

Kick-Start Fund Greater Brislington Mini Project

A project delivered by BAB Community Researchers




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Members of the Bristol Ageing Better Community Researcher Group undertook the research that underpinned this report. Christine Crabbe, a BAB Community Researcher, led on the writing of the report ... with support from Mike Kimber, Anne Jensen and Christopher Orlik. The Community Researchers were supported by Mat Jones, Jenny Barke, Richard Kimberlee, Robin Means and Naomi Woodspring from UWE Bristol. Additional support was provided by Bianca Rosetti, Alex Mills, Ruth Richardson and Adam Rees of the BAB central team.

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Introduction

Bristol Ageing Better (BAB) is a partnership of individuals and organisations working together to reduce isolation and loneliness among older people in Bristol, a city in the Southwest of the UK. The partnership is led by Age UK Bristol and funded by the Big Lottery Fund as part of their Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better programme. The BAB programme aims to reduce isolation and loneliness in older people in Bristol through commissioning projects across the city. Further details on the programme are available at www.bristolageingbetter.org.uk

BAB work locally with an evaluation team from the University of the West of England (UWE). The Community Research Group is a key aspect of the BAB evaluation. The BAB Community Researchers (CRs) are a group of volunteers aged over 50 who meet regularly and work with the UWE team to evaluate and support BAB commissioned projects. We aim to adopt co-production principles as a way of meaningfully including older people in the research process. In the early stages of the evaluation UWE and the CRs have selected specific areas of Bristol to understand the local assets that might contribute towards supporting older people. Our initial assessment of local grant funding, community activity and local needs indicated that Greater Brislington should be one area of focus.

Overview of Greater Brislington

Brislington lies to the southeast of the City of Bristol. The area is very mixed consisting of residential housing, primary and secondary schools, churches, industrial units, large supermarkets, retail parks, a small number of independent shops and green spaces. Much of the residential property is terraced housing and stone villas built during the Victorian period or early twentieth century. In addition, the housing in Brislington includes 1930s style bay windowed houses, a relatively small number of detached houses, as well as some social housing situated in areas such as St Anne's, Hungerford Road and Broomhill. Brislington is a popular place to live, especially as many other areas in Bristol are often unaffordable. Greater Brislington has two polling districts, Brislington East and Brislington West (see Greater Brislington Report, May 2016, Christine Crabbe).

The Greater Brislington Project

This project was primarily a desk bound initial profile of Greater Brislington covering the area, wards, councillors (after the May 2016 elections), key neighbourhood partnership staff and voluntary groups. Two community researchers were involved in the project. The two researchers produced a spreadsheet identifying approximately seventy-three organisations from searching the Internet, notice boards, and cards in shop windows. In May 2016 a report was produced.

Brislington: residential housing, primary and secondary schools, churches, industrial units, large supermarkets, retail parks, a few independent shops and green spaces.

The Greater Brislington Mini Project

Resources were not available to undertake a full asset map of Greater Brislington. However, Bristol Ageing Better identified ten smaller community groups from the seventy-three organisations listed on the Greater Brislington spreadsheet produced by the two researchers for a personal visit to gain a better understanding of the following:

- What do the community groups do in practice?
- What level of awareness do the community groups identified have of Bristol Ageing Better in general?
- What awareness do the community groups identified have of the Kick-Start scheme?

The last point was of particular interest as no applications for Kick-Start funding came from Greater Brislington in the first two rounds of the scheme.



Aims: Gain an enhanced appreciation of how best to support the capacity of the Third Sector in Greater Brislington to engage with Bristol Ageing Better.

Objectives

- 1) To collect information about the 'offer' (Kick-Start) to older people from a sample of ten community groups operating in Greater Brislington chosen from the initial scoping.
- 2) To ascertain the level of knowledge of these groups about Bristol Ageing Better in general, the availability of small grant funding in Bristol, and about the Kick-start scheme in particular.
- 3) To identify the sample community groups' perspective on how Bristol Ageing Better could improve their engagement with community groups in Greater Brislington.
- 4) To ascertain the sample community groups views on barriers to social participation and engagement faced by older people in Greater Brislington.



Timescale

August 2016: agree which community researchers will be involved in this mini project and confirm the audit tool.

September to October 2016: carry out interviews with the ten community groups.

November to December 2016: collate data and produce a 2,000 to 3,000 word report on the findings.

Outputs

- i) A short report outlining the extent of the present engagement of these groups with Bristol Ageing Better and what Bristol Ageing Better might be able to do to enhance this situation.
- ii) Mini profiles of the 10 community groups to be available to the provider covering community development in this area (and also to be made available to the Well Aware website).



Methodology

Three community researchers were recruited to work on the Greater Brislington mini project. The researchers met together to formulate a plan of action and a fourth community researcher subsequently joined the group. The four community researchers allocated the ten community groups identified from the Greater Brislington spreadsheet between them and telephoned or emailed the community groups to arrange appointments and visits. The audit tool for Greater Fishponds was to be used, but with modifications to meet the objectives of the Greater Brislington project.

However, in some cases, the audit tool was unhelpful because it was impossible to conduct a structured interview; therefore, the approach taken was to ask questions in a friendly, informal, chatty and random way to try meet the objectives. The six community groups interviewed were: a conservation society; a drama group; organisers from two churches offering a range of activities from bingo to lunch clubs; a camera club; and a tea club held at a community centre. The women's institute were contacted but did not respond. Due to time constraints three organisations were not interviewed.



... organisers from two churches offered a range of activities from bingo to lunch clubs ...

Contacts and interviews

The Greater Brislington community researchers contacted seven of the ten community groups, which resulted in five interviews. One of the people interviewed represented two community groups. In addition, it was difficult to obtain a response from one of the groups identified despite telephoning and sending texts.

The organiser on more than one occasion promised the relevant person would return the call, would call back at a particular time, or text the researcher.

In some cases, the researchers found the relevant person to talk to by a circuitous route, and it was necessary to telephone two or more persons before discovering the name and contact details of the person who could answer questions.

Findings

Bristol Ageing Better

Only one interviewee had any knowledge of Bristol Ageing Better and none of the interviewees had any knowledge of the Kick-Start Fund. One interviewee had heard of Bristol Ageing Better through the neighbourhood partnership coordinator.

Other Funding

One of the organisations in the sample of ten had made use of the Greater Brislington Partnership Well Being grants to buy equipment whilst another organisation had applied to the John James Foundation and Bristol City Council for funding. Rotary International was also mentioned as a possible source of funding by another group.

How could Bristol Ageing Better engage with the community?

Publicity in the form of posters and leaflets would be helpful to distribute to community groups and pin on notice boards. It would also be helpful to co-ordinate interviews so that even if the Kick-Start deadline for applications had passed the Kick-Start information remained on the website. At the time of the interviews community researchers did not know the date of the next round of applications, or when the information will be available. In addition, at the time of the interviews information about Kick-Start and the downloadable application forms were not available on the website. Therefore, researchers were unable to direct the interviewees to the website for more information. (Subsequently this information was made available, the website updated, and leaflets produced.)

Barriers to social participation

Finance

One interviewee discussed the struggle experienced with finances to keep their club going. This club provided an afternoon meeting playing bingo with a cup of tea and companionship. The organisers of the club felt that the hall rent for this activity was high, insurance expensive, and a fee was charged for the use of the kitchen. The club kept the subs as low as possible as many of the members are managing on their pension, therefore the club is struggling on the barest minimum. Consequently, they do not have money for extras such as day trips, something the organisers would like to arrange. Many of the people attending this club had health and mobility problems. An affordable venue to hold a club for small groups seems to be

Facilities

Two researchers visited a community centre. This is a large building in the middle of social housing. The interviewee runs a coffee morning for older people in the building. The community centre in past years was used extensively as a church as well as other activities. The community centre now seems to be in decline. There are no shops nearby, although the centre is situated on the road to a large school academy. The kitchen did not have a cooker or microwave, but tea and coffee is made using a kettle. The community centre has a social club upstairs with a bar, which is hired out and advertised on the internet. Members of the social club upstairs have to live within one mile of the centre, although the organisers are thinking of widening this. The large room downstairs accommodates over one hundred people, the organiser would like to use the room for a GP surgery as the nearest GP is a bus ride away and buses can be a problem. The interviewee mentioned that he was very happy to welcome the Muslim faith group from another area in Bristol who hire a room downstairs, which brings in useful income.

Publicity

The community centre only has a notice board outside the building to publicise events and something bright, attractive and colourful might help. The organiser of the community centre runs a coffee morning for older people, but only six people attend and there was difficulty in getting people to come along.

a difficulty in the area, particularly as three local halls had closed. Researchers were advised that one venue had been sold, one possible venue was used as a school and another possible venue used as a nursery. In contrast, an organisation centred round the popular hobby of photography is thriving; their members are mostly over 60 and come from Brislington and other areas in Bristol and beyond. They have received occasional help to purchase equipment, but appear to manage with the subscriptions paid from members. Although, to make the club affordable for people there is a sliding scale of subs for the waged, unwaged and families.* It seems that whilst some community groups need occasional help perhaps to buy a piece of equipment for their club, other groups need more ongoing help to pay for everyday needs such as rent hire, insurance, or transport for those with mobility problems to continue.

Transport

The day the community researchers visited the bingo group its numbers were down because the Dial a Ride transport had not turned up despite having been booked so some members could not get to the club. The lady who runs the club talked to the researchers about a trip she organised for her members with a coach company, but to get home from the drop-off point required an expensive taxi ride which some of her members could not afford. Another organisation mentioned that there were problems with the frequency of the local bus (No.36) and yet another group stated that some older people could not get to the activity because of transport.

* The community centre now seems to be in decline

Volunteers

This was mentioned by the bingo club as a difficulty, the researchers were told that people who had been running a lunch club felt that as they were getting older they could no longer carry on and there is no-one to take over so the activity had to close.

Summary

Although ten groups were listed for sampling, seven groups were contacted and six gave interviews. One organisation was unresponsive. The reason for the unresponsiveness was probably because this was a national organisation run for women of all ages and perhaps they may have their own means of funding and consequently not so interested in Kick-Start. One of the community groups centred on a photographic hobby had an average attendance of forty people meeting in the evenings. They had a membership of around sixty and although this club was not specifically for older people most people who use it are older. In contrast, the drama group was in decline, they had a membership aged from thirteen to eighty, the teens and twenties had dropped off and most people were older. The level of knowledge about Bristol Ageing Better in the community groups interviewed is low or non-existent, some groups mentioned other funding, but none mentioned Kick-Start. More publicity about Bristol Ageing Better could be provided to small community groups for local notice boards in churches and halls to publicise Kick-Start and Bristol Ageing Better. Researchers were able to give one of the groups a general leaflet about Bristol Ageing Better and as a result the Bristol Ageing Better office was contacted for help.

As mentioned transport is a problem for organisers of older people's community groups and this goes hand in hand with funding. If people cannot get to an activity the subs will be reduced and the activity may be in danger of closing. Halls have closed in the Greater Brislington area over the last few years and for some clubs the cost of rent and insurance is expensive. Lunch clubs appear popular but one of the lunch clubs had to close because there was no one to take over running of the club

Notes

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

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Bristol Ageing Better (BAB) is a partnership working to reduce social isolation and loneliness among older people and help them live fulfilling lives.

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