



<p><b>Population &amp; Society Topic Group</b></p> <p>21<sup>st</sup> May, 2010</p> <p>Minutes</p>		 <p>West Midlands <b>Regional Observatory</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.wmro.org">www.wmro.org</a></p>
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## 1. Attendees

Richard Wilson (Chair) (RW)	West Midlands Quality Institute
Chris Allen (CA)	University of Birmingham
Awen Clement (AC)	Medilink WM
Gareth Jones (GJ)	WM Faiths Forum (WMFF)
Joanna Matthews (JM)	Regional Disability Network (RDN)
Oliver Nicholls (ON)	West Midlands Regional Observatory
Susan Spencer (SS)	Age UK
*John Walker (JW)	West Midlands Regional Observatory

\*Attended at 11.30 for Item 3 of agenda

## Apologies

Rosie Day (RD)	West Midlands Regional Observatory
Dave Newall (DN)	West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership
Sharon Walton (SW)	West Midlands Public Health Observatory

## Welcome and Introductions

A welcome and introduction was given to all of the new members to the group and RW recapped on the groups aims and focuses.

Susan Spencer from Age UK has taken over from Steve Blick. Age UK is combined of 'Help the aged', and 'Age Concern'. She works in the West Midlands regional team as a Regional adviser. SS also advised that she has some expertise within the housing sector.

RW advised that he is now employed by the West Midlands Quality Institute which is part of the Strategic Health Authority, looking at the quality of health care within the NHS.

## 2. Approval of Minutes of the Last meeting and matters arising

The Minutes from the last meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> February were discussed and approved.

## Action

- *RW to follow up Disability research gaps with JM and co-ordinate key health data work with Observatory gap filling process and ONS*

### 3. Topic Group news

- RW advised that following the post election and coalition agreement, it has been said there won't be any great changes in the NHS, and there will be no significant reorganisation of structures.

RW also spoke about the move towards 'Big Society' policy, and how it plays an important role for the Population and Society topic group.

- GJ mentioned that he has four major events in June. These are:  
The WM Faiths Forum (WMFF) Annual Conference - Faith Relations: Whose Agenda. This event is an exploration of current faith relations. WMFF is also partnering the National Christian Muslim forum at the end of June.

The other two events are by invite only, one of which is in partnership with Oxfam. Oxfam are looking to engage with faith groups and faith communities at a National level, but also at three regional meetings. This is very much for single faith organizations.

The other event is a consultation for faith leaders in the West Midlands of over laps between the equality strands of religion, belief and sexual orientation.

Regarding the mapping of faith communities, GJ announced that some progress had been made, with the news that there should be enough Groundwork volunteers made available to be able to map faith communities of the whole West Midlands region.

- CA advised that the Prevent agenda is under review. Before the election, CA advised that they had won a contract to deliver a Prevent programme, looking at obstacles facing some women in society. This project has now been put on hold because the Prevent Agenda is up for review, and because of spending costs.

CA has written a journal article on the Review of New Labour policies. It is a review of New Labour's strategies in terms of faith and will be published in the next few months.

The University of Birmingham has been involved in employment initiatives in the West and East Midlands. This looks at the experience of young people on entry to employment programmes, looking at their values long term.

CA is also working on a Multi Agency project, looking at young men who are vulnerable to gun and gangs crime. The project explores the actual processes involved if people want to leave that lifestyle. Various organizations / services are working alongside this project.

- JM advised that the Regional Disability Network has won a contract from Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM) called Every Voice Counts which is an initiative

looking at voice and outer barriers. The Every Voice Counts programme has a majority membership from the voluntary sector, but also has representation from Government Office for the West Midlands, Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands (IEWM), Big Lottery Fund, 2 NI4 Local Authorities and West Midlands Local Government Association

- SS advised that the Big Society debate is something she is interested in, particularly the contribution to older people. Something that SS heard earlier in the week was around older people as an asset contributing social capital. Nationally within the over 65s, the contribution of people providing care is equal to 3x the cost of delivering care.
- AC advised that she will be leaving the group in the autumn time for maternity leave and probably will not look at getting a replacement to attend topic group meetings.

AC advised that Medilink WM is waiting to see what is going to happen with their organisation following the election. AC also mentioned that they are waiting to see what is going to happen to Regional Development Agencies, as this their primary source of funding.

Medilink WM is still working on creating collaborative projects between industry, academia and the NHS. The assisted living division of the organisation is going particularly well.

AC is a member of the Chartered Institute of Library and information Professionals (CILIP) and will be presenting at the New Professional Conference in 5 – 6 weeks time. AC will be talking about the value of skills to the profession as opposed to qualifications as a non graduate.

AC leads the Birmingham Knowledge Network, which exists to further best practice and thought in the information management sector. There is an open evening for those who want to attend on the 7<sup>th</sup> July at the Urban Coffee Company on Church Street, Birmingham. The start time is 6pm and allows like minded people to have interesting conversations based around Information and Knowledge Management.

#### **4. Sustainable Communities**

JW updated on the 'State of the Region Sustainable Communities' dialogue.

At the last meeting the group agreed to support the next stage in the development of the dialogue. However, in the light of the new government's focus on Big Society, the group agreed that there is first a need to review the work to date against the emerging policies of the new government.

#### **Action**

- *JW to email the wider group to form a small sub group to meet at the end of June, or early July to review the Sustainable Communities dialogue against the emerging 'Big Society' policies to assess the relevance of the original findings in the light of these new policies and agree a way forward for the dialogue.*

- *Anyone interested in contributing to the review, please let JW know.*
- *JM to forward a report recently published based on co-production and co-efficiency*

## **5. Visualising Data event**

RW advised that the Visualisation event that the group is to be involved in is to be split into 2 parts:

- The first part is an Open Data event. This event will take place on the 15<sup>th</sup> July and will look at how to make open and available to everyone
- The visualisation event (on 8th September) is aimed at promoting best practice in the field of data visualization, encouraging delegates to share best practice and learn what makes a high quality visualisation. The event will particularly focus on using visualisations to communicate complex data and influence policy.

### **Action**

- *An agenda to be formulated and circulated to topic group members for the Open data event*
- *Anyone interested in helping with either event, particularly identifying speakers, please let ON / RW know*

## **6. AOB**

- Dates of future meetings to be confirmed by EJ / ON