Finance & Debt	292	33
Finance & Benefits Total	1599	113

Health		
Alcohol	29	8
Doctor	118	5
Dentist / Optician	15	
General Support Enquiries	280	7
Hospital	50	
Mental Health	100	7
Young People and Sexual Health	29	
Preg / Contraception / Sexual Health	40	
Relationships / Family Support	883	101
Child Health (Baby Milk)	17	6
Health Total	1559	134

Social Services		
General Support	69	23
Contacting Social Workers	268	38
Child Protection	12	4
Refer for Assessment	16	8
Children In Care	6	6
Carers / Respite Care	8	
Social Services Total:	379	79

Legal & Violence	Total	CC
Domestic Violence	6	1
Magistrates/County Court	40	1
Legal General	72	3
Police	73	17
Probation & Prison Service	44	3
Solicitor	91	2
Victim Support	4	1
Abusive Behaviour/harassment	1	
Legal & Violence Total	331	28

Networking and Referrals		
Inter-Agency	847	877
Local Information	102	31
Networking and Referrals Total:	949	908

Other Agencies		
YMCA	16	
LCC Housing Advice	40	
Community Alcohol Team	121	
Community Drugs Team	5	
Sexual Health Clinic	41	
Welfare Rights	26	
C.A.B.	7	
Morecambe Homeless Action	776	
LDWA	73	
Shelter	57	4
Youth Offending Team	16	
Other Agencies Total:	1178	4

Community Shop Drop In's		
Community Police & PACT	111	
Adult College (ESOL classes)	206	
Morecambe Bay Credit Union	95	
Older Persons Health Drop In	76	
Older Persons Drop In	148	
Community Shop Tot:	636	0

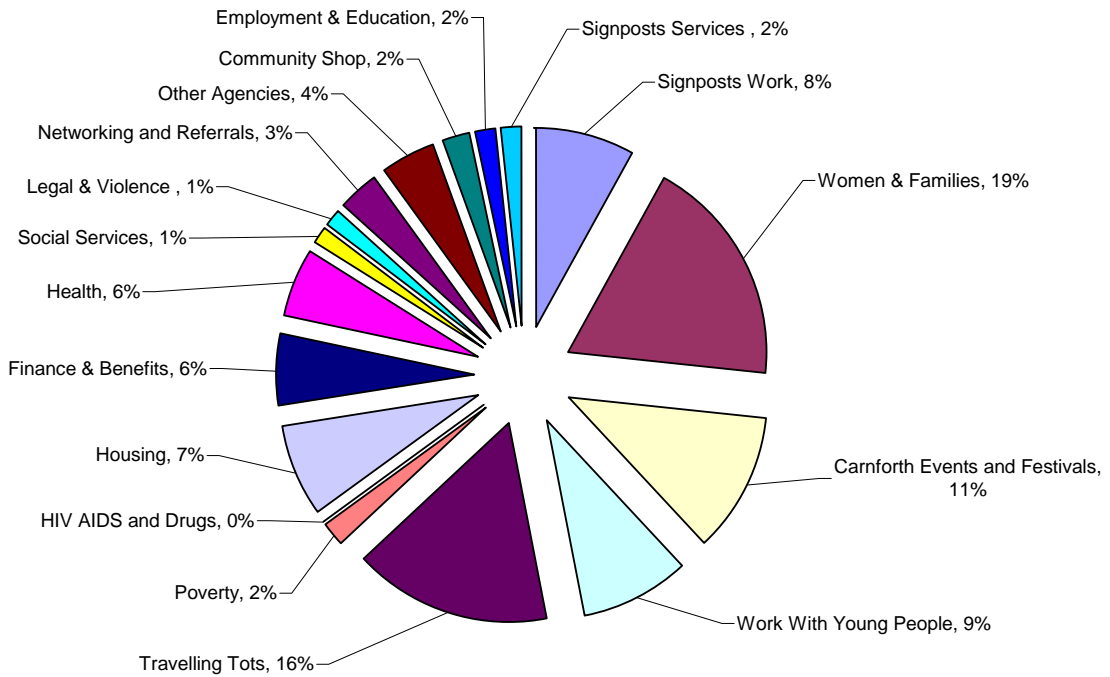
Employment & Education		
Seeking Work/Employment Issues	193	6
Education	220	93
Training Courses	45	4
Employment & Education Tot:	458	103

Signposts Services		
Computer Use	34	3
Laminating/Fax	48	1
Photocopying	87	2
Room Booking	275	
Internet	14	1
Signposts Services Total	458	7

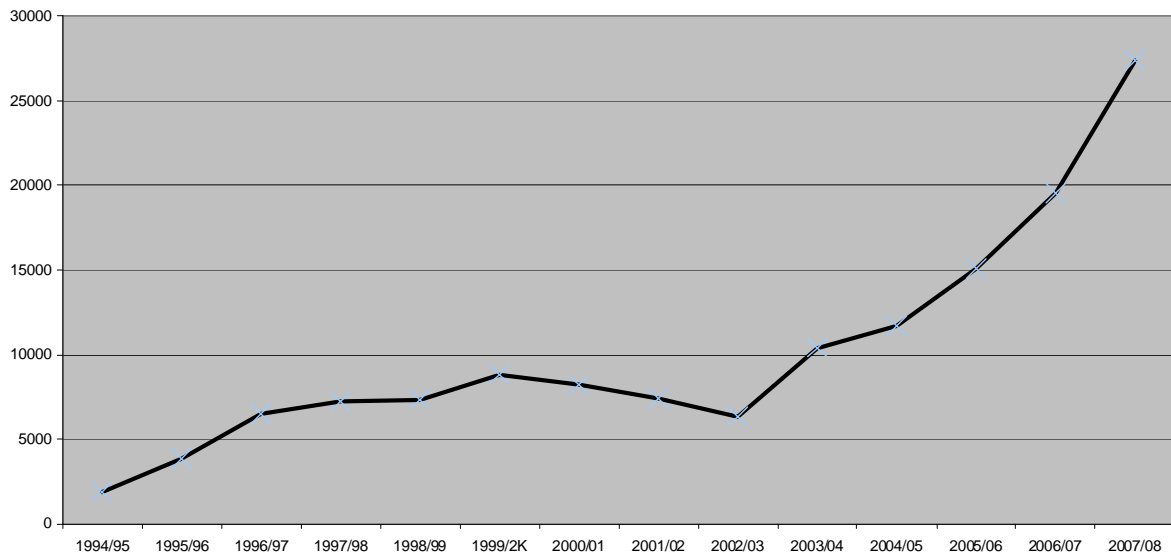
Total Enquiries for period	27401	7669
Total Adult Enquiries	19732	

Enquiries and Statistics – Graphical Representation

Statistical Analysis of Work Undertaken 2007/08



Total Enquiries - Year on Year



Section Three – Our Work

Operational Overview

By Deputy Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team

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

Work on these objectives has been continued by:

- The establishment of 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 Children's Centres and within the targets of Pupil Mobility Projects in Morecambe Bay and Preston to provide support to children and families and to mainstream this work
- 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
- Delivery against an SLA with Clear Voices for Older People to support working groups and organise seminars and events and the mainstreaming of this work in Cumbria.
- 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.
- Expansion of a team of sessional workers

In addition, the following Operational Targets for 2007/2008 were achieved:

- To work towards the project being fit for purpose – provision of quality equipment, resources and venues including the renewal of ICT equipment, purchase of appropriate resources, refurbishment of venues
- 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 and Blackburn BSR and Cumbria RSCP
- The provision of a high quality experience for students on placement
- The creation of 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.
- The training of members of its team to deliver training as part of the core service – seven people completed their training in June 2007.
- Closer partnership working with Places for People Housing via the developing Project Milestones resource at Heysham Road

Changes to the management structure has been a key change during the period which helped all the above to be achieved – thanks must go to the team for their work this year.

Operational Targets for 2008/09

- Consolidate and expand the admin, finance and HR capacity of the organisation by the creation of a Project Director – Organisational Management post
- Increase our ability to produce accurate financial and monitoring information
- Review the recommendations of the CAF organisational review with particular emphasis on work programmes based on the recommendations
- Maintain a focus on communication with the team via team bulletins, and training, ensuring a team focus for all pieces of work to support the teams health and wellbeing
- Implement a robust way of involving stakeholders in the planning of our work
- Develop curriculum materials including equality, diversity, and anti-oppressive practice
- Review procurement policies to ensure ethical purchasing including fair-trade, and review the organisations carbon footprint
- Achieve stability within social enterprise delivery
- Create a marketing strategy which includes better signage and acknowledges the most appropriate ways to market Signposts services.
- Rationalise the staffing at delivery level to increase opportunities for training, development and apprenticeships by introducing differential levels of responsibility and pay

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.

Key activity

- Provision of a user friendly, easily accessible, non-threatening holistic service to enquirers which seeks to address the concerns of the individual rather than provide answers to questions Monday – Friday 10.00-4.30
- Provision of information in a variety of formats to individuals, agencies and statutory bodies and the community including web based and published materials
- Referrals to other agencies and services and specialist information and advice provided both within its own service and by offering space for other services to provide information and advice (see table below)
- Local recruitment of volunteers who then deliver the service
- Leg Ulcer and Chronic Wound Clinic via a designated medical room at 58 Regent Road staffed by District Nurses
- Sexual health clinic delivered in partnership with specialist nurse provision
- Provision of outreach services and development of ICT access to information and advice via website, specialist information software provision and access to the service via email
- Reaching out to hard to reach groups and vulnerable individuals and families
- dealt with over 7000 enquiries

Agency Sessions – 58 Regent Road

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.

The table overleaf shows a typical week for room bookings.

Key Targets

- To review the service in terms of equality and diversity acknowledging the changing environment
- 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.
- To roll out the information and advice service model into Community Centres in Preston.

Signposts Room Use by Other Agencies

	Am	Pm	EVENING
Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter Housing Advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lancaster District Women's Aid • Community Drug and Alcohol Team • Housing Support Team 	
Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Alcohol Team • YMCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leg Ulcer Clinic • Welfare Rights 	
Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Housing • Sexual Health Clinic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's Reading Group (moved from Community Shop) • Morecambe Homeless Action (now at Community Shop)
Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sal's Place • Community Alcohol Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lancaster District Women's Aid • Leg Ulcer Clinic • Youth Offending Team 	
Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Alcohol Team • Leg Ulcer Clinic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Offending Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morecambe Homeless Action (now at Community Shop)

HIV Work

During the last 12 months Signposts has continued to receive a low level of funding from Adult Social Care 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. Discussions continue 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

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

Key Activity

- One to one casework

Key Targets

- To achieve a higher level of funding and to stretch the work across the North Lancashire PCT footprint
- To work in partnership with George House Trust and Bernardo's to offer an holistic service
- To investigate the possibility of delivering in Cumbria

World Aids Day

On Friday 30th November 2007 Signposts raised awareness of HIV for World Aids Day.

In all venues we had Posters, information cards, leaflets, balloons and information on sexual health.

The theme for 2007 was '**Lets get talking**' people had the opportunity to be creative using red fabric squares – to create an awareness display which was displayed in the Community Shop.

Feedback from the day included:

'Young Men asking about sexual health issues.'

'Discussions on why were raising awareness'

and

'People interested in how HIV is contracted.'



Signposts also organised Red Ribbons and Posters for Morecambe Library which is a well used venue for information distribution.

We gave away approximately 350 red ribbons - Which will hopefully contribute to more understanding about HIV in Lancashire and Cumbria.

Please remember

The Welfare Fund is available to help to improve the quality of life of people with AIDS and symptomatic HIV. The fund provides financial help towards the cost of items and services which applicants cannot afford on their current income, and for which funding is not available from statutory sources.

Visit www.signposts.org.uk for more information

Housing Work

Key Activity

Housing poverty and homelessness are still a major issue for Signposts and cuts across all areas of work and client groups.

The team have a wealth of knowledge and experience to support both one-off enquiries and case work relating to housing issues.

In addition we have access to specialist services which includes:

- Shelter,
- CAB and,
- DISC Floating Support

Project Milestones

Signposts has been working in partnership with Places for People for some time and part of this work has been looking at ways of improving their block of flats on Heysham Road.

We have worked with some of the tenants to support their involvement with the local community and to provide training and group work opportunities.

This has included:

- One off information and advice
- Referral to 50Forward
- Providing volunteering opportunities

The work is continuing to develop and we are in the process of setting up information and advice sessions within the ground floor flat which currently acts as an office for the Family Support Service.

A barbeque to celebrate the 1st year of the project is planned for July. This is specifically for the tenants to celebrate the progress that has been made to recognise their commitment to reducing anti-social behaviour and being involved in the local community.

Morecambe Homeless Action

We are continuing to support Morecambe Homeless Action during a time where the management committee are considering their development plan in light of Lancaster District Homeless Strategy's food services recommendations.

Our support includes:

- Venue for drop in
- Administration
- CRB clearances
- Good practice guidelines

Lancaster District Homelessness Strategy

Signposts has been involved with the development and implementation of Lancaster District Homeless Strategy since 2001.

This has included membership of the Homeless Forum to evaluate the implementation and shape the new strategy for 2008.

The evaluation of homeless services has formed part of the new strategy and Signposts have been involved with Multi-Agency Monitoring and housing survey weeks.

Task and Finish Group

A task and finish group has been set up with key workers from the team to:

- Identify homeless issues pertinent to Signposts clients.
- Continue development of above areas.
- Implement the key targets listed below.

Key targets for 2008/09

- Continued development of Project Milestones model.
- Develop Signposts service delivery proposal for Homeless Prevention.

Case Study

A client came into the Information and Advice Service looking for help with shelter and accommodation.

This was not his first appearance to us. He had been homeless since Friday, and sleeping rough over the weekend.

We managed to get him accommodation for two nights in a bed and breakfast with the help of the Salvation Army.

We then proceeded to fill out housing forms.

We also gave expression of interest form for a housing association.

Then we gave him lists of homeless drop-ins within the area.

This man was able to shower, and to do his washing and collected back dated benefit forms.

Update

The man has been short listed for accommodation with the housing association

50Forward – Care Navigator Project

Key Activity

The 50Forward project has been one of 9 pilot projects funded by DWP across the country. The pilots are due to finish at the beginning of July and the process of evaluation is taking place. Signposts has been delivering the Care Navigator part of the 50Forward Project that works with volunteers who deliver a service, tailored to meet individual needs of people who have become, or are likely to become, isolated within their community.

To enable this to happen sometimes barriers needed to be removed to allow older people to undertake activities that they would like to participate in. This was achieved in many different ways but the most common one was that the clients would be accompanied to activities by Care Navigators. An example of this is that a client 90+ wanted to go swimming but was nervous and apprehensive about doing so. With the help of a Care Navigator accompanying them the client started to attend sessions specifically aimed at the older generation. The client now attends these session independently.

Care Navigator volunteers have been recruited from within the local community and have included people who are looking to change their own life direction to people who have been referred to the service. They have been nurtured, supported and encouraged to become volunteers either for Signposts or other agencies.

The service has recruited 38 volunteers and reached 961 people providing them with (as 30th May 2008):

- Information, Advice and Guidance.
- Generic visits and 1-2-1 sessions.
- Casework Service.

Care Navigators have achieved a variety of outcomes with clients and have enabled isolated older people to feel that they can make a more positive contribution by:

- Increasing social networks
- Sustaining or increasing independence
- Supporting volunteering and employment
- Health and well being
- Financial inclusion

Key targets for 2008/09:

- Implementing enhanced budget to include Afternoon Teas at Food 4 Thought and United Reformed Church.
- Helping people to remain active and independent in their everyday lives to help avoid isolation
- Provide help in enabling older people to access suitable extended community services

50 Forward Case Study

Mr D was referred to Signposts by the Manager of the Sheltered Accommodation he was living in. It was felt that he would benefit from being involved in activities in his community.

Living Situation

Mr D is full time carer for his wife. They live in Sheltered Accommodation.

Personal goals and expectations

Mr D is already actively involved with a local group but would like to explore other opportunities. He feels he can offer support to others especially if they would want to join his local group.

Initial Assessment

Signposts initial assessment with Mr D identified the following goal plan:

1. Find details of activities within the community for Mr D and his wife to access.
2. Find activities for Mr D to attend.
3. Explore volunteering opportunities.

Follow-up Visits

During the follow up visit the 50F worker discussed with Mr D the care navigator role. Mr D felt that he could offer some support within this role provided it was to provide opportunity for people to access activities and group he was already familiar with.

Over the following few weeks, Mr D was recruited onto the care navigator team and has undergone training and supervision to support him in this role. Mr D has continued to be an active member of the team and now supports individuals and groups within the service.

Farming and Rural Health – ‘Well being in Wellies’

Key Activity

The continued development of the FRHP has shown that the project needed to be re-evaluated. The original steering group felt that the current changes within Lancashire and Cumbria with regard to PCTs and Health and Social Care required separate input in relation to partners and funding streams.

It was also recognised that both geographical and population differences required individual implementation of the project, whilst continuing to have a methodology and ethos that ran across both counties. The project delivered 2 seminars in Cumbria and Lancashire to identify specific needs for each area and to establish the way forward for the project.

Seminar Outcomes:

- Auction marts are no longer the social meeting they once were and farmers are often too busy to spend time discussing issues.
- Develop partnerships with those already accessing individuals within sparse rural communities.
- Work within local parishes to increase contact with rural communities.
- Health Promotion via Auction Marts.
- Use good news stories and case studies to show positive outcomes.
- Link to practice based commissioning
- Links to Information Gateway

Both steering groups have had their first meetings.

Project Funding

Tudor Trust funding was received for 2007/2009, enabling the establishment of Specialist Lead and sessional worker.

In addition the project has received two other funding streams:

- **Cumbria -**

RSCP funding received for April 2007 – April 2008.

- **Lancashire -**

BSR funding Received for Lancashire to develop work within 6 Parish Areas.

Auction Marts

The project has continued to deliver at Kendal Ulverston, Lancaster and Brock Auction Marts promoting health and well being which has included:

- Vision Advisory Service
- Stroke Association
- Smoking Cessation

Community Venues

Partnership work with Milnthorpe Children’s Centre has continued and we have supported various events and sessions including Family Days, healthy eating and road safety. We have also planned and delivered an Activ8 activity during February half term.

In addition to the sessions at Caton and Hornby the partnership working in Lancashire with Blackburn Diocese Board of Social Responsibility has identified 6 parishes to provide venue and volunteers to support delivery of Outreach Information and Advice.

Volunteers

Links have been made with Lindeth College Windermere which is a college for students with learning difficulties. They have identified two students who will work as volunteers for Signposts, delivering posters and information leaflets in the cluster areas of Ulverston and Kirkby Stephen.

Case Work

One-to-one support has been provided to individuals and families identifying and managing issues:

- Positive parenting advice.
- Self esteem and behaviour.
- Adoption issues.
- Social exclusion

Key targets for 2008/09:

- Develop project proposal for Commissioning Boards.
- Work with Eden Public Health Partnership and Local Forum to establish primary area to roll out project in Cumbria.
- Recruitment of volunteers – identify issues where knowledge within communities can cause barriers to accessing advice. Develop methodology to work across communities.

Case Study

Contact was made with the Stroke Association through networking at an Action for Health Meeting, in Penrith. It was agreed that we could work in partnership to meet both organisations key targets:

- Signposts; to bring health promotion and “on the spot” health to farmers who have difficulty accessing services during office hours.
- The Stroke Association; to reach rural populations in Cumbria and North Lancashire, to raise awareness of the need to have a regular blood pressure check, the highest risk group is not the elderly, but in middle age.

Lancaster Auction Mart Session.

The session was pre-advertised in the Auction Mart Newsletter advertising free blood pressure checks. The farmers, canteen staff and office staff were all keen to get a check and 40 tests were carried out.

Due to the nature of the session the farmers were keen to talk to the two Signposts staff on many levels, we were able to inform them about the service Signposts offers and hand out leaflets. Over a 100 were taken.



The Stroke Association were very pleased with the response. They have set up sessions in hospital foyers and had no response at all and due to the success of this partnership the Stroke Association is now booked to deliver sessions at Kendal, Ulverston and Brock marts. They will also attend Westmorland, Ulverston and Garstang Shows in partnership with Signposts.

Outcomes

1. One farmer in his early 40's was informed he could be in the high risk category and he was visibly shocked by his reading. He talked about his relationship problems at the moment which he felt were a contributing factor.
2. Three other farmers had high readings and were given advice and suggested to make appointments with their GPs.
3. The benefits of working together provides health advice, a "conversation opener" for Signposts and an on the spot health check.

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



Key Activity

The Pupil Mobility Projects in Morecambe and Preston received Lancashire Children's Fund Funding for 5 Years, including 2 years continuation funding. This funding concluded on the 31st March 2008.

The projects have now been mainstreamed and are encompassed within our Work with Young People and our Family Support Service.

The Pupil Mobility Projects were set up to identify the problems relating to 'Transience' and to address the difficulties some families were experiencing when moving from one area to another. The reasons for the rise in transience soon became apparent – they included relationship breakdown; debt; domestic violence; housing problems;.

Signposts were able to respond quickly to referrals and set up a robust Family Support service in Morecambe and Preston to work with the families and the difficult issues they raised. Morecambe and Preston soon showed a distinct difference in levels of transience, as Morecambe, being a seaside town had provided shelter for many families 'on the move' over many years whereas Preston, began working with families who had been 'missing' from school registers or had not turned up for health related appointments.

A multi-agency approach was adopted, as the issues were invariably complex and the families hard to reach. This sometimes required support for families over a long period of time. Together with colleagues from other services, we provided a holistic approach with targeted and focussed goal planning to bring about positive and realistic outcomes.

Information & Advice was available from both locations; with satellite sessions offered throughout Preston at various venues. This enabled Signposts to reach other areas, especially across the City of Preston.

Through the project we have witnessed a reduction in transience within the area and families appear to be more settled. The project has ensured that families have mainstream provision in place and are engaging with their local community. The project has highlighted the importance of working with families who are new to the locality, to ensure that the necessary services are involved and engaging in their

communities where possible. There is still much work to be done to address the issues relating to migrant workers settling within the area from Eastern Europe.

Key targets for 2008/09

- To continue to offer this service via mainstream funding

Case Studies

S moved to Morecambe with her two daughters and was homeless living with her mother in unsuitable accommodation. Through the project we were able to ensure that both girls were enrolled in local schools and had the correct uniform. We also completed housing forms with S to ensure that the family had suitable accommodation. The family has now been rehoused and both young people are attending school and engaging in local activities.

A young male aged 12yrs, new to the Preston area had recently been excluded from school and his Mum felt this was a wrong decision and wanted to know how to appeal. Also no homework had been sent home during the exclusion period so his behaviour had deteriorated. Signposts put Mum in touch with the appropriate services. It was later found that they had the wrong address for the family. This was corrected and homework arrived! Signposts also accompanied Mum to the Appeal hearing. The results of the appeal went in favour of the school and the school refused to take him back. At the hearing Signposts heard that the boy had severe behaviour problems, both physical and emotional. Signposts referred him to GRIP (Group Intervention Panel) and he was accepted onto a 12 week programme looking at his behaviour and its consequences. Signposts encouraged Mum to contact the Education dept. responsible for finding her son a new school, as Mum was planning to leave the area.

The GRIP programme was a success; he had attended every session and engaged well.

He had been offered a place in a new school and is now looking forward to a new start.

Family Support Work

Key Activity

The project has worked with over 200 families in Morecambe, Carnforth and Preston over the last year. Referral issues include parenting support, behaviour management, access to information and advice and accessing local activities. The project receives referrals from Schools, Primary Care Trust, Social Care Services and self referrals. The project continues to be delivered via 1:1 casework, referrals to specialist services, family days and group work. This variety of approaches allows us to provide a holistic and innovative approach to our casework.

The team have delivered a number of very successful family days including a trip to the pantomime at the Dome at Christmas, a family art and crafts day in the summer. Over 70 families attending over the 2 events, and a good time was had by all.

The project has developed its links with the Children's Centres and is working closely in partnership to deliver a succinct and targeted service. The electronic database is now fully functioning and aiding the delivery of casework and ensuring monitoring is up-to-date and accurate.

Key targets for 2008/09:

- To continue to develop the working relationship with partner agencies
- To embed the casework systems

Case Study

E has 4 children aged 7, 5, 4 and 2 and self referred herself to the service. E needed advice around housing, parenting support and returning to work. We worked with E around the parenting support pack for 6 weeks and also closely worked with her health visitor. E was signposted to CAB to look at her housing issues as it was about deposits being withheld from a previous tenancy. E attended CAB and this issue was resolved. We provided E with information on local courses in the area and volunteering opportunities. After some discussion E decided that she would like to do some voluntary work and then look at a course in September when the children would be at nursery.

The outcomes from this case were that the behaviour of her children improved, she is volunteering and CAB were able to advise her regarding the housing issue.

Dads Work

Over the past year the dads work has provided one-to-one support for dads via casework the service also supported a dad's group. The purpose of the group has been to act as a self and mutual support network for dads and their children in the Morecambe area. The group aims to find worthwhile, enjoyable and educational things to do which involve their children and support them to access children's centres and local events and activities.

The group participated in a photography workshop with a local artist providing opportunity to learn skills using cameras, computers and printing equipment, and has taken part in discussions with other professionals.

In addition to this the team have organised and delivered 3 Family events:

- Beach Walk in the summer, a chance for the dad's to explore the local environment. The event was attended by 15 people.
- Blackpool Trip in the summer, the day involved going to the aquarium, seeing the lights and the fun fair. The day was attended by 30 people.
- BBQ event in conjunction with The Healthy Living Centre in the summer. The event was attended by 12 families.

We have also been delivering dads work in Preston which has involved the project team designing a range of flyers and questionnaires to promote and research dads engagement in Children's Centres and group-work

The Project Team initially began promoting and encouraging Dad's to attend the Children's Centre's existing 'Smile its Saturday' Sessions with a view to evolving later into a distinct Fathers Group. The Father's Work Project has shown that there is significant interest from Dads in forming a Dad's Group at Preston West Children's Centre. The project has engaged with 25 dads.

We are now looking at how we develop this work and take it forward to encompass the feedback from dads.

Parenting

Key Activity:

New project for 2007 – 2008 working with the Lancaster and Morecambe District Parenting Forum Steering Group and partners to deliver the aims outlined in the LSP Funding bid and Parenting Forum Terms of Reference.

Aims:

To write a district wide Parenting/Family Support Strategy, in consultation with partner agencies.

The Strategy will aim to provide a framework that will embrace all families whether accessing universal or targeted services and will be developed as a guide for a continuum of prevention, early intervention, and supportive services. It will inform local practice, develop skills and build on existing good practice.

It is anticipated that the Strategy will be the key document for all those working with parents/carers and become an intrinsic part of strategic planning for the district and link to regional and national initiatives.

Key targets for 2008/9:

1. To publish/launch the Parenting Strategy in Lancaster and Morecambe District - September 2008
2. To create an 'Action Plan' to involve the local Children's Trust Board and partners in the future commissioning of parenting/family support services for parents/carers in the Lancaster and Morecambe District.
3. To co-ordinate the work of the Parenting Forum and ensure that new policy and strategic developments related to parenting are disseminated locally; to continue to sustain positive links with partner agencies, both targeted and universal, who provide parenting support.

Work With Young People

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

(a) Young Carers

Key Activity

At the end of the financial year we had 76 'active' Young Carers on the database, this figure has fluctuated throughout the year. The project has engaged Young Carers through a variety of ways including trips, 1:1 work, activity meets, forums, group work and holiday activities. The project has adapted in order to meet the needs of these Young Carers.

In October 2007, the project was involved with two very successful residentials. The first was the return leg of the exchange residential with Young Carers in Gateshead. The group stayed in Keswick and enjoyed various activities including raft building, canoeing and climbing. Everyone enjoyed themselves and felt the whole experience had been a success. The second residential was held at Winmarleigh Hall in Preston and brought together Young Carers from across the county to enjoy activities such as archery, quad biking and climbing. This was an excellent opportunity for our Young Carers to meet other carers from across the county and to share their experiences and have some quality time out. It is proposed that the residential will be a yearly event as it was such a success.

The project has also adapted its delivery to cover the holiday period, as it was felt that this was an important time to provide Young Carers with a break. This has been a great success, with activities including writing and recording a song with More Music in Morecambe and a cook and eat session at Food for Thought.

Key targets for 2008/09:

- Develop family support work to support the work carried out with Young Carers to reduce their caring roles
- Build accreditation into all work carried out with Young Carers

Case Study

Susan is an 11 year old young carer, who helps to care for her two brothers who have learning difficulties and her mother who has mental health problems. Susan has been accessing Young Carers for over a year and enjoys meeting with other young people. She has engaged well with the project and contributes. When we spoke to mum about the impact it has on Susan she stated that Susan enjoyed the time out and it allowed her to be a young person. Through attending the Young Carers project Susan has grown in confidence and has developed a support network of friends.

(b) Access to Leisure Project

Key Activity

The project continues to support 15 young people with disabilities each year to access mainstream leisure activities. These activities include a bowling group, a drama group, a youth group and a Beavers group.

The project has recruited more volunteers to support the young people, enabling us to be more flexible in our approach and to match volunteers with young people more efficiently. The project has seen a number of young people successfully begin to access groups independently. This has demonstrated the success of the project and highlights the possibilities for young people with disabilities.

The project has been successful in securing funding for a further 3 years.

Key targets for 2008/09:

- To continue to raise the awareness of young people with disabilities to providers
- To look for further funding to expand the project

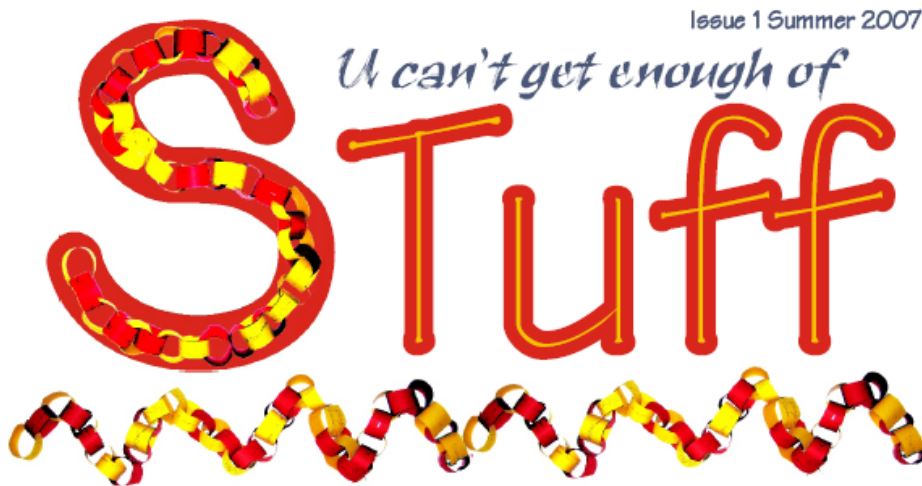
Case Study

For reasons of confidentiality all names have been changed.

Peter is a 12 year old boy with Downs Syndrome. He attends a local special school and wished to attend an activity. When I first meet Peter he already had an active social life and was engaging in a number of different activities. Peter said that he would like a different activity where he could meet new people. We discussed a number of different options and peter felt that he would like to access a bowling group. Peter was matched with Chris, a retired volunteer. Peter and Chris began to access a bowling group on a Saturday morning. Initially Chris said that Peter was given one-to-one tuition, Peter seemed to thrive in this environment and increased in confidence rapidly. After a few weeks, Peter was encouraged to play with the other young people who attended the group; Chris fed back that Peter enjoyed this, but became frustrated if he couldn't win. Over a number of weeks Chris commented that Peter was settling in well and the young people in the group had welcomed him and enjoyed bowling with him. Overall Peter continues to access the bowling group with Chris and is growing in confidence each week.

(c) Other

Signposts has delivered and developed a range of projects aimed at working with Young People. It has been a very busy and exciting time and the work has supported young people across Preston, Morecambe and Carnforth to engage in innovative and fun activities.



STUFF was a young people led e-bulletin group who reported and recorded positive activities for young people to do in Preston.

The activities were all easily accessible for young people and either free or had minimum costs. 10 young people were involved in the project and they produced 4 e-bulletins. The project worked in partnership with Prescap in Preston.

STUFF reported on Park, Museums, Sports, Dance, Art, Pantomimes, Carnivals, Healthy food and games.

The young people thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the project, the end of the project was celebrated in December with a launch of the young people's art work and voice recordings.



Activ8 Preston, Morecambe and Carnforth

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:

- Painting a Children's Play area
- Designing Play activities on the floor of a play area
- Making a video of what young people think about their community
- litter picking and recycling
- Gardening and weeding
- Making a puppet show called 'Where we live'
- Talks with the local Police Community Support Officers
- Writing letters about environmental issues
- Painting a mural for outside a Community Centre
- Making and tasting healthy food

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 and Music Workshops.

During 2007-2008 Activ8 took place in the following areas:

- West End of Morecambe (13-19yrs)
- Carnforth (12 – 18yrs) – working in partnership with LCC Youth & Community and the Police
- Preston - Farrington Park Area (13 – 18yrs)

YOF Bids Morecambe and Preston

Young People from the West end of Morecambe and Farrington Park in Preston both put in separate Youth Opportunities Fund bids to go on residential weekends.



The Preston Group went to Tower Woods during February Half term and participated in team building activities to include Abseiling, Tree Climbing and Sailing. A total of 17 young people went on the weekend.

The Morecambe group also went to Tower Woods but challenged themselves to lead the evening activity session. This involved all the young people taking responsibility to lead a game or a discussion session. The group also went kayaking on a very cold Lake Windermere and had the fantastic experience of doing lime stone cliff climbing. A total of 10 young people took part in this residential.



Summer Programme for Young People with Disabilities.

During the Summer Signposts led a programme of activities for young people with a range of disabilities.

- We had a total of 40 referral forms
- Young people accessed up to 3 full days of activity provision over a 5 week period.

Young people accessed activities ran by the Lancaster City Council Play scheme, They did arts and crafts, went bowling, had trips out to happy mount park and went to regent park studios.

We worked with young people aged 5-17 and recruited a team of specialist staff to join our sessional team.

We concluded the programme with two fun days. On these days the young people took part in Music Workshops led by More Music in Morecambe and sports and craft activities.

The programme was very successful and both the young people and staff enjoyed the summer. The project will be repeated during summer 2008



Young Peoples Stakeholder group

The young people's stakeholder group has developed considerably during the past year.

- Young People involved in the group have been involved in consultation relating to young peoples issues and regeneration in Morecambe.
- The group have attended Signposts development days and AGM.
- They meet with the Board of directors and feedback issues relating to the delivery of young peoples work
- The Young People have received funding from the Youth Opportunities Fund and Youth Capital Find for a residential and furniture and an upgrade to equipment in the community shop.
- They are currently working on a research project with the National Youth Agency.



NYA Research project.

We are currently working with the Young Peoples Stakeholder Group and the National Youth Agency to carry out some Young People led research in Morecambe and Lancaster as part of the Young Researchers Network.

The young people in the group have had some brilliant training from the NYA so far including a research residential at Warwick University a training event in Leeds , Bradford and Birmingham

The research proposal is based around young peoples and adults understanding of what activities are available for young people in the West End of Morecambe. The young people will be carrying out the field work research during the summer holidays.



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 (50+) and Young People.

Key Activity:

- The identity of the shop has changed – shop opens when activities are taking place on a booking system – see programme below
- Provision of space for community groups including PACT and community based education
- Provision of space for group work with young people
- Provision of a venue for Health Displays and Leaflets

	Activity
Monday	Young Peoples Stakeholder Group (weekly term time) PACT Group (Monthly)
Tuesday	Adult College (weekly term time) Sovereign Club Older Persons Health Drop-in
Wednesday	Adult College (weekly term time) Womens Group Reading Group (monthly – moved to Signposts) Morecambe Homeless Action (evening)
Thursday	Morecambe Bay Credit Union Adult College (ESOL Workshop)
Friday	Adult College (weekly term time) Morecambe Homeless Action (evening)
As and when	West End Arts Development Group Activ8 (holiday time) Young Carers Signposts Board Meetings

The community shop has increased its identify as a venue for work with young people via the Young Peoples Stakeholder group and investment from the Youth Capital fund.

Key Targets:

- To extend and develop the programme for the community shop linked to inclusion and community empowerment.
- To secure capital funding to further upgrade and enhance the premises

(b) Work in Carnforth

Key Activity

Over the last twelve months we have continued to deliver our services in a positive way to the local community even though we still have the issue of having no town centre presence but this continues to be high on our agenda.

We have;

- Continued to provide family support to families with children over 5
- Worked with young people through our Activ8, Young Carers, Access to Leisure as well as being asked to deliver one to one work in Carnforth High School
- Expanded our services through out reach work into the rurals
- We now have a bank of volunteers for various areas of work within our project
- We have been delivering a new service specifically aimed at those over 50 as part of our 50Forward Project Model
- We were invited once again to attend the Health Fair at Carnforth High School whilst there we were approached by the high school in Hornby to deliver the same at there Health Fair
- Continued to facilitate the Carnforth Interagency Group meetings
- The Events and Festivals programme in the main were well attended and included some new ones linking with the 'Ramblers'



Conclusion

Our work still continues to be well received by the community along with statutory and voluntary organisations within Carnforth and the surrounding rural areas.

Key targets for 2008/09

- Young Roots intergenerational project
- Re-launch of the events listings
- Town centre premises

(C) Carnforth MTI Events and Festivals Programme

Key Activity;

The projects aim was to bring more cultural facilities into Carnforth with the view of self sustainability within this area and to make Carnforth a place to go and not just a Town to pass through. The events and festivals encompass the needs and development of the tourism industry as well as enabling the local people to enjoy activities and events by targeting key events in the calendar year. Part of this project was to include the gathering of information about other events that are taking place in and around the Carnforth area on a monthly basis both regular and one off's and to distribute this information both locally as well as to a wider audience.

OBJECTIVES

- Building on to existing partnerships and build new partnership working
- Creative opportunities for local people to try new work
- Develop links with the Chamber of Trade
- Increase economic activity
- Create links to/with various local organisations and businesses
- Bringing arts organisations into Carnforth
- Raise the profile of Carnforth in the surrounding hinterlands
- Vocational training courses
- Involvement of all age groups
- Create a good partnership working environment

To deliver the above objectives we have:

- Developed new activities with Youth and Community – involvement and participation with the Batala Band from MMM for the Christmas Lights switch on
- Promoted the offer of a room at the Local Fire Station as a base for meetings.
- Co-ordinated local walks with the local Ramblers Association
- Organised events that have encouraged local people to have 'hands on' involvement with events like the Dukes Theatre, A 100 Short Stories
- Asked local people for help in connection to promotional information of events by developing flyers/posters
- Directed some of our existing connections in Carnforth to the Chamber of Trade enabling the pooling together of resources
- Arts workshops and events have been provided by
 1. More Music in Morecambe – creating a Carnival Band, DJ and MC , percussion workshops
 2. Folly – Pocket Making Movie Workshops, VELOCITY, Halloween Film Nights
 3. Dukes Theatre Lancaster – 100 Short Stories of Carnforth, A Christmas Carol, War Wives

Feedback:

- Signposts has received both written and verbal confirmation that local business have seen an increase in visitors
- New business have been opened by local people
- All the retail units at Carnforth Railway Station have now been let
- Local businesses are now contacting Signposts for information

The development of a regular local events listings which was electronically mailed out as well as distribution locally. Signposts Carnforth Office has received phone calls from people who wanted extra information about events that were happening in Carnforth who lived in Windermere

In partnership with The Adult College Lancaster there has been a number of specific Vocational Courses taken place in Carnforth for economically inactive local people to help them to become more economically active for the local area.

Signposts events were focussed on Family Fun Days – Eggstravaganza Easter Fun Day, Circus Family Fun Day

Partnership working has taken place throughout the whole of the time that the project has been running plus new partnership working has been established – old partners, Fire Station – new partners Salvation Army.

SUSTAINABILTY

This will be provided by some of the existing partners Folly and More Music in Morecambe who have said that they will continue to run events and workshops in Carnforth. The After Dark Theatre who made contact with the Carnforth Station and has already booked dates to deliver a number of short Plays over the next twelve months.

After a very successful Christmas lights switch on in December 07 the Chamber of Trade want to keep this momentum going. They have already discussed starting to organise the Christmas 2008 event. They are also looking to arrange extra events throughout the year to help raise funds for this event.

CONCLUSION

The Cultural Carnforth Project has been well received by all those involved throughout the community as well developing some good strong partnership working.

Carnforth and its residents now have a more positive attitude along with expectations as to what they want and what can be achieved.

Case Study

Carnforth Lights Switch On

Once again this event was added to by a greater working partnership with the Carnforth Chamber of Trade, More Music Morecambe, Folly, the Adult College Lancaster plus local groups and business's.

This was achieved by,

- Regular meetings with all concerned
- Division of specific responsibilities
- Better and more predominant advertising of the event
- More new involvement from groups, churches and corporate shops in the local community.
- Inviting Made in Lancashire to attend with stalls
- Involving Young People of the area to be involved in providing music/dance on the night which involved workshops prior to the event.

Even though the weather was not very good on the night the event was attended by approximately 850/900 people. Father Christmas was over whelmed by 200 young people visiting him.

There were people from out of the area and the most positive quote heard on the night was ' I never knew Carnforth was so vibrant'



The Chamber of Trade now wants to build on this success even more in 2008 to give sustainability for this event. To do this they have,

- Already had a planning meeting
- Asked last years partners would/could they be involved with this years event
- Asking Made in Lancashire for expression of interest in attending four months earlier than last year
- Ideas for events that can be held to help raise extra funds to be out towards the event
- Father Christmas has already put it in his diary to attend

Unfortunately the funding has come to an end for this piece of work but the enthusiasm from the local community to build on last year and make the event in 2008 bigger and better thus giving it sustainability I think that this can be measured as a great success and a job well done.

(d) Preston Community Centres

Key Activity

Following lengthy negotiations, Signposts tendered for and was appointed to manage three community centres in Preston at Farrington Park, Tanterton and Grange.

A business plan has been developed and we were pleased to welcome the staff team on 1st April 2008.

Objectives

- To work with local communities to encourage them to access services
- To work with local communities to identify local people who are willing to be involved in the design and delivery of services
- To establish Management Committees for each Centre
- To work within agreed Health and Safety Procedures and Principles
- To establish long term sustainability for the Centres
- To work with Preston City Council to achieve financial independence and viability for the Centres
- To work towards the Centres being the Hub of their communities
- To develop innovative ways of delivering services to include Social Enterprise
- To strengthen existing partnership working and partnership links
- To address the Corporate Strategies of Preston City Council

Work on this is at an early stage and a programme of activity is being developed. Some of the key targets follow.

TARGETS FOR 2008/09

Project Name/Target: Healthy Eating

We aim to address this issue by utilising staff and volunteers and the kitchen facilities already in place. Healthy snacks will be made and sold at a realistic/affordable price to the community.

Both centres will continue to run and develop the Breakfast Clubs.

New menu's to be devised in order to provide healthy snacks at other times of the day and during activities at the centres.

This new initiative will obviously encourage healthy eating and will encourage community engagement and promote confidence in the community to continue using our facilities.

Project Name/Target: Service Level Agreement with Surestart West

The next 12 months will see discussions and the implementation of childrens and parental activities at Tanterton Community Centre. Activities would hopefully include stay and play, Dads sessions and Teen Talk.

We are also aiming to buy some robust play equipment (via Surestart funding) to use on the outdoor soft play area.

It is hoped that the new sessions will be built in to a new Service Level Agreement between Signposts and Surestart West.

The sessions will be combined with our healthy eating/fair trade ethos.

Project Name/Target: Information and Advice Services

Farringdon Park and Tanterton Community Centres are to install and develop Information and Advice Centres.

These will be open on a daily basis from 10am to 12noon and staffed by volunteers. Each service will provide confidential advice/info along with a private area with telephone and internet access for users.

Project Name/Target: Community Gardening Project

This project is to be set up in and around the area of Tanterton Community Centre. The purpose of the project is to involve children, families, young people and adults, encouraging 55+ to take an active role too.

The project will involve Signposts staff and volunteers inviting agencies to work in partnership. These agencies will include Probation Services, Wildlife Trust, Intag, Impact, local schools and faith sectors.

There will be an allotment area and picnic area to the rear of the centre enabling the community to work as a team, be creative whilst learning new skills and creating a pleasant environment.

The scheme will also involve re-planting the Community Garden to the front of the shops on Kidsgrove.

Project Name/Target: Young Peoples Action Group x 2 (One Voice & IMPACT)

For Signposts to play an active role in the above action group and to promote positive inclusion of young people in Grange and Ingol/Tanterton and where possible to encourage the use of the Community Centre facilities/sessions and local agencies and partners eg; Signposts, One Voice, IMPACT, YIP, INTAG, Youth Service, Places for People, Gateway etc.

Project Name/Target: To improve the volunteer structure

To engage with the local community and develop volunteer involvement across all three centres.

Staff to devise a plan/approach to promote the benefits of volunteering.

Volunteers to work on various projects including Information and Advice, Healthy Eating project, Community Gardening along with many other activities and areas of work.

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.

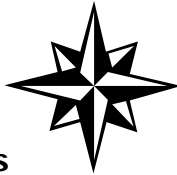
(a) Administrative Services & CRB

Clear Voices for Older People

"Clear Voices For Older People"

For Any Information Please Contact:

Noreen Haselden On
Mobile No: 07804 220108
Or Alternatively Email:
clearvoices@signposts.org.uk
www.signposts.org.uk/clearvoices



C/O Signposts Carnforth
Noreen Haselden
Parish Hall
Kellet Road
Carnforth, LA5 9LR

Lancashire & Cumbria Older Persons NSF Reference Group

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 and the provision of email contact via Signposts
- 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
- 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

The work has been mainstreamed in Cumbria. In Lancashire the work is on hold pending the outcome of the Help Direct Gateway tender process.

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 (moved to the Community Shop in 0708 as planned) to deliver two evening drop-ins and the opportunity to offer a Saturday lunch time drop in if required and the provision of a hot desk and access to services including telephone, ICT, photocopier, 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 and 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 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.

(b) Food for Thought

Background

Signposts had enjoyed a partnership arrangement with the Healthy Living Centre since its inception and was part of the Working Group that initially made the bid for the Centre for Morecambe, it has now been agreed that Signposts will become the management organisation for the café wef 1st November 2007 and we have undertaken to:

- Commit to the existing policy of healthy food at affordable prices for local people
- Commit to continuing training and volunteering opportunities for local people

Signposts was interested in Food4Thought because it fits with our commitment to communities and to working with them in a variety of ways, it will also link the café to other developments in our work programme and potential future developments:

- Healthy food to local people
- A café provision which is welcoming and affordable
- A base and link with groups which Signposts runs
- Links to the Community Shop on Yorkshire Street
- Outside catering for events and activities within Signposts and for others
- Development of Social Enterprise model – Signposts already runs Travelling Tots and a VCFS ICT Voluntary Support Service
- Links with other cafes in the Community Sector eg. Lune Park Children's Centre
- A sandwich delivery service to community groups and organisations

Signposts intends to develop F4T in the following ways:

- It would link to our existing services and management structure
- We would develop a robust business plan to ensure sustainability
- We would establish links to LMC to offer catering placements
- We would establish a staffing and volunteering structure
- We would create JD and PS for any posts created
- We would extend the opening times
- We would continue with the successful catering outside service
- We would market the service within our networks
- We would extend the links to partners and other services in Morecambe
- We would involve local people in the developments of services
- We would make a commitment to keeping the name

In addition we could consider the development of:

- Chef of the Year Competition
- Community Nutrition Assistants Accreditation
- Link to Schools Fund Trust for development of work with schools
- Market to business sector for outside catering at full cost
- Develop the service by links to van delivery service – Signposts has transport
- Approach funders for additional resources – Garfield Weston Foundation, The Ernest Cook Trust and Abbey Charitable Trust and the LSC for Education and Training funding

Signposts intends to ensure a continuing commitment to healthy food at affordable prices for local people

- We would underpin the financial management by linking this to our continuing services and financial management which should ensure that the project continues to offer food at affordable prices
- We would achieve financial sustainability for the project via volunteering and student placements
- We would source the food locally where possible
- We would develop a scheme whereby affordable food was offered via the café and via other Signposts services
- We would underpin the finances of the café via economies of scale within the Signposts organisation

Signposts intends to ensure a continuing commitment to training and volunteering opportunities for local people

- We have a robust procedure for the involvement of volunteers within signposts
- We have an established training and development programme for all our staff and volunteers
- We have a commitment to involve local people in our service provision
- We would make links with LMC
- We would make links with training providers
- We would develop a capacity to deliver relevant training within our organisation

Key Targets

- To achieve sustainability and increase the earned income potential
- To agree an appropriate lease with Poulton Memorial Hall Trustees

(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.



VCFS - ICTS.org.uk

ICT SUPPORT SERVICES



PROBLEM SOLVED

VCFS - ICTS is an organization who offer Information and Communication Technology Support for Voluntary, Community and Faith Sectors throughout North Lancashire - VCFS - ICTS.

Our services include:

- ➔ **ICT Bespoke Training**
- ➔ **System Repairs and Maintenance**
- ➔ **Networking**
- ➔ **Database Development**
- ➔ **Web Design and Maintenance**
- ➔ **System Supplies and Builds**

Please visit our website or contact us to find out if our service is right for you.

HELP DESK

**01524
42 77 88**

**Providing ICT
Support for the
Voluntary,
Community &
Faith Sectors
throughout North
Lancashire.**



support@vcfs-icts.org.uk

WWW.VCFS-ICTS.ORG.UK

(d) Communication and ICT

Signposts is the strategic lead for ICT and Communication for the Lancashire VCFS Consortium.

The following has been achieved:

Regular meetings of the ICT and Communications group to ensure Consortium aims and objective met.	Volunteering Database commissioned via group.
Ensure the sector is maximizing investment in ICT infrastructure in line with Lancashire VCFS Consortium service level agreements	Continued input into NW ICT Champion Reports and discussions. Group represented at SELNET event to promote the two support services in Lancashire. Volunteering Lancashire – Information and Communication Database Work linked to commissioned work from Safer, Stronger Working Group - ICT element to be commissioned via Working Group. Review of infrastructure audit Development of a website brief and contribution to the website tendering process
All sub-regional Infrastructure, local frontline infrastructure and delivery organisations to have where applicable and effective ICT structure that includes broadband capability and accessibility.	ICT Digital Media Pilot Scheme being launched. Paul Webster National ICT Champion pump primed some research into the work to increase access to ICT across the county. Work is now being taken forward to find out where the needs are. Database to review responses linked to brokerage scheme, hot desking, etc to enable organisations to access ICT. CMS system to be developed to allow resource booking and the development of the network.
Develop effective communications, wide participation and improve access to information, services and support.	Regular meetings of Working Group, regular circulation of relevant information via networks and via VCFS Website. Establishment and launch of VCFS ICT Support Services (x3). Involvement in SELNET event plus links to National and Regional ICT Hubs.

Key Targets

- To develop a work programme and business plan
- To continue to engage in the consortium structure
- To continue to work at a regional and sub-regional level

(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.

Aim

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

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

Key Targets

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

(f) BME Mental Health Community Development Work

This work is funded by North Lancashire Teaching PCT.

The aim of this role is to identify, meet and establish the mental health needs and gaps of BME and LGB&T communities in Lancaster and Morecambe,

The development of this work will be enhanced by service users and carer's involvement in the process. We are encouraging people locally to get involved in the North Lancashire Health Affiliate Scheme to ensure that their opinions and recommendations are recorded centrally.

The work will focus on minority group mental health services, encouraging service users and carers to become involved in feeding back to existing services and professionals; we are therefore looking for volunteers from service users and organisations that can promote the needs of these groups.

The key targets are the three building blocks identified in the Department of Health delivering race equality in mental health action plan.

- **More appropriate and responsive services** – achieved through action to develop organisations and the workforce, to improve clinical services and to improve services for specific groups;
- **Community engagement** – delivered through healthier communities and by action to engage communities in planning services, supported by 500 new Community Development Workers, nationally.
- **Better information** – from improved monitoring of ethnicity, better dissemination of information and good practice, and improved knowledge about effective services. This will include a new regular census of mental health patients.

Achievements

An information pack and questionnaire has been designed and distributed. Over 200 hard copies have been distributed and it has also been distributed via an email group to a wide range of organisations and health and social care professionals.

A section has been developed on the Signposts project page of the website www.signposts.org.uk for the BME community development work, the section includes, the info pack and questionnaire, relevant documents and legislation and useful information and resources. The info pack has been translated into Polish.

Priorities.

- To identify up to date district statistics of which groups, numbers and locations existing data is not accurate or helpful.
- To complete research that will formulate strategy for future work.
- To contact community groups to engage them in the process.
- To identify service users and carers, who will be involved in the research.
- To continue to build relationships within Primary Care, Lancashire Care Trust and Social Care.

(g) Working Together (Cumbria)

Project Aims:

- Produce identifiable outcomes as a result of Older People's influence on the formulation of Adult Social Care policy.
- Recruit older people to work as forums in 6 areas around the county in the first year 2008 with a view to expansion to 12 in 2009 (core membership being around 15, older people being 50+).
- Meaningfully include seldom heard voices.
- Publicise forum activity and recruitment widely and effectively.
- Develop a simple and accessible two way web presence with older people.
- Pave the way for sustained expansion for 2009 by:
 - Benchmarking present position of older people's forums and engagement to inform developing strategy, in discussion with Working Together Lead.
 - Negotiation of next steps in the development of six fully functioning older people's forums being run autonomously by January 2009.

Current Position of 50+ Forums in Cumbria

- 3 Forums are actively running with 2 currently expressing an interest in the Working Together Strategy (West Cumbria and Carlisle District).
- 2 Forums are in the processes of development (Eden and South Cumbria) with South Cumbria currently participating within the Working Together Strategy.

New Forums Next Steps

Recent contacts with various organisations have led to positive steps to begin the development of new forums. The team have identified key partners and will work together to contact user led organisation and carers groups who can distribute invites to service users and carers to participate in the forums.

Three areas have been identified and partners contacted to begin the process of setting up new forums.

- Carlisle
- Eden
- Barrow and Furness

Seldom Heard Voices

Whilst forums are a good method for participation and consultation it is recognised that they do not reach out to the whole community. Other creative methods need should be used to ensure that where people are not accessing forums they can still participate in the development of services and receive local and National information.

This includes making contact with identified existing networks, and including them within the distribution of the Working Together Information system:

- Traveller Service
- Multi-cultural forums
- National Farmers Union

Strands and Threads:

In addition to identified communities there are other individuals who find accessing forums and information difficult. The team have identified services and organisations that could provide a distribution process for ensuring information is disseminated and contact for forums widely publicised.

Information dissemination

Database Network:

The above networking and mapping exercise have enabled the team to begin developing a database for the Working Together Strategy Network. The information gathered will ensure that the database reaches the most appropriate contacts and so provide an effective distribution network.

Website:

www.workingtogether.signposts.org.uk

- Background information; key documents and links have been posted on the website.
- Site will 'go live' on Monday 16th June 2008.
- Information on new entries to the website will be sent out to the database contacts.
- Where key documents/consultations are posted 50+ Forums can request paper versions for distribution at meetings.

Key Outcomes

- Pack developed and distributed to Forums and partners.
- Mapping Exercise of existing Forums.
- Website populated.
- 3 new forums – areas, partners and methodology identified.
- Training Event delivered with Social Care Managers.
- Effective and appropriate database – continually updated.

Key targets for 2008/09:

Future Actions

- Plan and deliver initial meetings for 3 new forums.
- Continue to refine database contacts and website information.
- Plan Conference/Training Event for 50+ Forums in Cumbria.

Section Four - Conclusion

Looking Forward from the Annual Report

As this Report demonstrates yet again Signposts is a complex organisation which is constantly changing to meet the needs and demands of the people it aims to serve.

During the year we have had the benefit of the Organisational Review Health Check undertaken by Moira Laws on behalf of CAF and the Assessment for Investor in People. This has informed our thinking and has enabled the organisation to make changes to its operational and management structures to enable the service to grow appropriately. This continues to be a challenge in that we need to ensure that we are “fit for purpose” and also that we are clear what our core service is and what value and ethical base we are working to.

We continue to work with partners to work co-operatively on a range of agendas to make sure that we achieve economies of scale, avoid duplication and provide services which make sense to communities. The Change Up agenda and Capacity Building agenda for the VCFS has brought challenges in terms of the development of infrastructure services and the expectation that in many instances organisations will become larger and more robust in order to meet the demands of the commissioning process.

A Pocket Sized Guide from The Governance Hub states “it is often claimed that the distinguishing feature of organisations in the third sector is that they are value-driven. In the world of the busy organisation struggling to deliver its work in a challenging environment, do values help? Do they matter? We believe they do, now more than ever. Organisations can feel overwhelmed by the challenges they face or they can shape their own futures. Values are the solution.

What are values?

Values are the beginning – they are what inspire us: for example being driven by the desire to support people to increase control over their own lives.

Values are the means – they determine what we do and how we do it: for example planning and delivering work using approaches that encourage initiative and self-help

Values are the end – they are what we are trying to achieve: for example bringing about a society where everyone can play their part”

For Signposts this is particularly pertinent as Directors, Paid Staff and volunteers need to make sure that they understand the Mission, Aims and Objectives of Signposts and to make sure that the quest for funding does not obscure or divert the organisation from its core purpose.

We state in our Information Pack that we are:

“an organisation that “works to empower the community” by developing and delivering a range of targeted services that are accessible and affordable to everyone. The services we develop aim to address the needs of the most disadvantaged and hard to reach people within their communities. The projects we deliver are diverse and creative.”

It is essential that these principles underpin our financial strategy and business planning. We have acknowledged that we need to work on this throughout the next financial year as we have achieved the aspirations of the current Business Plan and it needs to be revised to reflect our longer term goals and direction. There is a need to consolidate what we have already achieved and to make sure we commission new work to represent robust Operational Plans which encourage inclusion and also wider participation throughout our extended geographical area of delivery.

It is the intention currently to:

Strategic Targets

- Develop the Business and Financial Strategy to enable the organisation to consolidate and expand its work
- Invest in the Team and Infrastructure to ensure the organization is “fit for purpose” ensuring we take an holistic approach to the health and wellbeing of the team and introduce a Team Health Policy
- Organise a series of events and training to ensure everyone within the organisation and our stakeholders are involved in the decision making of the organisation
- Ensure that Equality and Diversity and Anti-Oppressive Practice is understood and implemented throughout the organisation
- Achieve Fair Trade Status and develop an Environmental and Sustainability Policy throughout the organisation
- Consolidate Social Enterprise Models to new geographical areas and achieve full cost recovery
- Raise the organisational profile of Signposts
- Review staffing structures at a delivery level

This 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 organisation, 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
Chief Executive Officer
On behalf of the Board of Directors