

A Brief about FAST

FAST was established in 1993, incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in 2001 and registered as a charity in 2003 to respond to the gap in services for BME residents of Manchester suffering from learning and/or physical disabilities. It runs 2 centres, one on Cheetham Hill High Street and the other in the centre of Longsight. FAST was set up by BME families who felt their needs, those of their families and the wider BME community were not being met. It provides facilities and activities designed to improve the conditions of life for BME residents affected by disability. These include recreation and leisure to improve social well-being, education and training to develop vocational skills towards improved employability, advocacy, advice and guidance around health and well-being and volunteering.

Development

Since 2003 FAST has developed as a Not-for-Profit Charity Organisation and Community Support Centre providing advice, learning, employability skills and supported activities within the local communities. It has delivered a range of employment related and community capacity building support programmes including European Social Fund (ESF), Learning Skills Council (LSC), Department for Work and Pension (DWP)/Job Centre plus (JCP) funded provisions.

Employment Focused

We have supported participants throughout the Greater Manchester areas with significant barriers to sustained employment. Working on projects such as: New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP), Community Task Force (CTF) for 18 – 24 year olds and a range of targeted interventions such as: Black Minority Ethnic (BME), Mental Health and Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) which consisted of paid placements for service users.

The Local Community

Having become a well-respected support agency in the area FAST has seen increased demand for its services from the wider community and a need to diversify both its offer and the disabilities it addresses. As such it has extended its provision to deliver confidence-building, language learning, understanding local services, socialising, ICT, employability, vocational skills and money management. Its remit has expanded to support an increased range of BME residents: people suffering poor mental health; victims of domestic abuse and trafficking; people at risk of poor health through poverty; people subjected to coercion and control; people caught in the poverty trap unable to take the first steps.

Trustees

FAST's Trustees, management team, workers and volunteers are active members of the local communities of Cheetham Hill and Longsight. As such they are in close contact with local needs working in local communities to bring the best out of many different cultures and backgrounds in order to educate, train and build confidence to make better communities and using our centres as a warm welcoming place for those who are disadvantaged to achieve their aims.