

# How Hyndburn Works

## Being A Representative

Quick Guide 3b  
June 2010

### Opportunities — how you will benefit from being a representative

As a representative of one of the community interest forums you will:

- be in a position to influence change for the people of Hyndburn and the group/organisation you work with;
- gain experience and skills in strategic planning;
- help other partners to have a better understanding of the voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) — and the contribution that we make;
- receive first-hand information from policy makers;
- help small groups and organisations understand Hyndburn's priorities;
- build relationships with senior members of partner organisations
- network with other groups/organisations in the VCFS sector, including other strategic representatives, so that you can share skills and support each other;
- promote your organisation through the commitment that you show to representation;
- develop an understanding of governance and leadership—both in the VCFS—and across partnerships;
- use this experience as part of your professional development—whether that is on your curriculum vitae, or by being able to ask for a reference regarding your role;
- have access to NAVCA training in local democracy and partnerships, skills for partnerships, roles and responsibilities of representatives, skills for influence and using research for influence through Hyndburn Community Network

### Roles and Responsibilities of Representatives

Broadly, your role as a representative is to speak on behalf of the Forum that elected you and represent the views and perspectives of the VCFS to ensure that recommendations that benefit the sector, and your service users or members, are included in discussions and the work of the partnership. You will act as an advocate for the VCFS and in the interests of the common good as opposed to narrow self interest.

This role is **voluntary** and so this is not a contract, but we hope that you will fulfil the following expectations of your role and responsibilities as a representative.

**You have the mandate** (the authority and permission) to take on the responsibility of speaking for the Forum you represent because you feed through Network and Forum structures and because you have been elected by Forum members (either directly or through the Network).

**You are accountable**, for this role, to the members of your Forum, so you must take this seriously and ensure that you undertake the role and its associated responsibilities with due commitment. Treat this role as an extension of your work in the VCFS, as it will enhance what you are already doing.

#### As a representative our role is not to:

- Represent yourself or the views of your group/association in isolation or use this position as a Forum for forging political alliances for your own or your group's/organisation's interests
- Feel that you must be an expert on everything. At every partnership, the Network holds a place to represent the wider sector and you will work within the range of your knowledge and the scope of your Forum.

#### Key Roles:

Being a voice  
Influencing decisions  
Building the partnership  
Promoting the VCF sector

#### Key Responsibilities:

- Feeding back information to third sector groups
- Standing up for the sector whilst maintaining good relationships
- Reading papers and analysing complex documents
- Influencing decisions

# Stronger Voices...

## Your Role is to:

- Promote what the VCF sector and your Forum is doing and be positive about the sector and its contribution to work with partner organisations;
- Work as part of your partnership contribute to strategic decision-making processes on behalf of the VCF sector — bring solutions to meetings and challenges faced by the sector. In this way you ensure a balance of positive and more critical input and will be perceived as a professional and critical friend;
- Promote joint working across the VCF sector, as well as with partner organisations (e.g. the council);
- To keep lines of communication open and feeding back to the Network and/ or your Forum. With the support of the Network, you will let others know about decisions that have been made and items that have been discussed at meetings you attend. This ensures that there is information sharing between the Network, the Forums and the partnership.
- Recognise and engage in the learning and development journey of representation (support by the Network).

### Representation includes:

- \* Taking part in training to share experiences with other reps;
- \* Understanding your Forum's field of interest and gaining the ability to talk about the needs of the VCF sector;
- \* Become familiar with key policy information relating to the Network and Hyndburn Local Strategic Partnership information, related partner documentation, and national policy regarding the engagement with the VCF sector and the 'duty to involve'.
- \* Sometimes go to relevant conference and workshops

## Your specific responsibilities as a representative are to:

- Commit to act as a representative of the Forum that elected you, the Network and the VCF sector collectively rather than your own particular group/ organisation or area of expertise;
- Ensure you have the capacity to undertake the role so that you can commit the time necessary before nominating yourself for election or accepting the position, this includes:

### **preparation time, briefing meetings, attending all the partnership & Forum meetings, debriefing meetings, Network and /or Forum meetings to feedback and gather input for the next meeting**

- Tell your Network Support Officer at least two weeks before a partnership meeting (unless in extreme circumstances) if you will be unable to attend so that we can find a suitable replacement;
- Read and endeavour to understand the papers for the partnership meeting (you will be supported to do so by the Network);
- Attend a briefing before the partnership meeting;
- Listen to the discussions in the meetings, and actively participate in the discussions relating to the sector, your Forum and your expertise;
- Collect relevant papers given at the meeting for your records and that of the Network and your Forum;
- Take suitable notes on the template provided to feedback to your Forum and the Network so that there is evidence that you take your accountability seriously;
- Make it known either to the chair or the Network Support Officer, if you do not understand and would like clarity on issues raised at a partnership meeting;
- Attend and contribute to any debriefings after a partnership meeting;
- Listen to the advice from the Network and Forum and to give advice should they require it (this is a partnership and we are all here to learn).

## ***There is separate Quick Guide on the LSP and its theme/sub groups***

**Note: 'Partnership' includes the LSP, LSP themed and sub groups and any other partnerships or Forums where you are a representative**

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