

## **Mix and Match: Community Conference**

### **WECDC**

The West End Community Development Consortium is a partnership of five community-based voluntary organisations in the inner west – Search, Riverside Community Health Project, West End Health Resource Centre, Scotswood Area Strategy, and Angelou Centre. It is funded by the Newcastle Neighbourhood Renewal Fund to support community participation in regeneration activities in the west end, and its main focus is on grassroots engagement and capacity-building.

### **Mix and Match**

WECDC is holding a community event on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> November at Park Road Community Centre. In line with the remit of WECD, the aim is to bring local residents together with representatives from the local authority, the health services and other agencies to discuss previously identified issues of local concern.

This event is for people living in the inner west of the city. Childcare will be provided, and there will be support with interpretation and transport where required.

### **Pre-conference development work**

During the past few months, an extensive programme of consultation has been carried out with a range of local residents of all ages, with the help and support of other local organisations. Several hundred people have given their views about the issues of greatest concern to their neighbourhoods and their lives.

There have also been a number of targeted pre-conference events and activities designed to engage people from different neighbourhoods and groups. These have included:

- A children's conference held at the Riverside Centre in the October half-term
- An event for women from black and minority ethnic communities held at Nuns Moor Playcentre
- An older people's event held on a riverboat
- A programme of outreach consultation with young people attending different youth groups across the inner west
- A "storytelling" project focusing on local people's experiences of community engagement.

The outcomes of these various consultation activities will shape the agenda of the Mix and Match event.

## **The structure of the event**

The event will be launched by Doug Taylor, Chief Executive of the Newcastle Partnership, and Catherine Fitt, Head of Children's Services at Newcastle City Council.

The main business of the day will comprise workshop discussions focusing on issues identified through the consultation – issues such as bus services; litter, graffiti and other environmental issues; facilities and activities for children and young people; new social rented housing; local shopping facilities; access to training and employment; and local health services.

The event will end with a tea party where storyteller Chris Bostock will give a performance about local experiences of community involvement in planning and decision-making. The main conference will be followed by a short celebration event at which people who have successfully achieved qualifications through WECDL training courses will receive their certificates.

The event will also offer opportunities for informal networking and obtaining information about what is going on in the area.

## **Registration**

Mix and Match is open to residents of the inner west wards but advance registration is essential. The event is free of charge, but places are limited so anyone interested should book a place as soon as possible by contacting the West End Health Resource Centre on 2724244 or emailing [judith.green@unn.ac.uk](mailto:judith.green@unn.ac.uk).

## **Follow-up work**

Following the conference, a report of the proceedings will be produced. This report will also summarise the findings of the consultation programme, which will cover a wider range of issues than the conference will be able to address. WECDL is keen to disseminate this information widely in order to support planning, policymaking and service delivery in the local area, and would welcome an opportunity to present a report to the Ward Committee.