

2007 Managers Annual Report

This has been my first full year with Leeds Bereavement Forum and it has been a busy and rewarding year with lots of developments and achievements and many plans for the future. We have made a lot of new links with other organisations and renewed existing partnerships and our mailing list has grown by fifty percent. Additionally our new website (www.lbforum.org.uk) and web-directory has allowed many more people to access information about Bereavement organisations, training, events and more.

Amongst the events in 2007 some of the highlights include the two conferences "**Grief that can't be spoken**" in March and **Living Loss** in October. These were attended by an average of 80 people at each, the speakers were excellent and the evaluations were very good.

Our **Special Interest Groups**, for professionals working with bereavement and loss issues, are flourishing with approximately fifteen members attending most meetings and many more receiving the minutes. The initial meetings of each group invited members to discuss ideas and thoughts about how they wished the groups to develop and we have organised subsequent groups accordingly.

The **Children and Young People's Group** has been particularly effective with each session being led by a different professional describing their own role in relation to bereavement and loss. In this way members learn more about resources available locally and are able to share ideas and good practise. From ideas discussed and gaps identified by this group we have developed a **training package 'Supporting Bereaved Children and Young People'** to be run initially in February 2008 in a collaboration between Leeds Bereavement Forum, St Gemma's and Wheatfields Hospices and Leeds CAMHS.

Another interesting development from this group has been the **work with Schools**. The group had identified that awareness and provision of bereavement support in schools varied enormously. Yet we know that many children are affected by bereavement and loss. Leeds Bereavement Forum agreed to send a letter to all Leeds schools asking about their bereavement policy and support and the response from schools has been good. I am now in the process of visiting a number of schools to help them develop their support systems and bereavement policies.

The **Older People's Group** has also met regularly and, again, each meeting is led and hosted by a different professional describing their own role and that of their organisation. This has been helpful in spreading awareness of local resources and in sharing good practise and identifying gaps.

November saw the first formal meeting of the **Suicide Group** with Mike Howarth and John Joyce from Educational Psychology introducing the '**Suicide Guidelines for Schools**' that they have put together. We also launched the new **Leeds leaflet on 'Support with suicide and sudden death'** from Information from Mental Health.

Leeds Bereavement Forum itself is also flourishing with lots of new **Trustees** including representatives from Leeds Primary Care Trust, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Leeds Partnership NHS Trust and the Voluntary sector. They bring new ideas, experience and energy to a committee which already has much experience and represents a wide range of local and national organisations. We are organising an *Away Day* in the New Year to share ideas and discuss and develop our Strategic Development Plan.

So, as you can see, there is plenty to keep us busy here at the Forum and lots of ideas to develop in the coming year. Linda and I are looking forward to another rewarding and interesting year.

Sue Watts
Manager

Website thanks to Jonathan Kendall
(johnathan.kendall@vitaminkdesign.com)