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diverse resources is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year. It has a lot to celebrate.

In 1991, local residents and community workers in Hulme, Manchester, shared a vision of a community centre which would help local people find their own solutions to the problems of inner city living.

They developed the Zion Community Health and Resource Centre (ZCHRC) in the back of a disused landmark building in the centre of the notorious Hulme Crescents, with just £17,000 and one and a half members of staff.

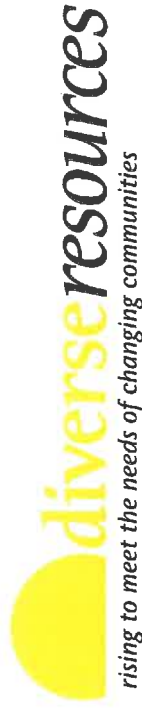
In 1997, ZCHRC became the first voluntary sector agency in the country to run a Primary Care Health Centre when it won the contract to manage the Kath Locke Centre, which had been built in Hulme.

A new name was necessary, and ZCHRC became CHRCs – Community Health and Resource Centres.

The organisation has grown steadily into the innovative agency it is today, employing 80 people, turning over £1.5 million a year and providing services from massage to consultancy.

In this, its tenth anniversary year and the year of the opening of the new Zion Community Resource, another name change has become necessary, as the organisation continues to diversify. CHRCs has become *diverse resources* – in acknowledgement of the diversity of the services it now provides, and the many people with whom it is involved.

As long as Hulme's communities – and others like them – keep on growing and changing, *diverse resources* will grow and change with them.



"VEE, THEY'RE LOOKING FOR A CLEANER"

Veronica Stapleton

I first came to the Zion – well, the old Zion – in 1991. My sister Sandra was working there, at *Hormestart* and on reception, and they didn't have a cleaner. She said, "Vee, they're looking for a cleaner at the Zion – why don't you come and see?" So I went over and looked around... it looked a bit grubby and I thought, yep, there's a job here.

I was born in Moss Side and now I live in Hulme. I lived here for 15 years, left in 1990 and came back three years ago. I like it. I moved from Hulme to Moss Side and I didn't like that much; then I moved to Chorlton and that was even worse! I didn't like the atmosphere – I don't know if it was racist or whatever but I just didn't like it. So I moved back here 'cause I felt comfortable here.

When I first joined the Zion something had happened in my life. When I came and saw what was happening here, how it functioned, I thought, that's a good place to work. People have their ups and downs but it's still a nice place. I'll be here till probably my pension – so they'll have to get me the gold watch! I'm the Head Cleaner now and sometimes I help out at reception, but I wouldn't like to do reception all the time. I have to be moving. You know in the job description where it says "any other duties"?

Well, I believe in any other duty!





It was a really exciting time, with different local initiatives pulling together. What we needed was something to act as a catalyst for all those projects. I grabbed the opportunity of some funding through the Urban Programme and a few of us got together to develop what were the beginnings of the Zion – and look what's happened since then. Libby Graham

Left: the first Zion Centre
 Right: the new Zion Community Resource under construction during 2000



SUDDENLY IT ALL KICKED IN AND STARTED HAPPENING

Fay Selvan

The council's attempt to redevelop Hulme before City Challenge was the Hulme Project, where I got a job as Tenant Liaison Officer. I was living in Hulme and a member of the Tenants' Association, but up until that point I hadn't been particularly interested in changing Hulme. That job got me going. I was quite lucky because the person who was running the project used to dump anyone who was awkward on me, saying, "Fay, you go and sort them out!"

One of those awkward people was Genni, who later set up DASH (Drug Advice and Support in Hulme). She was an ex-heroin user herself and her son had started using heroin; she wanted to set up some support services for drug users and their families, so she had come and harassed my boss, who'd sent me to deal with her. So that was how I got involved supporting Genni in trying to set up DASH.

It's a bit hard to imagine now, because needle exchanges and harm-reduction is how it all is

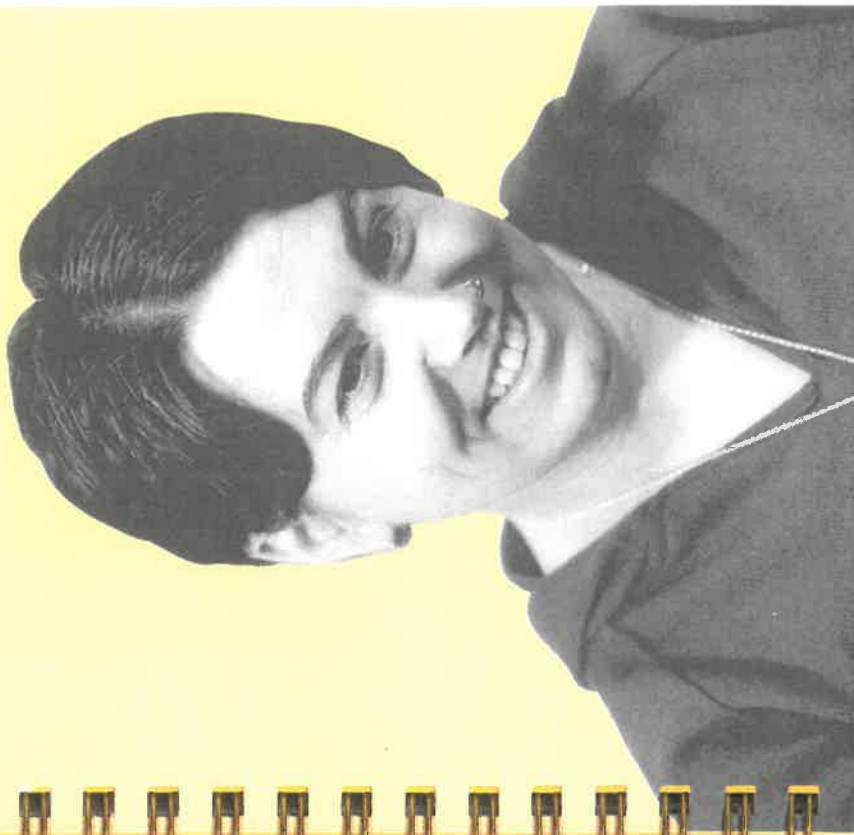
these days, but about thirteen or fourteen years ago, there was only one needle exchange in Manchester and it was all very hush-hush and controversial in the basement of the Town Hall. So to try to break into that was quite difficult.

We were lucky: I'd gone to a party one night and bumped into the only out-reach worker for sex-workers in town. We got talking about it all, and she actually had a store of sharps boxes, needles and condoms back at her house. She invited me round and I went back to her house, filled my car with stuff and went banging on Genni's door. It must have been about midnight. It was really exciting.

Suddenly it all kicked in and started happening: they got a needle exchange in Gort Walk, just round the back here, and then we managed to do some adaptations in the Zion and move it in there. They'd got a year's licence for the building because the City Council had nothing else planned for it. The idea came up of

developing a community centre which would be about health, as in well-being rather than illness, and that's when the Zion really got born. When they got hold of seventeen grand slippage money to employ a co-ordinator, I went for it and got the job – though I didn't think I would.

It's hard to imagine now, because needle exchanges and harm-reduction is how it all is these days, but about thirteen or fourteen years ago, there was only one needle exchange in Manchester and it was all very hush-hush and controversial in the basement of the Town Hall. So to try to break into that was quite difficult.



When I think about this area ten years ago, there was always so much going on. I used to belong to the Hulme Outdoor Pursuits Club: at least once a month we'd go off in the minibus to the Lakes, the Peaks, or North Wales to walk. It was run at the Old Bank Community Centre, which was on Clopton Walk. There used to be a printing and arts shop there and they used to produce a newsletter, The Octopus. There were the carnivals and the playschemes and you just can't imagine how active the place was. The District Centre, where the shops were, was pretty grim to look at but you always met someone you knew. And the laundrette was a hive of activity.

What happened to that vibrancy? The housing was bulldozed, people were moving around, individuals died, and there came about a real weariness amongst people, who were putting a lot of energy in during the redevelopment. It took a hell of a lot out of everyone in terms of

involvement. There were a lot of big campaigns, like the one around Birley, the adult education centre, when it was shut. It had been one of many places for social contact. Over a period of about 15 years we saw the systematic closing down of each one of those. It's devastating, really, when you think of it.

When I remember what it was like, I think that's what we've got to make happen again. I don't think it's enough to complain about how things have been done: it's our responsibility now to do something about it. In fact, I see our new building, and the Kath Locke, and the companies we're setting up, as a real opportunity to redress that imbalance.

CHAOS, VITALITY, THE

Ian Mello Baron

For me it all started one cold, bright day in November 1991, when I walked into the old Zion Centre and met a young man called Paul – a black guy who used to do voluntary work in Hulme – wearing glasses, sitting on reception in a horrible shell suit with his feet on the desk, reading a paper. It looked like a rather filthy and tiny community centre. Coming from a firm of accountants and not knowing what charity or community work was, I was quite shocked. My father had given me a lift there and was waiting out in the car; I'd gone in to ask for an application form for a job at the African Caribbean Mental Health Project, which was based upstairs in the centre. This man kept me waiting for about twenty minutes, standing there like a lemon, not knowing what to do. I'd said, "excuse me," "good morning" and "can you help me?" and he'd just said "uh, uh, over there."

So I just stood there for ages and eventually someone passed from the African Caribbean Mental Health Project and went up and got me

SIEGE MENTALITY... FANTASTIC MEMORIES

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the pack. A month later I started working there. So my first recollection is of this rather tatty, rundown centre. I didn't know what was going on in there but it looked as if it was committed.

As I arrived, Fay Selvan was just starting as Centre Co-ordinator. She had a spark to her and an honesty as well. I thought, and pulled people together very well in those early days. I just felt that it was the type of place that was a sanctuary at the time. A host of people – including myself – had a huge number of needs. I was finding my own identity as a black person. The Zion Centre gave me shelter and respect and it made me feel ordinary, because everybody else there was way more weird than I was. All manner of people with all manner of interests and hobbies were going to that place in those days.

I remember showing up there at ten to nine one morning and no buggar arriving until quarter to ten to open the place up, me just sitting on the step feeling angry but then realising there're more important things in life. Things like that

used to amuse me when I first started, coming from a private, professional background. Alan at the centre used to cook me meals. He used to do a wicked *coq au vin* and had some lovely

Chateau Margot to go with it. We used to sit in the music hall, where the philharmonic orchestra practiced. We would put a table and two chairs in there, play amazingly loud classical music and have some bizarre, posh, very white, middle-class, English meal on our lunch hour.

It was a wonderfully absurd and bizarre ritual but it was also completely releasing. I'll bet Fay doesn't know about it. It all started when I went down to ask about keeping the building open at night, and he was quietly playing some Verdi. I told him I was interested in classical music. I guess he thought an urban black guy like me couldn't possibly know anything about classical music, so he was manvelling at my knowledge – particularly my knowledge of Puccini. He went to this specialist shop off George Street and actually bought recordings of those operas, and said

come at one o'clock and I'll cook something. I thought it would be fish fingers. It was wonderful – I think it was *chicken chasseur* the first time.

Fantastic memories. Chaos, energy, vitality and the siege mentality. I think the good thing about it in those days was that people were allowed to be what they wanted to be and didn't have to conform. I just remember all sorts of people turning up in crisis, in really dire situations, and the feeling of being able to assist them.

Eventually I moved to a new job at the Health Authority, but I've never lost contact with the Zion. Around 1997, I helped negotiate the contract for the Zion to manage the Kath Locke Centre.

Overseeing the commissioning of the building was a difficult and unprecedented piece of work for the Health Authority, which had to create new rules to make it all happen. But I think *diverse resources* has shown just how effective the voluntary sector can be at engaging local people in primary care. Over 35,000 people go to the Kath Locke Centre each year: it's a huge success story.

Anna Akhtar

I've always had a bit of a chip on my shoulder about community work in this area. It's only my experience, but it always seemed like white, middle-class workers came into Hulme, used it as a stepping stone to go elsewhere and didn't really develop any skills amongst the community's own activists. Twenty years ago there was no empowerment – local people were involved, but nobody got anything from it in terms of personal development. I was born in Hulme in 1960, when it was all back-to-back houses, dead close together. There was a very strong sense of community – people helped each other out.

My mum, Maureen Mahn, was a local activist. There were a lot of strong, female activists who put a lot of time and effort into what we have here now. About 11 years ago, mum, Genni Flynn (who set up DASH), and a group of other people recognised that there was a need for a space for local people and that things could be developed around health and stuff like that – and they occupied the old Zion Centre. They used to say to me, get involved in this or get involved in that and I often said no, because I didn't want to do work someone else was getting paid for. What could I get? Qualifications? Training? No. I didn't like doing stuff voluntarily because I saw

what it was doing to mum and Genni, the stress that it caused them.

I work on reception at the Zion now, and I also do development work, running the Women's Group, but when I first came to the Zion I came as a cleaner. My mum was ill and they said she only had two years to live. I needed to be close to her, and someone said there were jobs going at the Zion. I was working in town. My friend Linda had seen an ad in the paper shop for two cleaners. So there I was, walking into the Zion – I'd never been in because of what I'd experienced through my mum – thinking God, here you go, you know... To walk through that door asking for a cleaning job was a real pisser! But it just demonstrated what I'd been saying. Because although I'd been involved in some community stuff, I'd never got any skills. There'd been no training.

I got that cleaning job five years ago. I came two hours a week. At that time I decided I wanted to do a nail course. They wanted us to do the NVQ in cleaning and I said no. It's two years! In three I could be a nurse, in five I could be a doctor and in seven I could be an architect! So I went and did a beauty therapy course, paid for by the Zion. I don't think they argued at that time because I was so bolshy! But then while I was

doing it, I realised it was really bourgeois stuff, you know: the girls that were training wanted to work in Kendals. I was wondering how else I could use the course. And that's when the community stuff started to come back again. So then when they were all discussing which salons they were going to work in, I thought, I'm going to take this back to the Zion, I'm going to work with people who are suffering from depression or have mental health problems. If you're depressed, your self-esteem is right down. I started doing some work for DASH, with drug-using women, women in rehab... you know how much better it makes you feel when you have a facial. Just being touched: that basic human contact tells you that you're nice, clean, worthwhile.

Then I took over the Women's Group about three months ago. That took a lot of confidence,

because although I was building up other people's confidence, mine was really low. It's a really big thing because I feel like I've been given the space to make my own mistakes. I've never done this kind of thing before. I feel really, really positive. I don't think I've made any mistakes yet and even if I do, they always say it's not a blaming

WOMEN



organisation. I think it's the best thing I've done. We've got Sue, who's doing massage. We've got Rebecca, who's doing creative writing. She just came as one of the women and then we found out through conversation she had all these skills, so we got her doing writing and poetry. Then there's Jenny, who set up the women's art drop-in. I do the beauty unless I'm really pissed off in which case I don't do anything, because I feel if you're not feeling good, you can't give anything good back. What makes me feel good is seeing growth in somebody else and knowing that I've just seen a little bit of something and I've pulled it out in them. It's theirs, not mine, but just showing them it's there can give me the biggest buzz

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WOMEN AT VOICES AND CHOICES

zion women's group

Sue Fairweather

I'm in fourth year at Holistic College. I do Advanced Aromatherapy now, and before that I was doing Swedish Massage. I've been taken on here as a volunteer. *Voices and Choices* is a chance for mums and women to come down and be pampered for a couple of hours. You never take time out for that – most of the women that I treat have never had a massage before and would never have even contemplated having one, but they find it really beneficial. I first came down to the Zion when I was referred by my doctor, because I was suffering from anxiety and depression. I heard there were lots of different groups and organisations to help. And I got involved in HARP (Hulme Action Resource Project), working in the HARP Community Café's kitchens to get experience and get back into things, back into the real world, dealing with the public and that. And it was really, really good – hard work, but good. I was going to Holistic College while I was doing that, and I was headhunted to start doing therapy work on different projects in the Zion. I've been volunteering at the Women's Group for six months now. A lot of people think it's mad, working for nothing, but it's invaluable experience, especially if you've been suffering with your mental health. It's quite nerve-wracking

at first but the confidence you get is just essential really. I've lived in Hulme for seven years now. It's changed a lot, but it all seems to be coming back together again. There are some community garden projects starting up, like Leaf Street on the Redbricks estate. I do my own garden. Centries like the Zion are essential in this area. Just for people to come and meet up with people with other mental health problems... because you don't realise you're not on your own suffering from anxiety. There are a lot of people out there, just normal people who are dead nice, unfortunately suffering from an illness. Usually, out of your set of friends, there's nobody else who has suffered, so they find it hard to relate. Ten years ago I was teaching meditation – I used to teach that all over the country. I was training at the same time, but I got very tired. Then I became ill, so I had to stop doing it. That's why I went into massage and aromatherapy four years ago: I wanted to find a job that was similar to what I was doing before – you know, helping people, helping them relax and find themselves.

Voices and Choices, it's a chance for mums and women to come down and be pampered for a couple of hours. You never take time out for that – most of the women that I treat have never had a massage before and would never have even contemplated having one, but they find it really beneficial.

Rebecca Mott

About a year ago I went to HARP (Hulme Action Resource Project) for advice on Disability Allowance and then got roped into everything else at the Zion! I've been involved in the Women's Group for about six weeks. I've been doing poetry with the other women, reading some and writing some. As relaxation, nothing heavy, I've been writing for years.

I first came round here about twelve years ago. I quite like it – it's got more of a community feel than most of Manchester has. I don't particularly like Hulme as a place; I think it's quite ugly really! But then I tend to like people rather than places.

This Women's Group isn't just a drop-in where people smoke and talk – it's got things for people to do. A lot of it builds up self-esteem and I think you can see the changes in people. And people wouldn't come if it was boring! Everybody helps everyone and the people who come along are as dedicated to the group as the facilitators.



I REALLY LIKED IT WHEN I FIRST
CAME TO THE ZION – YOU DIDN'T
KNOW WHO WAS THE CLEANER
AND WHO WAS THE BOSS!

Karen Welsh

I'm from Clayton in north-east Manchester. I moved over to south Manchester because my daughter was young and I wanted to bring her up in a more mixed environment. Things seemed more vibrant and exciting over this side. Clayton is quite deprived: a bit depressing and not very progressive. When I looked at Hulme it seemed there was lots going on, lots to get involved in, and that's what was lacking in Clayton. All my family lived there and I was brought up there: I wanted something different.

Around 1995, I didn't really know what to do with myself. I came to the Zion very nervous, and started volunteering on reception. I think they saw some potential in me: I was given quite a few opportunities to grow and that's what happened. I got involved with the Women's Group and ran that for a number of years, and things progressed from there. I developed more skills and had lots of support and encouragement from great people. I really liked it when I first come to the Zion – you didn't know who was the cleaner and who was the boss! It didn't matter. It wasn't like, "oh, you're just a working-class woman from Clayton, what can you give us?" I think I was seen for the skills I did have and the ones I could develop. I'm Centre Manager now. All the way along I've always been nervous. It's been Fay who's really pushed me and I had to borrow her belief until I got the confidence to believe in myself, really. That's how it's all happened.

Becoming aware that there're no limits to where self-belief and potential can take you has probably been the most important thing that's ever happened to me.

IT'S ABOUT LETTING PEOPLE DO WHAT THEY NEED TO DO

Consider my background – an Asian gay man with little experience of management or of the voluntary sector – I was given an enormous opportunity

Kirit Patel

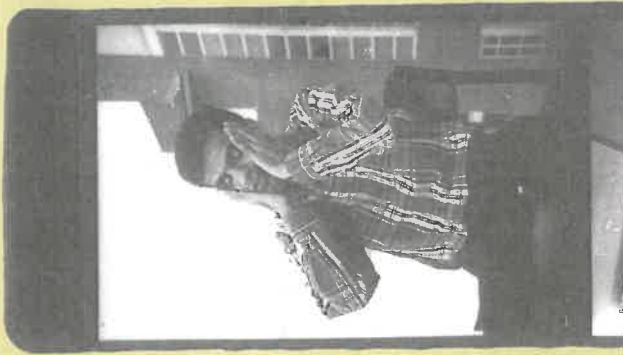
Ten years ago I was working for a high-street bank in East London. It was a real lesson in what not to work for – I hated it! I was made redundant in 1992 and that really gave me the opportunity to think about what I wanted to do, because until then I suppose I'd planned everything around working in a bank. So I took a chance when a course came up: I started doing a degree in Technology and Spanish, and working on a voluntary sector project counselling gay men. I'd never used a computer before I started the degree course but it gave me the skills.

After I finished the course I wanted to move, because I'd met my partner and he was from Manchester. So in September 1996 I applied for a job as receptionist/administrator for Kath Locke Centre, 25 hours a week. They were looking for five of them, so I felt very confident.

I got the job and came to Kath Locke. It was very different, getting used to the new city,

getting used to the accent, getting used to the way of working – and getting used to working in a multi-agency building. I actually thought that all the services in the building were related in some way to the organisation. How did it all fit together?!

Apart from the odd holiday and a year in Spain as part of my degree course, my move to Manchester has been my first move out of London. All my friends said I wouldn't like it, but I was moving – I'd given up my flat and everything. It was a real challenge in a way. First we lived in Droylsden, then Longsight, and finally Hulme. I find it quite a friendly area – people say hello and that's very rare in London. I bump into people I know from the Kath Locke Centre and the Zion around the area, and that's really nice. I don't think it's quite as cosmopolitan as I would like: I lived in Haringay in London and that was very vibrant. That's what I miss of London, the



vibrancy, and the choice you have. I think there are limited things you can do in Hulme and Manchester itself and that's the downside of being here. But on the upside there's much more ease. Nothing is such a stress, and your money goes much further.

I didn't have it in mind to be a reception administrator for five years. I was very upfront from the beginning with Dawn, my line manager, about wanting to try different things, and I was supported in that. So I tried out working on the advice project one day a week. I did a course on employment rights and a Certificate in Counselling Skills, all of which helped me think about what I wanted to do. Then an Assistant Manager post was created at the Kath Locke Centre, and I went for it and got it.

I don't think everyone on the interview panel was convinced I had the necessary skills to do the job, but enough thought I had the

potential. I was given an enormous opportunity – consider my background – an Asian gay man with little experience of management or of the voluntary sector.

While doing the job I was supported massively not only by the management but by the team at Kath Locke. But I think that's what this organisation is about: it's not about holding on to people, it's about letting people do what they need to do, enabling them to progress onto other things.

I went on to become Centre Manager at the Kath Locke, and have just moved to take up the post of Services Manager at BHA (Black Health Agency, based in the Zion Community Resource).

I'm manager of the core services that BHA provides, currently around sexual health but in the process of broadening out. So there's no centre to manage anymore; it's a different kind of very exciting challenge.

KATH LOCKE CENTRE



Above: inside the Kath Locke Centre
Right: Kath Locke Centre's distinctive street corner outlook



10:17

I'D NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE HULME'S COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Fola Agbalaya

The Zion Centre was just a dusty building in the Crescents when I first got involved. It was 1991 and I'd just finished my degree. I was bored and down, doing nothing, absolutely nothing, feeling a big anti-climax. I knew I didn't want to be a teacher or a social worker but I didn't know what I did want to do. I didn't want to go back to London; I didn't have any money. I was floating. I'd just got to know Fay – who was the Zion Centre Co-ordinator – through a friend, and she suggested I go to the Zion's art group (ZAP), just for something to do. Fay's been quite pivotal: she's watched me grow up! I went to ZAP and met a few people. It was friendly and relaxed, run by a woman called Alison who was really encouraging. So that's how it started, just going drawing. Then Fay said she was hoping to do a crèche, a one-off for the summer holidays, and she asked if I wanted to volunteer for it. I said why not, and a few other people I'd seen milling

around got involved, too. There were four of us and Fay mucked in. We had no funding – or very little – and we took the kids to the park and on little trips. We decided to keep the crèche going and to try to make some money out of it as part of the provision at the centre. It was obviously needed. So that was how the Aisha Childcare Project started up. Then Fay said, well, it needs to be represented on the management committee – do you want to do it? Well, no-one else did! So I went on the management committee and really enjoyed it – I guess when I was a student I'd done stuff like that. I think after two years I was Vice-Chair for a year and then I became Chair in 1993 for a couple of years. Eventually we got the crèche workers trained up. I didn't train but I encouraged the training to be put in.

I grew up around Tooting in London and left when I was 19 to be a student. I've never gone back to live there, so my adult life has been in

Manchester, really. When I first came to Hulme I was amazed that there were these horrible, horrible houses and such a strong community spirit. It wasn't the houses that were a shock to me because we had horrible housing in Tooting, too. I mean, we lived in a council flat until I was 16, and it wasn't nice. But there wasn't anything like what I saw in Hulme in terms of the community's spirit. Despite the area the people still managed to pull together. I used to see people who were doing things for the community – and not just hippies, not middle-class people – it was working-class people. That was what amazed me, really.

And Hulme seemed to have this pull – people who cared about doing things just seemed to move here. It wasn't always fantastic but on the whole people were concerned about where they lived and what would happen. I think that's changing now, and people are not so concerned



Aisha Childcaring: it all started as a one-off for the summer in 1991

Elaine Thompson

I've worked for *diverse resources* for about six years on and off. I've gained qualifications in childcare here which have opened new doors for me. I only work in Hulme now, but I lived round here for a good ten years when I was growing up. Still when I walk around I meet certain people I've just known forever, despite the redevelopment of the area.

The redevelopment has offered job opportunities and I like seeing people I grew up with doing the jobs. But I miss somewhere nice for entertainment – just a bar or something cultural. I do see Hulme as a cultural area and I think we're losing that.

If I were to have a different role in this organisation and community, I think it would have to be a role that develops positive awareness for mothers and children with disabilities. There is a big gap there. My son Elliott has disabilities and there are a lot of children around with disabilities like his. Parents need support and self-help services.



any more. The redevelopment was a big turning point, when people were dispersed widely. Now there's all this new private housing and a transient population. There has to be decent housing alongside all the other things that make people want to live in an area, and I don't think there're enough of those other things at the moment. We need shops that cater to all sorts of people, for all sorts of needs. I think the Hulme Garden Centre's a really good idea. It's offering diversity. I must admit I like the idea of a place looking nice.

At the moment I'm working as Training Officer for Salford City Council, giving management training to the council's teams, but I'm still connected with *diverse resources* through *Echo*, a very new trading arm offering training and consultancy. The idea is to make some money for *diverse resources*, providing training with the organisation's ethos.



Right: Elaine with her son, Elliott



PEOPLE JUST WANT TO BE FREE TO TALK

Mark Dixon

I came here on the New Deal, which had its ups and downs. Sometimes I just felt like a general dogbody. I'd just moved to Manchester from Preston and actually you have to have been unemployed for six months to get on the New Deal, but I lied! I came along to the Zion for an interview, had a very informal chat. That was in 1999. I thought it was a bit flowery at first, that it was all tree-huggers and crystals! But it turned out to be a very comfortable, relaxing place to work.

I'm from Macclesfield but I moved to Preston to be a student. I was going to do a drama course but I had to do an Access course first which I just got really bored with, so I didn't start drama. I'd kind of realised that I didn't want to go into drama, anyway. I'd done it at college and really enjoyed it, but I just found it a bit too competitive. When I first moved to Preston we just kind of got landed in a flat in the Asian quarter and at first it was very daunting. I was wondering with the racial thing how we'd fit in, in the middle of this

community, and not just be seen as white students? It worked out really fine. Sometimes I wished I'd stayed there, really. But then I moved to Edinburgh – until I ran out of money.

After my New Deal placement finished I got a job at the Zion, part-time, doing reception and admin. Since then I've started facilitating the Gay Men's Evening. It's a self-help group, but it's more a social group that supports itself, really. There's a lot of discussion. We used to have a masseur as well. Sometimes we have a structure, but other times people just want to be free to talk about what they want to talk about. Our group is going to be a contact for hate crimes – so if anyone's got anything to report they can come here instead of going to the police.

Ten years ago, in 1991 when the Zion first set up, I was still at school, aged about 14, and probably fearing for my life, because I was terribly bullied at school. I was lost in Prisoner Cell Block H – that was my escape.

IN THE GAY
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GROUP YOU
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SAILING
ALONE

Paul Hope

Paul Hope

I lost a really good friend of mine in February last year, and just before that I'd lost my dad, so I needed to find some people to be with, to share some experiences. I'd heard about the Zion Centre, that it was really good for support on anything to do with mental health issues. So I started coming to the Gay Men's Group last February. It's been absolutely tremendous for me and now I attend other groups, too, which have given me a lot more confidence than I've had in years, definitely.

The Gay Men's Group has just got a very friendly atmosphere. People get together and talk about issues or just chat. There're more members now and the group has really improved a lot. We usually go for a quick drink in Manchester after the session to round the evening off. I've met a lot of good friends in there, life-long friends, I hope. You find out that you're not in a boat sailing alone.

THE SUGAR GROUP



Well I think I just walked right in! This is a place where I usually pass and I was told that they were arranging the then not-named Sugar Group. So I got to talking to Dorothy and Sandra about what we could do for people suffering from diabetes. This is what's happening with our bodies. When you go to the doctors they give you tablets, but this group we've formed allows us to discuss and seek help for situations. That's how it happened. I invited people, then each one brought one and here we all are.

When I was first diagnosed I was frightened. I was devastated, thinking to myself, what's going to happen to me now? So the Sugar Group was a blessing. We can get together, sit here and share confidences.

I knew quite a lot of the Sugar Group members from the West Indies. We all came over around the same time. Then we lost touch and everyone went their way and settled. I am now seeing some of them again so it's great – like a reunion.

I look forward to these two hours all week. We thought we were locked at home on our own and it can be a lonely life when you live alone. Now I meet so many people of various nationalities and backgrounds that I have learned to adjust myself to meet people. We are trying to get the community more involved in things. Last year we had a party and we're going to try to get people gardening at the new Zion Centre, and we're thinking of putting a magazine together.

I INVITED PEOPLE, THEN EACH ONE BROUGHT ONE.....

.....AND HERE WE ALL ARE!

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COME FULL CIRCLE

Faye Macrony

I qualified as a midwife in 1982 at St Mary's Hospital in Manchester, and I returned there to work regular midwifery shifts in 1992. By that time I had a real interest in women's issues. I had left midwifery in 1989, fed up, feeling that I'd done as much as I wanted to within the field, sick to death of fighting for women's rights, never mind delivering babies. So I did a degree in psychology and the only reason I went back to St Mary's in '92 was because I owed so much money from my degree and needed a job quickly.

In the years I'd been away from St Mary's, they hadn't done anything about the increasing number of women who were disclosing drug or alcohol use. Plus, intoxicated, dishevelled women were turning up established in labour and nobody had ever heard of them, so of course all hell broke loose. I found myself getting involved voluntarily with MASH (Manchester Action on Street Health), giving advice to the prostitutes in the red light

district. MASH was based at the Zion at that time, and I got involved with the Zion at their request when they were looking, informally, at why women might not be attending for ante-natal care – I think in response, partly, to a child who had died from ingesting methadone having got its hands on its mother's prescription. I did a retrospective audit of fifty sets of notes to see what kind of care women received in maternity services, and a lot of the stuff I pulled out really made me think, *why should they turn up?* They were obviously treated very badly. A steering group was then formed to share ideas, and over the next couple of years we started putting in bids to the Health Authority for funding for a specialist post, because it was becoming increasingly apparent that there was a need for a worker who straddled the drug and maternity services.

At about the same time, some of the prostitute women I was working with through

MASH would ring me up at St Mary's for confidential advice around their drug use. So a job was sort of growing of its own accord anyway. Funding was found eventually, in 1995, for a Drug Liaison Midwife; I wrote my own job description and was seconded into the post. I'm jointly employed by Manchester Drug Services and Central Manchester Healthcare Trust. I've never had an office or anything of my own: I've been working between Manchester Drug Services and St Mary's and it has just grown and grown and grown. So I've really created my job myself. I was able to include everything I was doing in the voluntary sector in my brief. I really pick and choose exactly what I do, which is lovely – I think the philosophy that drives me is that everyone is entitled to health care no matter what their circumstances, and even if they'll never access it. Now, it's unlikely that a woman no-one's ever heard of will turn up at St Mary's in labour: we

hear about them right at the beginning because I pick them up at street level through all the other agencies, and there's a package of care ready for them even if no-one's ever met them.

Women weren't turning up to maternity services only because they were treated badly, though. They're not avoiding, a lot of drug-using women: it's just not high on their list of priorities. So in some ways, the pregnancy is way down on my list of priorities, too. Everything else that's going on in their difficult lives takes priority over a baby that's safe *in utero*. It makes sense. A lot of my role is assessing the complexities of the impact of a woman's drug use, looking at what may have led her into drug use and what that might mean for her potential parenting abilities. Many women are taking the drugs because it makes their distressing lives more bearable. So my brief has grown into something huge – I have up to 200 women notified to me every year.

Actually, last November it all crashed in on me: the caseload was unmanageable. We're now looking at trying to develop a service rather than a one-woman band. A post to run it has been created, partly in collaboration with *diverse resources*, and I've just taken up that post. Based at the new Zion, I've come full circle, back to the place where my job was envisioned in the first place. The Zion has always been my mentor place, and Fay, with her vision that other people don't want to look at on occasions, has always been supportive.

The last time I delivered a baby was four years ago. Apart from my own, that is, three years ago. All women deliver their own babies, really. It was very helpful being a midwife because the birth didn't hold any surprises. I'd never had a baby so I didn't know what I wanted, just what I hoped. I wanted to keep an open mind because I didn't really know what it would be like -- I might have

wanted to be hit on the head with a hammer. Actually the labour did match things I'd tried to describe to women in labour before. Now I have a three year old and I've loved it. I've found it all a bit of a breeze, but then I waited until I was a lot older to have a baby and I've done all the things I've wanted to do, in a sense.



DIVERSE RESOURCES AND I HAVE KIND OF GROWN TOGETHER

Fay Selvan

I became Chief Executive in 1997. It's a horrible story, really, how I came into this job. It was one of the Management Committee's great battles and it nearly destroyed the organisation. I think a lot of the people on the committee didn't really want to manage another building, and when we got the contract for the Kath Locke Centre it was a bit of a shock. There was then a big dispute about how we would structure the management and take it forward. I suppose I felt really strongly that I should have the opportunity to take on the Chief Executive role. I wanted the job and felt that I should get it automatically, as did a proportion of the people on the Committee. Others, however, felt we should advertise and interview for it. That was quite a turning point for the organisation: having that argument then was really important to us as it made us scrutinise all our ideas on staff development. But it was positive in the end

because the debate around my role after we got the Kath Locke contract helped us come up with the ethos we have now around recruitment, personnel and development, which is to appreciate the people we've already got and see what opportunities we can give them to do something really good.

I think we've also got to be able to support everybody to take time out to study and think: it will make us ten times stronger. When I first became CEO, I needed some help to think about working in different ways, about different kinds of organisations, and I started doing an MSc in Strategic Leadership. Having that time to read and reflect was brilliant: you can so often get lost in the detail.

diverse resources and I have kind of grown together. I always think I am one of the luckiest people, because so few people get an opportunity to build their own organisation.

WE HAVE TO LOSE THE BEGGING-BOWL MENTALITY AND START MAKING OUR OWN MONEY SO THAT WE ARE IN A POSITION TO FUND LOCAL PROJECTS

THERAPEUTIC SERVICES



To be able to say what kind of culture you want to work in, what kind of things you want to encourage and how you want people to try to treat each other is fantastic.

I suppose we're just terribly cocky – we come from a confidence where we know we've delivered everything we've done to a very high standard, and people out there know that. We do have the best teams. I went to the USA with *Business in the Community* three years ago to look at successful community projects there. I realised we needed to take more control: to lose the begging-bowl mentality. Now we're going to start making our own money so that we are in a position to fund local projects ourselves – not beg other people to!

IT'S FANTASTIC TO BE ABLE TO OFFER THESE SERVICES

Sue Pollitt

I started volunteering a few years ago, offering massage at the Zion. Everyone said it would only be taken up by white, middle-class women, but in fact it started to be used by a great range of people from different places and backgrounds. Now we offer the service to people with mental health needs who use our centres,

and we have set up a city-wide counselling service and started up some homeopathy, too. I think it's fantastic that we are able to offer a whole range of complementary therapies to people who wouldn't normally be able to get hold of them.

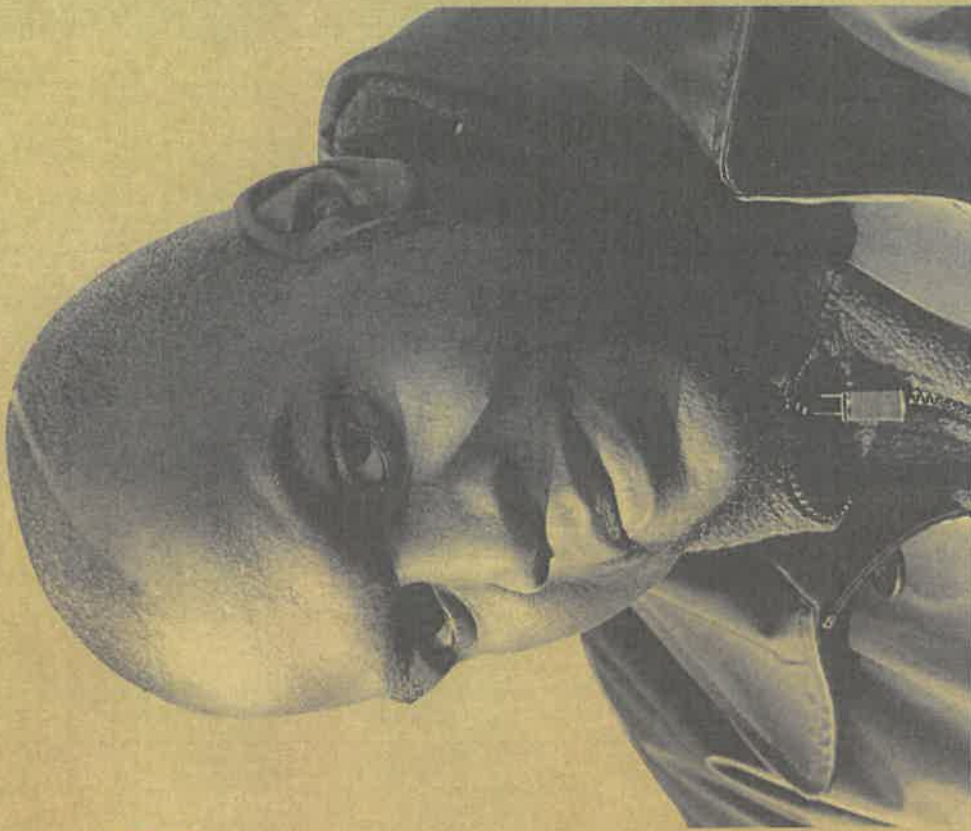
A BIT OF SPACE TO WORK

Sefton Simpson

I'm working on a lot of different things for *diverse resources* at the moment – I do reception at the Kath Locke Centre, admin work for Therapeutic Services and now I'm working on the publicity and information for the relaunch of the organisation under its new name, *diverse resources*. Mainly I'm leading on organising the new website. We're allowed to be expressive and creative and it's feeling like an area I should be working in. It's really nice.

I just enjoy being given a bit of space to work – I work really well with it. I used to do customer services for a large telecommunications company and I was seeing that I was more and more unhappy daily. For some reason I'd come into the Kath Locke Centre, where I saw an advertisement for some vacancies. I filled in the application there and then.

I've always had a lot of friends, family and connections in Hulme. I used to have a recording studio here and a few years ago I organised a show, a talent show, at the NIA Centre – which was a lot of hassle but so much worth it. That's why I'm actually living here now, though I was brought up in Whalley Range.



SO DIFFERENT FROM ANYTHING I'D SEEN

Dawn Rivers

I came back to Hulme in 1997 to manage the Kath Locke Centre. I'd been working promoting healthy living in Birmingham and Cornwall and I'd heard about the Kath Locke and was very excited – it sounded so different from anything I'd seen elsewhere in the country. Sometimes you feel the spark of inspiration for a project inside yourself, and the determination to make it happen, but you don't always receive backing or support from your place of work – especially when the idea involves joint-working. Because of the experiences – both positive and negative – that I had had elsewhere, I could really see the potential for the Kath Locke to make things happen in an inclusive way.

It was the first time a major NHS contract had been awarded to a voluntary sector agency. For whatever rebellious reasons I've always wanted to push at boundaries and the idea of a voluntary sector agency running a health centre seemed to offer up a lot of freedom. Nobody was going to hold us back from shaping our vision. I was manager for three years, over which time the Kath Locke Centre changed from an idea into reality. Before we moved in we spent time building a shared vision and spirit amongst our team. We would be working in a complementary way with statutory services at the same time as being totally open to the needs of the communities around us. It was fantastic, creative work.

in Levenshulme and the general development of healthy living initiatives in Ardwick.

What I am most proud of, really, is the way that we, *diverse resources*, have listened and listened to people – especially those telling us what we're not delivering. That's how new services have been created – the Sugar Group is a good example. When it comes to health in this area, the experts are not always the professionals but the local communities, and we must always start by listening to and working with them.

Quite often, if people can just get together and talk and have a laugh, that brings a sense of belonging which can have an impact on health.

diverse resources supports risk-taking – we recognise that the answers aren't always out there and that we have to go through learning processes to find our own.

There is a lot of support for our way of working in other parts of Manchester now. In June last year, we were encouraged to go to Longsight to get involved with a group interested in setting up *Sure Start*, a scheme aimed at improving opportunities for families with children aged 0 – 4. I'm now involved in developing a new base in Longsight as a result. We've got a site near the market and we're doing well – it's very exciting. Within a year, we've been invited to be the lead *Sure Start* agency – we'll be working with parents and children, staff teams and community groups to help shape the services people really want. The communities around Longsight are very different – we have no blueprint for development. We've also been supporting Victoria Baths to be returned to community use, the setting up of a Health Forum

**RETURNING THE VICTORIA BATHS
THE AREA. DIVERSE RESOURCES IS
TRUST TO DO JUST THAT.**

GILL WRIGHT



**TO USE WILL BE A REAL PRIZE FOR
SUPPORTING THE VICTORIA BATHS**

IN CHARGE OF MY OWN DESTINY

Nicky Libbetter

I was on a counselling course at Greenheys down the road in Moss Side about five years ago and I was experiencing really bad panic attacks and agoraphobia – which I'd had for a couple of years. They came on while I was in the middle of doing a PhD and I had to give it up because I wasn't well at all. My life took this massive change from pharmaceutical research in neuroscience: I dumped the test-tubes and became more people-orientated. On the counselling course, I met this woman called Josie, who I believe was doing reception cover at the old Zion. She said I should go to the Zion, that she thought I could run a group or something. I had been thinking along the lines of running a support group anyway, because when I first started with panic attacks there was absolutely no help in Manchester and I thought it was ridiculous because loads of people have this problem. So I persuaded my partner Pete to come

My life took this massive change from pharmaceutical research in neuroscience: I dumped the test-tubes and became more people-orientated

along with me, and very soon after we'd talked to Fay, who was then centre manager, we decided to set up a group for people with all sorts of anxiety disorders. Around that time I was also volunteering for the National Phobics Society. So everything started coming together and I had a real life-change. That was 1995 when we started doing the Anxiety Group and it's still going now – it's got to be one of the longest-running self-help groups I know of. In 1998, I became manager and we took the department away from Therapeutic Services, which it used to be part of. Since then, well, we've just blossomed completely. It's really nice to be in charge of your own destiny: I never get told what to do, I'm just left to do it and just report back every now and again and it's a really good environment to work in. Especially when you're working with people with mental health problems – the last thing you need is to be controlled.

Because of my agoraphobia there are very few places I feel at home and the Zion Centre is the second place – I won't even go into town very often. I go back a long way with a lot of people and things have changed a lot since the early days. I was one of the core people from early on and we've seen massive changes. I think we went through a lot of teething problems when we took on the Kath Locke Centre in 1997, with the organisation trying to do a lot of things and learning some lessons. Nothing was done with bad intentions but a few things did go wrong and we lost a few good people along the way. I think one of my best achievements over the past ten years was having my daughter. I never, ever thought I could cope with being pregnant. It felt like I would be out of control. But I had a lot of support from a midwifery project – if it hadn't been for that I doubt I could have had Nathalia. With midwifery, the service is very patchy and if

Right: the joyous results of the KLC's pilot Midwifery Project



you have a mental health problem... well, it's stressful anyway, being pregnant, but if you suffer already with panic attacks and your hormones are going crazy... I had a really bad spell at around five months when I thought I wouldn't manage, but I got through it because I was on this project where I had two midwives and they were like friends, and they supported me through it. I was on this pilot project at the Kath Locke Centre for pregnant women who had mental health problems or who were drug users, where there was a really close relationship with the midwives. I saw them every week and even the labour was lovely – they came and got me from my house and drove me to hospital and it was all very, very nice. I had Nathalia in five hours with very little pain relief and was out of hospital three hours later – and in the Zion the next day.



GETTING A BIT OF BALANCE BACK



Andrew Stewart

In the early 90s I used to volunteer for Hulme Community Arts, which was in the middle of the Crescents before they were demolished. Community Arts did printing and photography and stuff, non-commercial work, for the community. I got to know a lot of local groups and campaigns simply because they'd come to Community Arts to get their posters done. You'd be in there and just see the groups coming in, read the stuff and see what was going on. Hulme had quite an articulate and gobby population. I used to do bits of photography for the Zion Centre, like if there was an open day. We took some pictures of the first Zion building as part of an exhibition about the area just as the redevelopment was starting. That would have been around 1992. It's funny what's happened with the redevelopment – there's still a bit of resentment in some ways, with people feeling they didn't have much control over it and that the

consultation work that went on was piecemeal and just, well, a nod at the process. I especially don't like the lack of green space we have round here now. It's all disappearing, being sold off to building contractors. I'm a development worker at the Hulme Garden Centre. I got it going with Geraldine and Pete a couple of years ago, hoping to get a bit of balance back. When we started work on this plot of land, people were a bit pissed off that we were fencing off another patch of green – it's right where they used to come with their dogs. Once we explained what we were doing, people were all right about it. *diverse resources* and Libby Graham, who does regeneration work, helped start it up. We thought it was a good project but we didn't really shout about it from the rooftops: they used to really push it to other people and say it was brilliant.

A lot of private housing has come with the redevelopment. I can see how it's good, in a way,

to mix private and social housing, but the trouble at the moment is that there isn't much mixing going on with the people who live in them. People who've bought houses round here maybe did it because it's close to town and cheaper than buying a loft apartment, but they don't go in the local pubs for whatever reason. One of the things about the garden centre is to try to get people mixing. We have such a wide range of people coming in – people who've just bought Bellway houses, people who've lived here for years, people who've moved back into the area and suddenly they've got a balcony, people who are starting to garden for the first time. We plan to get a demonstration garden together which we hope can be a social space where people can come and chill out. There doesn't have to be this big battle between the private and the public sector, but it's hard. Some nasty flats have been got rid of and some reasonable housing put in their place, but a lot of



HULME GARDEN CENTRE

the community side of things, the people side of things, has been left behind a bit. Maybe there's no money left for that kind of stuff but it's a bit disappointing really that regenerating the area and regenerating the community haven't gone hand in hand. It's back to local people and groups without any cash to rebuild the community.

I'm from Heywood. I first used to come round Manchester when I was about 18 or 19 and used to go out with the Hunt Saboteurs. We'd pick people up at Piccadilly Station and then go off up near Bury or down in Cheshire, wherever the hunt

was. A lot of the time the people coming from Hulme didn't turn up at Piccadilly, so we had to come down here, drag them out of bed and put them in the van half asleep. Later I moved in with a woman in Levenshulme, and then got a house in Rusholme with mice and cockroaches, and then got rehoused in Hulme. I moved into the flat in 1988 and I'm still there. It's weird — I thought it was just going to be for a few months.





10:36

Yvonne Prendergast

I've been working here for about a year, as Training Officer for *diverse resources*, based at the Zion. I suppose in some ways Huime reminds me of the area I was brought up in, in Birmingham – inner city Birmingham. It had a very bad reputation for violence. It was a mostly Pakistani, Black and Irish area. When I was growing up I had the feeling that people were very tolerant of the differences around them. You tried to live together and you didn't complain. I was there until I left home. I remember my sister going to university to do politics, and coming home outraged one day, saying "I don't believe it, we're studying us!" And they'd been studying our community, Small Heath, as a kind of negative specimen. Lots of people on her course weren't from Birmingham. She was so annoyed, just feeling like she was being studied. So that's really made me mindful,

I think, of other communities I've gone into and the way I talk about people – because none of us are items of study in any way – or we shouldn't be.

My mother was very pro-education. I think I was sure that I wasn't going to be another one going down the standard Small Heath path. It was a hard lesson I learnt as a child and I was really determined to have a choice. And I think people round here feel that, too. There are lots of survivors around here, which I love. People don't need anyone else's sympathy, they just need to be given a fair chance. Actually I think that's what *diverse resources* does. I don't think it's true to say that all of us can do whatever we want – structural things do count. If you come from a place like Huime you do have to do extra things to get yourself noticed and to be seen fairly. I mean, post-code discrimination is well-known now.

A very exciting and liberating time in my life was when I first started reading books about feminism and sociology. They made sense of what I was thinking and I had that really brilliant feeling that I was part of a wider world. I still love reading and learning. I used to work on women's rights for years, at the Law Centre in Salford. I learned masses, representing women in discrimination cases. I started off with maternity rights, but then gradually moved more towards cases of sexual harassment in employment. Some of the women I worked with were unbelievably strong, not putting up with stuff. I also worked with women who were experiencing domestic violence. I think they're often presented as passive victims but my interpretation is that they resist every day and are surviving every day. So it was a very satisfying job and I learned lots.



Darren Bates
at the Basic
Skills Group

The job I'm doing now involves developing a range of learning opportunities for people in this area – people who might not have had the chance to get much training – so that they can move onwards to whatever it is they want to do. For example, last year we ran a basic skills course which led to participants producing a brilliant newsletter together. I love the idea of finding creative and flexible ways for people to learn. But I think I don't ever do things I don't want to do, really. I need a job I'm committed to.

LEARNING BASIC SKILLS



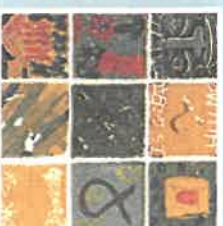
with thanks to...
everyone who agreed to be interviewed
for this publication, making time in
already busy days.

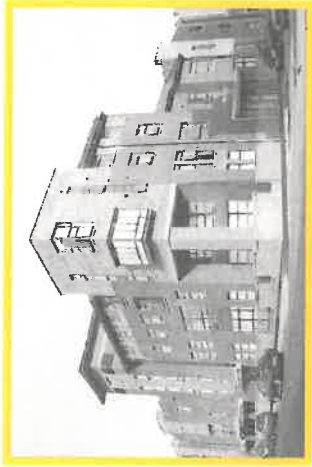
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Finally, thanks to Michael Clarke, our photographer, for his stunning photos.

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 **diverse resources**
rising to meet the needs of changing communities