



# **Advocacy Action**

Developing Advocacy in Wakefield District

## **Coordinator's Report**

*March 2006*

### ***Introduction***

This report is going to be quite brief. At the last meeting we agreed that Advocacy Action had to become more flexible in order to get work that would make us more sustainable in the longer term.

I have been working closely with Ben (Treasurer) and Paul (Co-Chair) since the last meeting and discussing developments with them.

### ***Social Enterprise***

The Rules of Advocacy Action were always set up with social enterprise in mind, but the original business plan was based on working with grant funding to do a couple of years of background development work before becoming a true social enterprise.

This has now changed. We have our first contract with Connexions, so we are now trading. We meet all the other criteria of a social enterprise: social ownership, social aims, and not-for-profit status. We are applying for a learning grant to help us to set up appropriate accounting systems, and a business development grant from WYSE Link. We are also seeking other possible contracts.

### ***Connexions work***

This is going ok. The time scale is much slower than we initially anticipated, mainly because many Connexions staff are not available during March or the Easter school holidays. Training dates should be 4 & 25 April and the 16 May. We have received their payment for the training and guidance booklet (£5000).

### ***Children & Young People's Complaints - and Peer Advocacy Pilots***

Henry has put quite a lot of work into this recently, which is effectively unpaid but which is already helping to attract potential future business. The Connexions work was secured through links made at the Involving Children and Young People Subgroup meetings, and the Council's Young People's Service has made some initial enquiries into the possibility of some advocacy training for some of their staff in June or July 2006.

As well as redrafting the 'Code of Practice for Resolving Children and Young People's Concerns and Complaints', Advocacy Action also agreed to take the District lead on ensuring that advocacy is available to all children and young people wanting to make a complaint. The training work is partly linked to this, but more



specifically we are trying to apply for funding to run some pilot schemes for young people's peer advocacy.

### ***Website***

The website has been completely redesigned since the last meeting, and moved to a better server (kindly provided for free by Horbury-based Equaliser Internet). This is a fully web standards-compliant site and has a number of positive accessibility features.

The experience of making the website helped to focus on rewriting some elements of the old business plan, and we hope that some more lessons will be incorporated into the next one (hopefully to be written shortly).

### ***AGM***

This needs to be held before the end of April. The votes were quite evenly split between having a very quiet and low-key event or making more of a splash. In the end the positive approach of making a bit of a splash has won. Date to be confirmed shortly.

Henry Fisher  
Project Coordinator