

Farmers' Markets Community bus



Allotments



Neighbourhood Watch



Exciting and innovative projects to support the development of local services in our communities are being developed around the county, ranging from opening community shops and healthy living centres to campaigning for improved public transport links.

To help you develop your own projects, you may find it useful to read how other people have developed their ideas.

In addition to information in this leaflet of how the **Gloucestershire Childminding Association** is helping to train more child carers in both the urban and rural areas of the county, you can find out more about other initiatives including the **Whiteshill Village Shop** and a range of **Rural Transport Partnership Initiatives** in the Beelines Bulletin in this folder and on either of the following websites:

Forum – www.town2town.org.uk

BBC – www.bbc.co.uk/gloucestershire/communitytoolkit

Turn to the back page of this leaflet for a list of useful organisations and contacts you can use to take your idea further.



Childcare



Community Shops



Healthy living centres



GLOUCESTERSHIRE CHILDMINDING ASSOCIATION

Childcare is a Quality Issue

The Challenge

There is a shortage of childcare places in Gloucestershire which has a knock-on effect on employment prospects, low income, cultural issues and literacy skills.

Developing the idea

The Gloucestershire Childminding Association, through local childminding networks, offers on-going training and support to people who want to become childminders. It started when a group of childminders met and decided to contact others in the county.

Since then the Association has gone from strength to strength, becoming a key member of the County's Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, and spearheading accessible nationally-recognised training support for childminders throughout Gloucestershire.

Making it happen

As part of the Government's strategy on childcare, there is funding to support and encourage more people to become childminders, particularly people who are prepared to train in caring for children with disabilities.

The Gloucestershire Childminding Association's local childminding networks meet in the community and offer support for their members, helping them to help each other, deciding how to spend funds to buy shared equipment. They are able to access the compulsory quality training to become registered childminders and improve the services they can offer.

There are also several Local Associations with toy libraries for local people to source play equipment in Cheltenham, Gloucester City, the Forest and Cirencester.

Membership of the Local Association also gives access to cheaper insurance, and other benefits.

A new Childminding Association in the Forest of Dean offers local support and a drop in centre. The Association has, for example, bought double and triple buggies for members to use. There are now about 70 childminders in this area of the county.

Support for childminders

The Gloucestershire Childminding Association training team helps childminders develop their own literacy skills so they can write assignments for the Development of Childminding Practice and Extending Childminding Practice qualifications.

The training also offers personal development, generally broadening the knowledge of the childminders, helping to make them better at their jobs and thereby offering a quality service to children and parents.

Childminding network in inner city Gloucester

Training has been offered to Asian Muslim women and has been adapted to work within a different cultural environment. Whilst it was important to take on board a whole range of issues to do with culture and religion, the rules and regulations covering hygiene, child development and equal treatment of girls and boys were not compromised. Another project for the Chinese community is planned.

Within a year, at least 20 new small childminding businesses in areas of low income and relative isolation will have been launched, with Asian and Chinese women being able to offer a professional childminding service within their ethnic communities.



The total number of childminders at present remains fairly static for a range of reasons, not least increased competition from nurseries and playgroups. But Shirley Crandon from the EYDCP Childminding Unit says, "It is vital that parents have a full choice of childcare to meet the individual needs of their children. Childminders can offer a very different, more individual sort of care compared

to a nursery and can be the best choice for some children. It is therefore essential that anyone who wants to be a childminder receives the very best training and support they can get."

Contact: Shirley Crandon, EYDCP Childminding Unit 01452 425436.



