

# NW SOUTHWARK TIME BANK PILOT REPORT

**Time Bank (Community Advocacy Pilot)**

**Report To Elephant Links Partnership**

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### **1. Introduction and background**

This section gives you background information to the project and tells you about the partners involved in the pilot.

Charterhouse in Southwark is a voluntary sector, multi purpose organisation that has been supporting local community development since 1885.

Many Charterhouse in Southwark (CiS) projects also have a strong community advocacy element, for examples; the Befriending, Bangladeshi Health and Carers Projects. In addition, a CiS Volunteers' Project provides support to volunteers giving their time and skills via Charterhouse activities.

The North West Southwark Healthy Living Network (the Network) is a developing cross-sector partnership that aims to improve the health and well-being of local people. Recently, a short Roadshow Project has helped the Network partners, including Charterhouse, to expand and check out plans to develop new health promoting activities and community facilities across North West Southwark. This Roadshow attempted to reach out to different corners of the community and it was found that many local residents welcomed active outreach and a new dialogue about health.

Collectively the Network can mobilise a wealth of experience, skills, resources and contacts. It is a clearly stated objective of the Network Business Plan 2000-2005 to establish a Local Exchange Trading System (LETS) operating within the partnership. Time banking is one type of local exchange trading.

The New Economics Foundation (NEF) has played a key role in disseminating the idea and practice of time banking from the USA, where it originated, to the UK. In particular, NEF has been involved in setting up the Rushey Green time bank pilot based in a health centre and in developing the London time bank initiative.

The pilot was set up to test if a time bank could be a tool for creating the kind of mutual aid that could underpin the proposed Elephant Links Community Advocacy project. By valuing and rewarding the time neighbours can give to neighbours and mobilising the (currently) wasted skills, talents and energies of many people (older people, people with disabilities etc), the time bank could be a useful tool for building the kind of social inclusion envisioned by the Community Advocacy scheme. The pilot described below, was designed and delivered in order to find out if the time bank tool could work in practice.

## 1.1 Project Aims and Objectives

a) to explore opportunities for developing and running a fully operational mutual aid scheme, which will contribute to the operation of a Community Advocacy Programme. The scheme will be based on exchange of skills and assistance (with time rather than money used as the exchange currency) in order to improve the likelihood of social inclusion of participants.

b) to build on the community development and outreach work of the Network, particularly the recent Roadshow which has enabled many local people to identify, and to consolidate through action, a greater control over local factors affecting quality of life and health.

## 1.2 Glossary

A **time bank** is a 'virtual' bank where people can deposit the time they spend helping each other and withdraw that time when they need some help themselves. Members time is of equal value (one hour) and transactions are facilitated and recorded by the **time broker** using the **TimeKeeper** software.

A **member** of the time bank is someone who has shown an interest in the scheme and who has completed a skills audit. In the case of the pilot, time bank members did not have their references checked and in some cases did not give contact details.

The **Community Advocacy Scheme** is a project being proposed by the Elephant Links SRB in order to help people who are socially excluded into training and/or a better quality of life. The time bank pilot was one of pilots undertaken as part of the Community Advocacy Scheme.

### **1.3 Project Delivery**

CiS is the lead agency of the Network and delivered the Project by employing a part-time Worker to manage, develop and broker the Time Bank Pilot. CiS executive management have monitored the progress of the Project and held financial control. The Network Partnership Board acted as a steering group for this Project.

An Advisor from the New Economics Foundation (NEF) with experience of setting up Time Banks has assisted the Worker by providing recruitment materials, training and on-going support. The Advisor has also contributed to the monitoring and reporting of progress.

Confirmation of Public Liability Insurance was confirmed to protect participants in this scheme from the outset.

As with all CiS projects, the Child Protection Policy applied to this project. It was agreed at the outset that childcare or babysitting services would not be available through the pilot and because members could not be police checked in the time frame for delivering the pilot.

Contact details of members were kept on the Time Bank database on the understanding that they will not be passed to any unauthorized persons without their permission.

### **1.4 Time Schedule and Milestones**

Total time frame of the project was May 2000 to December 2000.

During May-June 2000, the initial development of the Project began and information and outreach was shared with other groups. This included NEF, CiS and Southwark Hour Bank working together.

In June, SRB Partnership Board approved the Project. Then two venues were confirmed and the Worker and NEF Advisor started working.

In July, the Project systems and publicity were ready and "What is a Time Bank" outreach workshops commenced. Time Brokering was added to the workplan of the Worker and this brokering commenced. Weekly sessions at two outreach (gateway) venues started. At this point it was decided best to continue more flexible outreach rather than committing to setting up a third gateway site at Blackfriar's Settlement. Time Bank transactions commenced.

In August, the Supporter's Forum was set up and began meeting and in September, the Project was reviewed.

In October, the interim report was presented. Then exit strategy negotiation accelerated, as did further evaluation by members.

In November, work began on drafting a report and the exit strategy was agreed.

In early December 2000 this final Reportis launched and exit strategy begins.

## **2. Report on Activities**

### **2.1 Project Elements**

- *Awareness Raising* - Publicity (see Appendix 1) and project literature was prepared and disseminated.
- *Outreach* - "What is a Time Bank?" outreach workshops were offered to community groups and voluntary sector projects within the Elephant Links SRB area and to member groups of Healthy Living Network Partnership Board. Workshops, stalls and meetings were held in order to raise awareness of the pilot.
- *Outreach at gateways* - Worker held weekly outreach sessions over four months at two different "gateways" to the project. These were at Falmouth Road GP Surgery, a local doctor's practice, and at St Hugh's Weekly Sale, a community drop-in. Members were also recruited from existing contacts.

- *Referral* – Local General Practitioner made one referral to the scheme.
- *Recruitment* - The Worker and NEF Advisor engaged interested individuals and explained verbally how the time bank could work and some of the benefits that time banks offer in other areas. New members were then informally interviewed and completed a cartoon skills audit (see Appendix). This gained new members an initial Time Credit (equal to one hour of their time). These people were asked for their name and contact details only for the purpose of staying in touch with the Worker. During the pilot Project new members were not asked for references in order to join the scheme.
- *Introduction* - Members were then introduced to other members through personal introductions, community drop-ins and social events. These events were organised by members of the Time Bank with support of the Worker and were publicised by a combination of written invitations, display at Doctor's Surgery, telephone calls and word of mouth.
- *Systems* - A Time Bank database was set up at CiS Central office and Worker had some support in using Time Bank systems from NEF Advisor and a member of scheme familiar with Time Keeper soft ware. The Worker fulfilled the role of Time Broker by maintaining records of member's contact details and skills audits. Computerised system did not become fully operational during pilot and confidential paper records were kept instead.
- *Time Trading* - Members engaged in a whole range of practical and social activities (see Time Bank Members' Activities). Some members offering and requiring services/activities were matched and then introduced. Time exchanges were recorded after transactions.
- *Keeping in Touch* - Worker provided regular updates to members of Project progress and the Time Credits they had earned or had used to gain a service.
- *Involvement* - There have been four Supporters' Forum meetings where members and stakeholders have debated the issues arising from Pilot and where members have had an opportunity to influence both the running of the scheme and contribute towards the exit strategy. The first of these meetings explored potential benefits and concerns about the scheme and included an induction. Some members did not attend any of these meetings. Members attending earned time credits.

- *Strategic Direction* - The Worker and Advisor kept up liaison with relevant groups such as Network Partnership Board, Quality of Life & Environment Sub Group, Older People's and Carer's Community Advocacy Pilot Project and with consultants carrying out the Community Advocacy Feasibility Study. Also visits made to Southwark Hourbank and Rushey Green Time Bank to share learning.
- *Evaluation* - Worker and Advisor have gathered and collated feedback from members and groups throughout the pilot. Additional feedback has been gained from groups of participants in Forum meetings and from individuals via a survey at end of the project. CiS Volunteer Project Manager also helped to gather feedback from groups.

## **2.2 Key Linking Activities**

Through both the outreach element of the time bank and through time bank activities, residents have come to know more about opportunities available in the local area. This "sign posting" has been a key strand of the pilot. After completing the cartoon skills audit, members who showed an interest in setting up a business were given information about Elephant Jobs Business Start Up Courses and those interested in child minding were sign posted towards the Childminding Development Project at Blackfriars Settlement. Local community information was made available through a display at Falmouth Road GPs Surgery waiting room. Members have shared amongst themselves, their knowledge of local groups and activities and have offered to take others to community venues. This has been a form of community information exchange.

For examples, one member joined Southwark Credit Union and another now regularly attends Il Covo activities. Another member was offered a paid work assignment through a new contact made via the time bank. One member made contact with the Child Minding Development Project.

## **3. Report on Progress**

### **3.1 Meeting Targets: Local People Contributing and Benefiting**

A total of forty-eight people have been recruited to the scheme. All these people are over 16 years old, living in the Elephant Links SRB area and feel that they have time to share with other local people.

Twenty-three of these people have been actively involved in Time Banking. That is, exchanging skills and assistance with time rather than money used as the exchange currency.

#### 3.1.1 Member's Activities:

These members engaged in a whole range of practical and social activities. These were:

- *Developmental* including promoting the scheme at community events, helping to recruit other local people, designing a logo, setting up Time Bank computer system, attending meetings and seminars, writing about the Time Bank, making links for Time Bank with local alternative healers and healthy living projects.
- *Social activities* including playing Welsh harp, sharing meals and home baking together, demonstrating embroidery, sharing knowledge of cooking and healthy eating, helping at community fairs, Bingo calling, shopping for refreshments and clearing away after meetings
- *One to one activities* including escorting to social events, to community drop-ins, to shopping at Borough Market and to swimming pool, wheelchair pushing, henna hand decoration, baby photography, DIY such as home repairs and home decorating.
- *Community participation* including representation in local regeneration.

#### 3.1.2 Interests:

The results of the skills audit gathered at initial point of contact with interested individuals shows that one in five members wanted to get involved at community events or in running a local fruit & vegetable co-op.

Most help was offered with the following:

Companionship, phone friendship or listening  
Shopping  
Visiting Housebound  
Form filling  
Cooking skills  
Community café  
Teaching reading  
Translation  
Parenting skills  
Increasing fitness

## Computer/ net skills

Most interest was show in getting help through the Time Bank with home improvements, haircare, massage, increasing fitness and gaining new computer or internet skills.

### 3.1.3 Involvement:

The following tables describe levels of involvement and some of the diversity of the whole group of people.

Table 1 - This table shows numbers of local people involved in Time Bank Project and amount of time they spent participating. Table also shows numbers of people from Black and ethnic minorities and compares numbers of women and men who participated.

	People interested in Time Bank	People actively involved in time bank	People most actively Involved in time bank	Total number of people recruited into Time Bank
	1 hour	Up to 11 hours	12 hours or more*	
All members	26	13	9	48
Black & ethnic minorities	13	8	1	22
Women	22	11	5	38
Men	4	2	4	10

\*Out put measure 8C – residents within target area who have become involved in voluntary work as a result of the SRB. ie. Residents not previously involved in work, either paid or unpaid, who contribute to the capacity building of an organization or the local Elephant & Castle community generally. A resident must continue to be involved in voluntary work for a minimum of 3 months and must spend on average at least one hour per week involved in such activities (That works out to 12 hours or more).

Table 2- This table shows the approximate age ranges of people involved in Time Bank pilot project.

	People interested in	People actively	People most actively Involved	Total number of people
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	Time Bank	involved in time bank	in time bank	recruited into Time Bank
	1 hour	Up to 11 hours	12 hours or more	
All members	26	13	9	48
Young people 16 - 24	4	1		5
Adults 25 - 54	20	9	6	35
Older Adults 55 - 85	2	3	3	8

Table 3 - This table shows differences in languages spoken by people involved in Time Bank pilot project.

	People interested in Time Bank	People actively involved in time bank	People most actively Involved in time bank	Total number of people recruited into Time Bank
	1 hour	Up to 11 hours	12 hours or more	
All members	26	13	9	48
English as first language	13	8	8	29
Bengali as first language	4			4
Other first languages	9	6		15

Table 4 - This table shows the known health status and two domestic factors affecting people involved in Time Bank.  
(nb. Members who described chronic ill health conditions and members recruited at doctor's surgery are included in this table as having an ill health condition.)

	People interested in Time Bank	People actively involved in time bank	People most actively Involved in time bank	Total number of people recruited into Time Bank

	1 hour	Up to 11 hours	12 hours or more	
All members	26	13	9	48
Ill health conditions	8	4	6	18
Carers of children	14	8	1	23
Carers	2		1	3

### 3.2 Meeting SRB Objectives

The project has made progress towards SRB Objectives as follows:

➤ *SRB Strategic Objective SO5 Individual Links Delivery Plan Year 2*

The Project has explored opportunities for developing and running a fully operational mutual aid scheme, which will contribute to the operation of a Community Advocacy Programme for residents of SRB area.

➤ *SRB Strategic Objective 1 – To enhance the employment prospects, education and skills of local people, particularly the young and those at disadvantage, and promote equality of opportunity.*

The Project has provided local people with new opportunities to share and gain skills and knowledge; to build confidence through demonstrating ability in a supportive environment; with help in accessing specialist support services and resources; and with opportunities to make useful contacts and relationships within the community.

The Project promoted equality of opportunity by outreaching to a wide range of local residents wishing to participate in changing their life chances through the Time Bank. The Project has also enabled residents to provide support to others across cultural, generational, gender, geographic and housing barriers and has offered support to those on low incomes by providing help and services paid for with their time instead of their cash.

➤ *SRB Strategic Objective 5 – To promote initiatives of benefit to ethnic minorities.*

The Project has provided new opportunities (as above) to local people from ethnic minorities including people speaking English as a second language. The Project has promoted the Community Advocacy Programme through inclusion of Community and Ethnic Minority Groups; has provided a workshop and written information in Bengali and has provided a new mechanism for the transfer of support, skills and knowledge across cultural and language barriers.

- *SRB Strategic Objective 7 – To enhance the quality of life, health and capacity to contribute to regeneration of local people, including the promotion of cultural and sports opportunities.*

Members of the Time Bank have played an active role in enhancing their own quality of life and environment and have inspired and supported others to also do so. The Project has enabled people who are socially excluded to value their own experience and creative potential as health and social providers and has supported them to be agents of change. The Time Bank has measured 372 hours of community participation – just some of the unpaid input of local people within and across our local communities in the past few months.

#### **4. Exit Strategy**

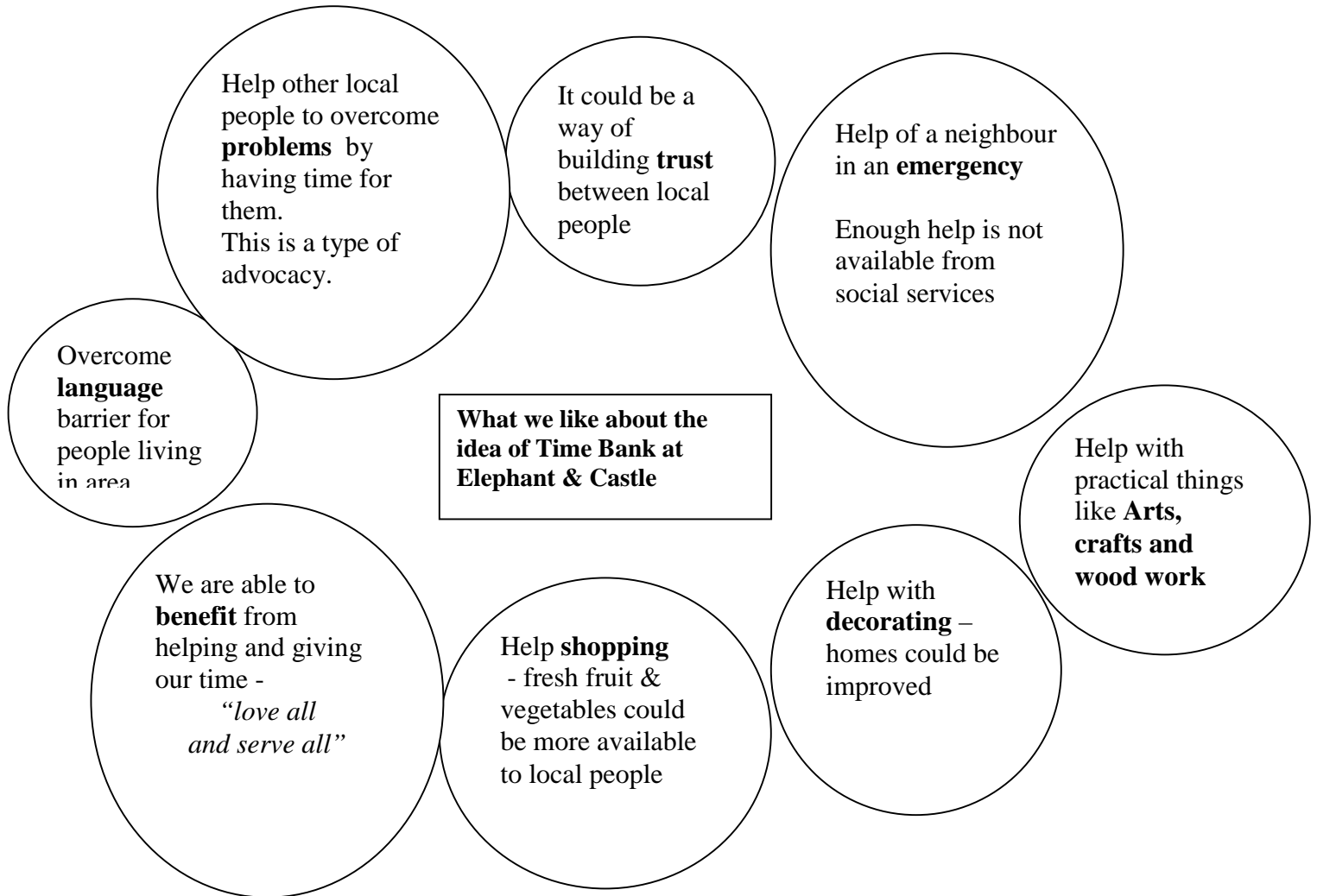
The time bank pilot comes to an end in December 2000. Although some time bank members are keen to continue the supportive relationships they have made with each other, the active brokering and recruiting will come to an end, as there is no paid worker in place to continue the work. All member records and time accounts will be frozen and kept in confidence at NEF. Sarah Burns and Karen Smith at NEF will act as named contacts for members. In the event of a full time bank project being launched in North West Southwark, members will be re-contacted and their accounts re-activated. This will not be before May 2001. In the meantime, all members will be offered a copy of this report as well as verbal feedback at the final forum meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2000.

#### **5. Feedback about the time bank pilot**

Feedback from the pilot was gathered in the following ways: from individuals, groups and at forum meetings. Feedback was gathered at all stages of the pilot's life: before, during and after.

##### **5.1 Members**

At the initial stage we were trying to gauge whether people thought the Time Bank was a good idea – and one that would work to support local people. This is the feedback from the first Time Bank forum (induction) meeting:



Other feedback gathered during this meeting raised the following concerns:

➤ **Safety**

“How do we know who we can trust?”

“Shopping means trusting with money.”

“Listening means trusting with your private concerns.”

“Some people are dishonest.”

“Members must respect others property and confidentiality.”

➤ **Real money**

"Will the Time Bank cost us?"

➤ **Accessibility**

"Can we get to where we can help?"

"Will scheme fit in with different daily routines?"

"Will members have access to crèche?"

➤ **Difference**

"Differences, like speaking a different language, makes it harder to get to know each other. Members can get to know each other through meetings and community events."

In addition 48 completed cartoon skills audits from new members told us what type of help was most on offer and which types of support were most needed (see section 3.1.2 Interests above).

During the life of the Pilot we sought constant feedback from members in order to refine the design.

Towards the end of the pilot phase we asked members about their experience of the Time Bank to ensure that any future scheme reflected as closely as possible the lessons gained from the pilot.

We asked: What have you been doing?

Answers were:

- 1) promoting Time Bank
- 2) attending meetings and seminars
- 3) sale of work
- 4) playing harp
- 5) helping at community fair
- 6) Bingo calling
- 7) sharing meals together
- 8) getting out of the house
- 9) henna hand decoration
- 10) designing logo
- 11) making links for Time Bank with local alternative healers
- 12) clearing away after meetings
- 13) home repairs
- 14) wheelchair pushing
- 15) photography
- 16) cooking and sharing knowledge of healthy eating
- 17) setting up Time Bank computer system

We asked: What do you want to do next?

Answers were:

- 1) help each other
- 2) introduce others to English classes
- 3) paint hordings around building sites
- 4) babysitting
- 5) cooking
- 6) ironing
- 7) let more people know about what Time Bank is offering
- 8) distribute information and leaflets in local areas
- 9) womens' craft group
- 10) only meet in accessible places
- 11) use computers at Rockingham Community Centre
- 12) balcony gardening help
- 13) make friends
- 14) walking and swimming partners
- 15) children's disco with older people too
- 16) exploring literature
- 17) bulk buying & delivering fruit and vegetables

We asked: What can be done to improve the Time Bank?

Answers were:

- 1) Use other Time Banks as models for ours (including set up, constitutions, safety checks for baby sitters etc.)
- 2) make sure people know what services are available – maybe a “yellow pages”
- 3) members need to have more support from a Time Broker
- 4) lots of opportunities to meet others in safe community spaces
- 5) group community activities
- 6) places to meet that have no stairs and are accessible
- 7) better communication with more word of mouth through friends  
increase membership
- 8) nominated contact person for each area so Time Bank belongs with local people
- 9) more going with people for shopping and exercise like swimming
- 10) natural swaps to take pressure off people who already give a lot of time to community and neighbours.

ADDITIONAL QTNS (MEMBERS SURVEY) WILL BE ANSWERED ON THURSDAY

## 5.2 Community Groups and Organisations

Feedback was gathered from groups that had been involved in the pilot:

### 5.2.1 Falmouth Road GPs Surgery

Outreach initiative was well received. Publicity about other community and healthy living activities in area was welcomed. Staff team continue to be interested in developing patient support networks and have nominated one GP to act as link person between time bank and group practice in future.

### 5.2.2 St Hugh's Church and Weekly Sale

The Priest has been very concerned about the time bank because there has been no explanatory leaflet setting out exactly how the time bank works in terms of banking and spending hours etc and some members do not seem to know these details. There is no application form for joining the time bank and some members are known only by their first names. It was reported that several people have felt under pressure to become members of the time bank. It has not been made clear enough what safeguards are in place to protect members from unqualified and uninsured people carrying out tasks in their homes or on their behalf, and to protect them from criminal people or activity. There is also, no guarantee that member's contributions (in terms of hours given) will all be repaid in the future. He would not encourage anyone to be involved until these points have been answered.

Priest, St Hugh's Church, says,

*"I would like to offer the following observation: as a new initiative, a time bank is only likely to succeed in relatively small established communities where there is already a reasonable level of knowledge, trust and mutual accountability. Only after it is well established in such a community, is a time bank likely to be able to expand to include members of the wider community."*

Co ordinator of the Weekly Sale noted that a time bank could be attractive to younger retired people or people unable to work due to health problems. Social and relationship-based help might be a good starting point and with small time bank groups that could be linked together later. It is important not to underestimate the difference that can be made by helping with shopping, running errands or helping people to get out of the house. The time bank should not involve skilled jobs. The leaflet has caused confusion because there are too many things apparently on offer, no detailed description of the time bank, no written guarantee of standards of help or written guarantee of insurance. The complaints procedure was not circulated with membership.

It was reported that sometimes the scheme came across as far-fetched. Vulnerable people could be let down or feel let down by the scheme if it is not deliverable in the future. However, it was obvious that for some members there had been a real benefit in terms of a raised sense of self-esteem.

### 5.2.3 CiS Bangladeshi Health Project and Rockingham Bengali Women's Group

A group of women using these projects, noted that they are already involved in helping others in the community but that this time is not counted and saved up in a time bank. That younger and older women would be able to get involved in different ways and that women with health problems would also be able to offer support to others in a way that suits them. They suggested that Bengali men should be invited to participate in the scheme, perhaps through publicity at the Mosque and at advice centers. Although, the broker does not need to speak Bengali, this could improve access to the scheme and increase activity. Support offered through a time bank would not always be completely reliable but as it is based on what members enjoy doing in their spare time it could have good results in keeping people involved.

These women are keen to set up a Time Banking group at the Rockingham Community Centre in the near future. Three Bengali women have now joined the TIME BANK. Their ideas for activities include:

- collecting children from school or religious activity
- childcare or respite care in home
- escorting elderly people
- house sitting
- weekly women's group
- embroidery and flower making
- cooking
- translation at doctor's or other appointments
- bulk food buying and distribution

This group's Health Worker feels that the pilot has raised awareness of the concept of time banks. Interest has been shown in the scheme and now further development work is required before members of the Bengali community can develop time banking on a practical level.

#### 5.2.4 CiS Volunteer Project

Volunteer Project Co ordinator thought that it would be a good idea to operate a membership list with full names and addresses and a vouching system for new members. Otherwise, the safety of individuals involved in such a scheme may be compromised due to misunderstanding that members have ALL been vouched for or vetted in some way. How would members who had only given their first names be traced if something went wrong? Appropriate references would be needed for members offering some skills and services. Induction is very important for laying ground rules and to make boundaries clear from the start. Members are not volunteers as such in terms of CiS written volunteers' policy, but the time bank could be a route towards volunteering at CiS for some people.

Feedback was also collected from groups who had supported or expressed an interest in the time bank:

#### 5.2.5 Blackfriars Settlement

Community Care Manager says,

*"Blackfriars Work Centre is a vocational rehabilitation scheme for people who use mental health services.*

*Being involved in the time bank would be an excellent addition to the continuum we currently provide our members, particularly as it is flexible to allow them to draw on their range of skills which is extensive. We see that they would be willing to take a first step towards the time bank because it is brokered. We also see that we would be able to provide, at least initially, some support to them over their exchanges of services.*

*Being engaged in time bank would have numerous advantages for Work Centre members. First and foremost, it would concretely give them the chance to give back by doing some thing for other people. The opportunity of using skills in and for the community would boost their confidence and self-esteem. Exchanging within the time bank would widen our members social contacts. All of these benefits could also be available to users of our services for older people".*

#### 5.2.6 Rockingham Community Centre

Outreach Worker met with time bank members and suggested potential in developing cyber café, new activities for older people and improvement of green spaces.

#### 5.2.7 St Mathews Community Centre

Co ordinator is interested in exploring practical development of a time bank.

#### 5.2.8 Rockingham Food Availability Mapping Project

Volunteers are interested in time bank as one possible element to a new fresh fruit & vegetable delivery scheme for the Rockingham Estate. Potential exists to credit time spent by residents in helping to develop and operate a food co-op and possibly to negotiate an exchange rate to buy food with time credits.

#### 5.2.9 Elibariki Community Centre

Potential exists to develop a link between time bank and their food-to-home delivery service currently run by volunteers

#### 5.2.10 Putting Down Roots

Development worker of a new project at St Mungos, called Putting Down Roots, believes that a time bank could potentially bring benefits to homeless volunteers who are active in local gardening initiatives but that vetting and safety procedures would need to be sufficient. For example, to provide protection against theft and risk to children.

#### 5.2.11 North Southwark Health Visitor Team

Health Visitors noted that a time bank would be of use to local families and especially to those who are experiencing isolation. The team would be interested in becoming involved in the future once fully operational safety and referral systems appropriate to services for children have been set up.

### **6. What we have learned from the time bank pilot and Recommend**

This section uses the feedback of time bank members and groups to focus on the experiences on the pilot (both positive and negative) and give practical suggestions for developing a time bank as part of the Community Advocacy Scheme.

#### ***6.1 Getting people involved***

By basing the outreach in neighbourhood sites we tried to engage members at a level they felt comfortable with and could relate to. In addition by

moving the bank around different community sites through social events and outreach, the pilot involved a diverse range of people and came into contact with additional networks (eg St Hugh's Church). Finally, by involving members in the development of the time bank, members started recruiting through their own networks by word of mouth.

Recommendations:

- Time bank is a tool that can be usefully facilitated by host organisations, such as community groups. However within any partnership there should be a clear understanding about the respective aims and activities of the time bank and the host and how these relate to each other.
- Time bank is best publicised through member's own networks and at a *neighbourhood* level.

## **6.2 Making people feel safe**

This is absolutely vital – both to time bank members and participating groups. It was a concern, both on the part of members and groups. In fact at the first induction meeting, members opted NOT to enter each other's homes initially, as they did not feel safe enough. It is also clear from the experience of the pilot that while there is a very real need for safety and security, other members are concerned that police checks and vigorous referencing would prove a barrier to many people wishing to join the time bank.

Recommendations:

- All new members should undergo an induction/training session to ensure they understand how the time bank works, what their responsibilities are as well as the opportunities on offer. Written rules and policies should be part of the induction. For examples Southwark Vulnerable Adults Policy and existing confidentiality policies. There should also be a written complaints procedure as well as code of conduct in place.
- In addition, members should be involved in developing additional rules and policies etc – they are more likely to stick this way.
- Childcare activities should operate as a discrete project to the time bank. This will ensure that all participants working with children are police checked.
- Members feel more confident giving time when they can choose how much /little to give and also choose the setting, ie in a group or in a one to one environment. We would suggest that new members should be initially offered time giving/spending opportunities in a group environment (meals, socials etc). This would help them to build trust of each other. They could progress onto more one to one time giving when

they feel more confident and the broker is also more confident and sure of their abilities.

### **6.3 Time bank activities**

All new members completed a cartoon skills audit which covered a very broad range of activities. While this was useful in terms of inspiring members and getting them to sign up it also raised expectations, which were then often difficult to fulfill practically.

The most successful time bank activities were those which were simple to organise and involved lowest risk eg cooking food for socials, running errands etc. However, services like DIY were requested, especially from older people. There were also concerns about the standards of practical work given – like DIY.

Recommendations:

- New members to the time bank should progress through the time bank 'escalator' as outlined above (Making people feel safe). ie Begin giving time in a group setting and then progress onto more one to one tasks.
- Time bank *individual* (one to one) activities or help in homes could be limited to a specific range of activities (eg telephone befriending, running errands and letter writing) so that tasks can be carefully monitored and members have an opportunity to build their confidence and experience.
- More complicated tasks, like DIY should be organised as a *group* activity, with a qualified leader taking charge and with a possible training option for less qualified members. Accrediting the training could also be one way of ensuring the quality of the work. Quality of services should be monitored by the brokers. The broker should then report this back to the steering group.
- Recruiting groups as well as individuals to the time bank creates group time giving opportunities for members as well as strengthening local voluntary sector links.

### **6.4 Getting ALL time bank members active**

The time bank pilot was successful at gaining the active involvement of older people, people experiencing ill health and people with disabilities. However although more people from minority ethnic groups, young people and carers of children signed up they did not participate so actively in earning and spending time.

- Use community networks to access more hard to reach groups

- Target specific groups (eg young people) and tailor time giving/receiving activities to their interests
- Ensure membership of the time bank is mixed – in terms of ability and needs as well as in terms of gender, ethnicity, age etc. This is vital in terms of developing the time bank as a healthy, supportive community of people.
- Ensure time bank is easy to access physically (eg for people who don't have telephones and/or cars) as well as technically for those who have literacy needs. This means making sure the time bank can be flexible about the ways people can join (application forms etc) as well as maintaining joining requirements, like the induction.
- Participation and ownership of the time bank should be built through a steering group, composed of key stakeholders (including community groups offering their facilities) as well as members.

## 7. Final Conclusions and Recommendations

### 7.1 Overall experience

LEA SAY SOMETHING HERE ABOUT THE OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF THE PILOT

- Things that could have been better-

Produce an information leaflet based on outcome of first forum (induction) meeting outlining terms of reference, insurance, brokering, spending and perhaps information on tape or video.

Kept the skills audit separate from leaflet. It has created confusion by saying "help for people living in your area" instead of "Please tell us what are your interests and skills". Purpose of the skills audit was not made clear. In retrospect, the skills audit could have asked people what they had to offer and then asking what people needed could have been asked in a different way to avoid raising expectations.

Outreach – some people have welcomed active outreach style but others have felt that they had been too pressed to get involved.

Induction of members has been patchy and inadequate. Full induction to time bank is necessary for members before engaging in one-to-one activities.

I could have taken up references for members before they engaged in one-to-one activities.

Should have formed a steering group from outset including representation from St Hughs, Falmouth Rd. and interested projects. Tried to combine this with Supporters Forum

➤ Positives-

Much interest shown by local people and groups (both in time bank and in results of skills audit)

Involved members in decision making and communication

Have increased flow of community information through a word of mouth exchange.

Members feedback inc. benefits, have enjoyed themselves and have improved quality of life.

Director, Charterhouse in Southwark, says,

*"The time bank pilot has been a valuable experiment that has:*

*Shown how it can be a means of building community*

*Shown that outreach in places not previously used for this purpose can result in reaching some hard to reach people who have not previously been involved in community activities*

*Shown that people are interested in giving to others*

*Enabled people who believe they have little to offer to get clear that they have value*

*Shown that the time bank is an effective mechanism for raising self esteem and skill levels*

*However the pilot has also shown that more thought needs to be given to how the substantive project will work. This initiative aims to work with some very vulnerable members of the community and it is imperative that the project is very carefully thought through to ensure their safety and that nothing happens which will exacerbate their vulnerability.*

*The staffing for the substantive project also needs careful consideration. It may be that we need workers with the skill to work with particular sections of the community such as young people and Bengali people. It may be that there should be a worker with DIY skills who could supervise this type of work. Training needs to be an element of the project so either one member of staff needs to be a trainer or there needs to be a training budget."*

## 7.2 Proposed Time Bank scheme for NWS

This section builds on the lessons learned from the pilot and seeks to outline how a fully developed time bank scheme might operate, independently or as part of the Community Advocacy Scheme.

### ➤ Where should the time be?

The time bank should be operational and accessible at neighbourhood level, possibly covering four adjacent estates with a tangible presence at each location. These should include the Rockingham and Tabard Estates. In addition, there should be outreach through partner organisations, like health centres, (nurses teams etc); schools (one member has a good link with Grange Primary School – and teachers are interested in using the time bank to support pupils with special needs); and the Healthy Living Network.

### ➤ Who should run the time bank?

We propose that the time bank could be run by a minimum of two f/t *paid* workers. These workers would act as the time brokers as well as developing the profile and activity of the time bank.

In order to promote the integration of the time bank, across ALL areas and to ensure good links with the Community Advocacy scheme, we suggest that the time bank workers have a limited remit to work across each others areas. Workers speaking community languages as well as English could improve access to the scheme and increase activity. Some members felt that they would only access women-only activities and this might have implications for gender of a supporting worker..

In addition there should be p/t administrative support, where it would be inappropriate for members to help out (eg inputting confidential member records into TimeKeeper).

### ➤ How should people be recruited to the time bank?

Any joining process should include:

Explanatory information video

Re-designed (more limited) skills audit

Induction process, including references, written code of conduct (see Appendix for Fair Shares – time bank Standards of Care) and additional policies.

An 'escalator' of activities that would ensure that new members start their time/giving receiving in group settings and progress to individual activities once they and the time broker is confident of their abilities. Possible groups activities include: community fun days, food bank (Food Availability project), Cyber café, Craft group, DIY and gardening.

➤ **What kinds of activities should be offered by the time bank?**

The range of individual activities offered within the time bank should initially be limited to key areas, eg befriending, running errands, shopping – as identified by members.

In addition activities should be offered within group settings. New members should be encouraged to get involved in group activities initially.

Community groups and organisations should be encouraged to join the time bank in order to provide opportunities for more group activities and in order to ensure that the time bank helps to strengthen community links.

Where group activities are involved (eg DIY), the work should be led by a member or worker from a partner organisation who has received adequate training. This should ensure the quality of work and safety of participants as well as providing training opportunities for members.

Any childcare activities should be organised as a discrete project, with police checks and training in place.

One of the key roles of the time brokers will be to monitor transactions and check that members are satisfied with services given and received.

➤ **How should the time bank be managed ?**

We propose that the time bank be managed by a Steering group, composed of key stakeholders (members – both individuals and organisations as well as representation from the Community Advocacy project and the Southwark HOurbank). The Steering group would have a key role in developing policies and procedures for the time bank as well as organising the evaluation and monitoring of the project.

➤ **How should the time bank be linked to real £ money?**

Some time bank members were interested in using the time bank as way of developing a mutual support scheme for people trying to set up their own businesses or get back into work. Members could earn time for supporting others who wanted to develop a business plan, update their job skills etc.

The time bank could also further develop links with Southwark Credit Union in order to make credit available to members. This would be of an advantage to particular ethnic communities in North West Southwark, who may already be aquanted with Credit Unions such as the Irish Community or with micro credit such as the Bangladeshi community.

In addition, there are opportunities for linking time credits with re-cycled goods, like computers. This would mean that members could be rewarded with goods as well as time back. Such a scheme is awaiting final approval from the DHSS.

➤ **How should the time bank be linked to the Community Advocacy Scheme?**

Reciprocal links should be established between the two schemes so that all time bank members have the opportunity to take part in the Community Advocacy Scheme and vice versa.

In particular, time bank members should be aware of opportunities to take part as trainee advocates as well as offering more informal advocacy services, like sign posting to community resources and offering practical help to users of the advocacy scheme.

As well as linking on an individual basis the time bank and the Community Advocacy scheme through group activities, such as training, and peer support scheme to set up your own business or get back to work. The Community Advocacy scheme should consider joining as an organisational member of the time bank in order that this kind of exchange is possible.

➤ **How should the time bank be linked to the London time bank initiative?**

The London time bank is pan-London initiative to support the development of time banks in the capital and to create a London-wide infrastructure for time giving and receiving. The initiative is being led by the New Economics Foundation in partnership with a variety of organisations and groups across London and is supported by the National Lottery Charity Board. The London time bank is keen to support the work of new initiatives, like the time bank in North West Southwark by ensuring that the project is networked with similar schemes and is able to share best practice and additional resources like training, website etc

➤ **What other resources does the time bank scheme need?**

As well as the core time bank team (2 f/t time brokers plus p/f administrative support), the time bank will need the following to become fully operational:

A lead body to back the scheme and provide financial and legal support.

Office space

Outreach locations (with partner organizations) accessible to a wide range of residents including older people.

A computer, telephone line, e-mail

Accessible community space(s) for members to meet in.

A training budget.

A publicity budget to cover costs of making a short information video and for translation and interpretation.

A small budget to cover running costs like, postage, member's expenses, travel plus any small capital costs, like tools or DIY equipment.

**8. Appendices:**

Publicity materials, cartoon skills audit, photos, translation, contacts list

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