

Hampshire Independent Equality Forum update

Forum launch

The launch of the Hampshire Independent Equality Forum was celebrated at Winchester's Discovery Centre on Tuesday 24th November.

Of the 100 people who attended, 72 were from communities and voluntary organisations/networks that work with diverse communities and 28 were from statutory agencies (e.g. NHS, councils, police etc.).

The event was facilitated by Ange Jones from the National Equality Partnership and the two Forum presentations included a timeline of the Forum, the results of the consultation process and an explanation of the Forum steering group selection process. A report of the event can be found at <http://www.action.hants.org.uk/index.php?id=556>

The eight event speakers were from all equality strands and one statutory agency and throughout the day there were three workshops. There were also performance from Proud2B and the Drum Runners, who gave percussion and drumming performance in the morning. In the afternoon, Thara and Maya Darnton (supported by Moksha Darnton) danced Bharathanatya which is a South Indian classical dance. Photos are available on <http://www.action.hants.org.uk/index.php?id=541>

The Forum consultation process

The aim of the Forum consultation process was to ask as many individuals as possible from special interest groups, community and voluntary organisations and statutory bodies (eg. councils, NHS, police, etc.) about their views on the Forum and how it should be structured and developed.

The consultation document and questions were sent to approximately 1000 people during a 13 week period and 138 responses were received. This was a very positive response rate at 13.8%, which was higher than the originally targeted 10%.

Results

138 responses were received by the end of the consultation period – 66 from the statutory sector and 72 from community and voluntary organisations, groups,

and individuals. These responses represented the views of people from all equality strands as well as various different communities.

The full results from the consultation process can be found in the 'Consultation Feedback Report' at <http://www.action.hants.org.uk/index.php?id=522> and the Forum's final 'Terms of Reference', detailing how the Forum will work, will be drawn up by the steering group based on these findings.

Next Steps

Interested individuals from the community and voluntary sector can put themselves forward to participate in the Forum steering group. There will be a formal selection with interviews in January/February 2010 which will be managed by the Hampshire Voluntary Sector Consortium (a network of voluntary sector networks).

The activities of the Forum will then be defined by the steering group based on the findings from the workshops at the launch of the Forum on 24 November 2009. They will also ask their communities and wider equality strand about what the priority action points for the Forum should be going forward.

If you are interested in being involved in the steering group or if you need this information in any other format, please contact Jane at jane.rawlins-mateus@action.hants.org.uk or call 01962 857357.

The Forum is part of a Big Lottery project managed by Community Action Hampshire in partnership with Winchester Area Community Action.