

Applications from new Forums of Interest

Summary

An application from the Hearing Impaired Forum of Interest to become a Forum of Interest has been received. A summary of the application information is attached for the Board's consideration

Recommendations

- The application of the Hearing Impaired Forum of Interest application meets the criteria for approval which has been used for previous Forums of Interest and therefore should be approved.
- However, the Board should be mindful of the growing number of disability related Forums of Interest, and the potential for this to increase further, and the effect this could have on the balance of the Board itself.
It is recommended that the Hearing Impaired Forum is made aware of this situation and that the Chair's of the Disability FOI and the Visual Impairment Forum of Interest are tasked with agreeing a way forward.

FORUM OF INTEREST – APPLICATION SUMMARY

DATE: 1st December 2009

NAME OF FORUM: Hearing Impaired Forum of Interest

Summary of forum aims:

The network exists to facilitate and support members to identify common areas of concern and work in concert to improve facilities and services for the hearing impaired in Shropshire.

The network intends to lobby and to seek to influence policy and decision making and to be a key communication link between statutory agencies, and organisations providing support to the hearing impaired and, through these VCS groups, to the hearing impaired themselves.

Number of members: There will be a core of 5 VCS organisations (Hard of Hearing group representative, Hearing Concern Link representative, Shropshire Deaf Children's Society, National Association for Deafened People representative, RNID). In addition other VCSA agencies with overlapping interests, e.g. Age Concern, will have a place at this Forum. Statutory agencies will form part of the core membership, but there will be a majority of VCS members and the Chair will be independent.

Is there significant cross over with membership of other Forums of Interest?: Some overlap

Paperwork received:

Minutes of previous meetings: n/a as this is a new Forum

Statement of Commitment: Y

Terms of Reference of Forum: Y

Board Members

Proposed Board Member (organisation): Not determined at this stage

Proposed second (organisation):

Are these organisations already represented on the Assembly Board? The Chair is aware of the requirement for Representatives to be from a VCS organisation, not currently represented on the Board

Considerations for the Board:

This Forum fulfils the definition of a Forum Of Interest, having a majority of members from the VCS. The core of this membership does consist of groups not represented on the the existing Forums of Interest, although there is some cross over. Although the new membership is fairly small, we have, in the past accepted other small FOIs and there is a precedent for the Board accepting FOI's representing a single type of disability (Visual Impairment FOI).

However, the Board must be mindful of the growing number of disability related Forums of Interest and the impact that these will have on the balance of the Board if we keep accepting that each individual, disability related Forum of Interest gets a seat at the Board. It is recommended that consideration be given to a solution in which the separate disability related FOI's maintain their distinctive character, but that one Board member act on behalf of them all.

Recommendation: The Board accept the application of the 'Hearing Impaired Forum' to be a Forum of Interest, but tasks the 2 existing Forums of Interest related to disability to agree a way forward in terms of representation at Board meetings.

This summary was prepared by Helen Herritty VCS Assembly Coordinator, 11th November 2009