

May 2007

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) News

The regional ERDF Operational Programme is now with the European Commission and negotiations are underway. The Commission is raising issues about 'territorial cohesion' in the programme, i.e. does the programme benefit the whole region or are we relying on a trickle down effect. Yorkshire Forward and Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber are currently finalising proposals for governance and other implementation issues, in response to feedback from the Commission Desk Officer. The revised programme makes more coherent links between investing in businesses and innovation and reducing disadvantage as a result of the Forum's response to the consultation. The programme does not meet the continued need in the region for investment in social inclusion work, but given the narrow restrictions laid down at European and national level, the redrafted Operational programme offers a pragmatic way forward. For more information email Cath Joyce, Regional Forum European and Regeneration Officer, via email <mailto:cath.joyce@regionalforum.org.uk>. **See page 2 for European Social Fund news**



BME VCS Regional Panel seeking new members

The BME VCS Regional Panel is seeking to recruit six additional members. The Panel which works to empower the BME VCS across the region, is looking for six experienced and energetic team players to work with Panel colleagues to achieve the aims and objectives of the Panel. Applicants should have experience of working with BME VCS organisations and communities and be able to demonstrate strong analytical ability, high level communication and influencing skills and be able to work as part of a team. To apply, download an application pack from the BME website <http://www.bme.org.uk/content/jobs-and-tenders> or contact Rachael Kirk for an application pack on 0113 394 2300 or <mailto:rachael.kirk@regionalforum.org.uk>. For further information about the Panel contact Gopal Lama, Regional Forum BME Development Officer on 0113 394 2300 or <mailto:gopal.lama@regionalforum.org.uk>.



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Leadership in the VCS Conference

The Regional Forum and the Third Sector Leadership Centre are co-hosting a Leadership Conference on 25th June 2007 at the Octagon in Hull. The conference will explore issues surrounding VCS leadership using case studies and interactive workshops. Leadership development tools such as Peer Review and competencies for Local Strategic Partnership Representatives will be discussed. For further information contact John Harris, Workforce and Skills Manager, on 0113 394 2300 or <mailto:john.harris@regionalforum.org.uk>. Visit the events section of our website <http://www.regionalforum.org.uk> to download your booking form and view the programme for the day.



Offender Management Feedback

Mark Crowe, the Regional Forum Head of Development, has met with members of the Regional Offender Management (ROM) Team to give feedback he received from readers of 'Forum E News' about voluntary and community sector (VCS) experiences of delivering services with the prison and probation services. He highlighted concerns he had received about the unclear VCS engagement agenda and the consequences, to both offenders in the community and VCS organisations, of the commissioning processes which often provide short term and discontinuous funding. The ROM Team responded by showing interest in research into the impact of the commissioning process on the VCS provider market. They also made a commitment to communicate better with the sector about project opportunities and to develop ways of further involving the sector in service provision through the Regional Forum and other partners. This work is linked to the Forum Procurement Project.

Forthcoming Events

- **4th June 2007**
WYLDA AGM
 - **25th June 2007**
Leadership in the VCS conference
 - **11th July 2007**
Regional Forum Annual Policy Conference: Because We're Worth It – Promoting Equality and Valuing Diversity
 - **17th July 2007**
Commissioning of Mental Health Services and the VCS Conference
- Further details of all events listed and many more, can be found on our website: <http://www.regionalforum.org.uk> in the events section.

European Social Fund News

The national European Social Fund (ESF) Operational Programme was sent to the European Commission in March, the negotiations are nearly completed, so it should be formally adopted in September 2007. The Regional Skills Partnership established a Task and Finish group which has developed a regional ESF framework in line with guidance from the Department for Work and Pensions. The Regional Forum has a place on this group. The framework is out for consultation until the end of May. It is not yet available on the web, but if you email Tina Maisuria at the Learning and Skills Council <mailto:tina.maisuria@lsc.gov.uk> she will email the document and details of the online consultation process. For more information email Cath Joyce, European and Regeneration Officer, <mailto:cath.joyce@regionalforum.org.uk>

Procurement Project Update

Recent highlights of the Regional Forum Procurement Project include:

Employability Services: The Forum is continuing dialogue with Jobcentre Plus about how new contracts, such as Pathways to Work, can support vital voluntary and community sector (VCS) work. Job Centre Plus and the Department of Health are having discussions about work and health issues.

Children's Services: A conference about Third Sector Commissioning of Children's Services was held on 16th May 2007. The event was oversubscribed with a good range of speakers and delegates from both sectors.

Health: Good links have been made between the Strategic Health Authority and social enterprise networks. There is a half day regional conference at Leeds Town Hall on 17th July 2007 about the Commissioning of Mental Health Services and the VCS.

For further information about the Procurement Project contact Lesley Wood, <mailto:lesley.wood@regionalforum.org.uk>



Footsey 2007

The UK's biggest and best Social Enterprise Trade Fair, Footsey, is about to get even better. The event will be held again at York Race course on Thursday 18th October 2007. Last year's event attracted 100 exhibitors and over 600 delegates, even more are expected this year. The event is a great place for Social Enterprises to showcase what they offer to potential customers and like minded VCS organisations. Delegates have the chance to learn what Social Enterprises are really about. During the day there will be eight seminars for delegates to choose from – including favourites from last year such as Dragons Den and Social Enterprise case studies and new sessions like 'How to win business from both public and private organisations'. For information on sponsorship or to book an exhibition stand, contact Jamie Veitch: <mailto:jamie@newstart.co.uk> For more general information on Footsey, contact Regional Forum Business Development Manager Brian Lawrence, <mailto:brian.lawrence@regionalforum.org.uk>

WYLDA AGM

West Yorkshire Local Development Agencies (WYLDA) are holding their AGM on 4th June 2007 9:30am to 12:30pm at Square Chapel in Halifax. If you are a WYLDA member you are encouraged to attend this open meeting to participate in the WYLDA Executive elections and to vote for constitutional amendments. WYLDA members wishing to stand for election to the Executive should contact Rachael Loftus on 0113 394 2300 or <mailto:rachael.loftus@regionalforum.org.uk> by 31st May 2007. Rachael would also like to hear from you if you have any queries about WYLDA or if you intend to attend the AGM so she can ensure there is sufficient paperwork available.