

## WEST AREA COMMITTEE – STRATEGIC INITIATIVES BUDGET:

### PALLION ACTION GROUP FEED-BACK REPORT

Pallion Action Group were granted £30,330 from the 2007/08 budget in January 2008.

The money granted was to help towards the cost of our core funding.

- **How the money has been spent**

The money allocated to Pallion Action Group from the West Committee has sustained the cost of running the building, the projects and services that are being delivered. The running costs of light, heating, water, telephone, fax, insurance, council tax and basic service contracts. All the Invoices of expenditure are sent each month with the interim claim and a close check on spend is assured.

- **Outcomes of the project**

During the past year for activities; the organisation has had 115 users per week this collates to 5,750 repeat users in the year.

The involved project has registered over 180 young volunteers aged 16 to 25 years offering volunteering opportunities.

The Mentor since October 08 has registered 11 one to one clients, dealing with homelessness, drug alcohol misuse, and other issues affecting young people.

The Welfare Benefits and Money Advice have seen 1,375 clients for benefit advice and debt and money advice.

- **Other Funding**

Due to the core funding being secured from the West Committee we were able to attract other funding providers who would **not** have supported the organisation unless the core funding was in place.

- V inspired £272,000 2008 to 2011
- Volant £75,000 2008 to 2011
- 4 Acre Trust £10,000 2008 to 2009
- Youth Opportunity Fund £35,000 2008 to 2009
- Big Lottery £92,000 2008 to 2009
- City of Sunderland £60,000 2009 to 2110

Total Secured Funding £544,000

## **V involved**

During the past two years Pallion Action Group (PAG) has ran a number of extremely successful projects for hard to reach, disadvantaged and disengaged young people focusing on the health, sexual health, personal development and employability status. This group are NEET (not in education employment or training) including lone parents, having drug/alcohol problems, young offenders including a percentage who are still 'tagged' and special needs young people. We offer a range of innovative volunteering opportunities within the community, training, accreditation and positive activities and work with external agencies such as Social Services, Children Centre, Youth Offending team and Northumbria Police. Over the last year over **180** young people have enrolled on the volunteering project and over **580** annual repeat evening users have accessed provision for a fitness project on a Monday night. Young people are encourage to raise their own funds and have secured additional funding, PAG has funding from v, Volant Trust, Four Acres Trust, Primary Health Care Trust, GENTOO and Connexions to support work with young people. **233** have gained one or more accreditation including Introduction to Youth Work, First Aid, they have made 3 issued based DVDs including an Anti Bullying DVD, which won the Diana Anti Bullying Award 2007. A graffiti Art projects, street clean ups, a volunteering awareness day which attracted over **1500** local people and community painting projects are just a few of the activities the young people have participated in recently At Christmas a formal dress '**Snowball**' award ceremony was held at the Sunderland Leisure Centre, where young volunteers were recognised and given awards for their achievements.

## **Youth Opportunity Fund**

Young people are encouraged to raise their own funds and have secured additional funding from Youth Opportunity Fund to open a homework club Monday - Thursday, Due to the increase in anti social behaviour and the work we are currently delivering we have identified a need for youth provision on an evening. We carried out an in depth consultation with young people and the community police support officers, it was identified there was nothing constructive to do on week-ends. We will rectify this by offering young people activities on Friday and Saturday nights in a safe, friendly environment for ages 11 years upwards. Working closely with outside agencies like Youth Offending Teams, Probation Services, Youth Development, Northumbria Police, Connexions and local schools we will offer a variety of opportunities including The Duke of Edinburgh Award, Mayors Award, Young Community Leaders Award, Media Workshops, Dance/Drama, Volunteering Opportunities, Life Skills Programmes and Fitness & Healthy Eating workshops. This will improve young peoples aspirations and combat anti-social behaviour, we will continue to offer existing services, example SHOWT, Chlamydia screening and opportunities with the transition process into employment, education or training. All the activities will be delivered by suitably qualified staff. Community police support officers will be encouraged to access the project to help break down the barriers with the young people. Off site activities including residential will be offered, helping with team building and leadership skills, this project will aim to be youth led and self sufficient by the end of the 2nd year funding. Recognition ceremonies will continue be held to recognise the young peoples efforts and they will be nominated for local community awards such as the Young Achievers Award.

## **Welfare Rights & Debt/Money Advice**

A full-time experienced Welfare Rights Worker; a full-time Money Advice Worker, and a full-time Financial Administrator staff the Project.

This project has been developed as a requested need from residents of the area. Young adults and the wider community have benefited from the advice and guidance from both the benefits advice as well as how to handle your money.

Year ending December 2008 has been a very productive year, during this year the project has assisted and advised 1,375 clients regarding benefit, debt and money advice and recovered over a quarter of a million pounds in backdated and new claims in benefits.

With eight years experience of working in the Voluntary and Community Sector the worker is used to dealing with change and adapts accordingly, responding to the changes in funding and the local community, working on a tight budget we have used our resources carefully.

The Project offers a service that is responsive to community needs, for example an appointment system is practiced however any client who drops in will be seen immediately if the need is great.

This offers value for money alongside a high standard of quality, which in turn gives best value to funders and good quality advice and service to the community.

In the present climate of 'credit crunch' and recession Pallion Action Group feel that this is a much needed service within the community. Government Statistics predict over two million people will be unemployed and will be living on job seekers allowance of sixty pounds fifty per week, the North East area is one of the areas that will have the highest numbers of unemployed. These members of the community will still have to meet mortgage or rent payments with the same number of outgoing payments as when they were employed, this will put pressure on both health and family life. It is a and will continue to be a much needed project for advice and support during this time.

Due to receiving the core funding the project is now very stable and has recently tendered and been awarded a contract to deliver the service in Pallion, St Chad's, St Ann's, Sandhill, Barnes and Silkswoth as well as the conflict of interest area, which is where the City Council's own service cannot assist a client with their enquiry and subsequent casework because, in the opinion of the City Council, there is a conflict of interest

The project continues to offer a professional service in line with the expectations of the Community Legal Service's Quality Mark.

May I take this opportunity on behalf of Pallion Action Group to thank the West Area Committee for their support.

**Doreen Buckingham**  
**Centre Manager:**

