

Funding to Develop Active Citizenship

Funding is available immediately for enthusiastic and committed partners to take forward Take Part Activities, with the support of their Local Authority that are initiated in March 2010 and completed by end of April 2010.

The Take Part Programme

Take Part helps people gain the skills, knowledge and confidence to become empowered, enabling them to make an active contribution to their communities and influence public policies and services.

Take Part learning is a distinctive and proven approach that enables people to make a difference in their community by focusing on:

- community-based learning to build the skills, confidence and experience needed to tackle local political, social and technical challenges
- an informal, practical approach that gives people an understanding of how power works and how they can learn to influence decisions and policies
- open dialogue and reflection as key learning tools, recognising that change in a community emerges from individuals working together

The Take Part Regional Champion

In late February 2010, the WEA North West Region was awarded the contract for the Regional Take Part Champion Role and for the administration of the Regional Take Part Development Fund.

The role of the Regional Take Part Champions will be to support and enable the spreading and development of Take Part activity across their regions by:

- Promotion, advocacy and development of Take Part activity across their region
- Coaching others in Take Part methodologies and encouraging new organisations to utilise the approach
- Developing local partnerships to support Take Part
- Allocating a development fund to local authorities within their region and attracting match/continuation funding where possible
- Linking Take Part with other initiatives at a local level e.g. Connecting Communities, Community Learning Champions, Duty to Involve

How you can be involved

There are development funds available to enable the spread of Take Part activities and learning. These are aimed at Local Authorities in the North West, where there is a recognised need for developing activities around

- People feeling that they can influence decisions in their locality (Indicator 4 of Public Service Agreement 21)
- Narrowing the civic participation gaps between disadvantaged groups and others in society (Indicator 3 of Public Service Agreement 15)

Often these are expressed in Local Agreements and Local Strategic Partnership Plans.

Up to six Local Authorities can seek up to £10,000 of support each in order to develop Take Part Approaches. Most commonly this will be in partnership with local voluntary and community sector organisations and with the Take Part Regional Champion organisations. Local Voluntary and Community Organisations and Networks may, with the support and advice of the Regional Champion, wish to initiate work in their area.

This can be for a range of activities including capacity building, training in the active citizenship framework, community voice events, community engagement /empowerment activities or for awareness raising and planning .

The National Support programme

There is also a national element to the Take Part Pathfinder programme which aims to promote and develop the Take Part approach across the country. This includes:

- 'Train the Trainers' courses so that more people will have the skills to provide practical support, leading to more people trained in areas outside as well as inside the pathfinder areas.
- Development of the existing Take Part learning framework, by drawing on other existing models and materials to extend its scope, by developing new resources and trainers' packs and by advising on its wider use.
- Targeted 'How To' guides and other tools to meet identified gaps of support to help particular groups assume community leadership positions.
- Initiatives to encourage and engage more learning providers beyond the Take Part pathfinders to adopt the practices successfully rolled out by the pathfinders.

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