

PRESS RELEASE



The Community Connectors Unifying Plymouth



As part of a wider programme, four new Community Connectors employed by Unify Plymouth have begun work to improve the integration of diverse communities. Following the many years of work by Transforming Plymouth Together & Plymouth Octopus Project, building relationships between citizens and between groups, the connectors are off to a flying start.

Community Connectors are allocated to neighbourhoods in and around Plymouth. Kay Nicholls, Community Connector for St Budeaux, explained “I try to be approachable and helpful in my role which involves having conversations with multiple people from a variety of diverse backgrounds. I see my job as building connections between those groups and individuals within communities. It is surprising what people know and through my travels and interactions with people, I am able to draw on their life experiences and knowledge. I share what I have learned with others who may not know what is available for them in their local area.”

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As part of their role, the Community Connectors will assist communities in Devonport, St Budeaux and Efford to develop inclusive local vision statements. Their local vision should encourage people from different backgrounds to work together to promote inclusion in their neighbourhood. Working side by side with residents and groups and supporting local events, the Community Connectors will provide a link back to the wider Unify Plymouth programme.

Unify Plymouth is a partnership between Plymouth City Council, Transforming Plymouth Together, Plymouth Hope, Diversity Business Incubator, Plymouth Argyle Community Trust, Plymouth Octopus Project, Devon and Cornwall Chinese Association, Our Plymouth and the University of Plymouth Law Clinic. The partnership is delivering a range of projects aimed at supporting the integration of new migrant communities.

'It Started with Jack' is a project run by Plymouth Argyle Community Trust highlighting the contribution to city life made by Jack Leslie. An outstanding player who scored 137 goals in a 14-season spell as inside left for Plymouth Argyle, Jack who was the only black professional player in England at the time was called up to play for England. However, the invitation to be a reserve for his country was withdrawn when the FA realised he was black.

Plymouth Argyle Community Trust's Dan Hart says, "Community connectors are a great idea because they can support the work that Unify Plymouth is doing to increase social harmony in local communities."

Another partner, DBI, whose main role within the Unify Plymouth partnership is to deliver a programme aimed at upskilling the next generation of city leaders, were recently involved in a city-wide programme to celebrate Black History Month. This programme was promoted by Plymouth City Bus and Plymouth College of Art and Design, and attended by the Lord Mayor.

Jabo Butera, MD of DBI welcomed the Community Connectors. "Community Connectors says it all. We need individuals who care and are passionate about giving a voice to local people so that decision makers know what is really needed in the community."

The University of Plymouth Law Clinic delivers the Public Legal Education Programme which provides legal workshops and resources to local communities. They hope to bring confidence and empowerment to people's everyday lives by providing attendees with a clearer understanding of their legal rights and responsibilities.

Clara Chan, Administrator for the Law Clinic, highlighted the importance of Community Connectors. 'Community connectors are incredibly valuable in allowing us to see the bigger picture; the links and gaps that might otherwise be missed. They have done a fantastic job of providing the Public Legal Education Programme with meaningful introductions and ideas.'

For more information about the Community Connectors, including details of how to get in touch, please visit

<https://transformingplymouthtogether.org.uk/initiatives/community-connectors>

Alternatively, please contact Chris Forster on 07710 096210 or by email at chris@transformingplymouthtogether.org.uk