

Yorkshire & Humber Regional Forum
Updating you on our work

The Regional Forum is the strategic organisation for the voluntary and community sector in Yorkshire and the Humber. We are a member led organisation with over 150 members. We bring together voluntary and community sector organisations to ensure that there is a coherent voice at a regional level and that the sector has the right support and structures to contribute to regional activity.

Health of the sector survey

Thank you to the 90 organisations that filled in the Forum's 'Health of the Sector' survey online. Initial findings are:

- The two major sources of funding for organisations are local authorities and earned income.
- The income of 32% of organisations went down and 46% stayed the same. 22% saw an increase.
- A significant drop in funding via local authorities, mainly due to the end of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.
- A significant drop in European funding.
- Earned income has stayed steady.
- Organisations are increasing the diversity of their funding: less are reliant on one or two sources.
- 15% are seriously considering winding up their organisations due to funding issues.
- 35% are seriously considering making staff redundant.

The full report will be available soon and will include case studies and additional findings from local and national research.

New European Regional Development Fund

The prospectus for the new programme has now been published and contains a call for proposals under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Programme for Yorkshire and the Humber.

Although the application process is rolling, with no time limits, Yorkshire Forward is anticipating over bidding in two cases and has set time limits for the submission of bids relating to social enterprise support and capital developments under Priority 3.

Further information, guidance and copies of the Outline Business Plan and Full Business Plan pro-formas are available on the Yorkshire Forward website at:

<http://www.yorkshire-forward.com/erdf>

A date for your diary

Footsey 2008 is only 5 months away! This will be the 7th annual social economy trade fair for the Yorkshire and Humber region and will take place at York Racecourse on Thursday 16th October. We plan to make it bigger and better than ever. If you are a social enterprise, thinking of becoming one, or just want to know more about this exciting and growing movement, you need to be there.

Footsey will be open for delegate bookings from June. To keep abreast of developments just log on to the Footsey website at: www.footsey.org.uk (from 1st June).

If you are interested in exhibiting at, or sponsoring the event, please contact the event organisers (Newstart) on 0114 281 6130.

Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) Informal Adult Learning Consultation

Organised jointly by the Regional Skills Partnership, the Regional Forum Workforce and Skills function and the Trades Union Congress, the DIUS 'Informal Adult Learning - Shaping the Way Ahead' consultation event was held at the LSC offices in Bradford on 22nd May 2008.

The consultation period, which has been extended to 12th June, is designed to 'start a discussion that will lead to a new vision for informal adult learning for the 21st century' - John Denham, Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, in his foreword to the consultation document. The consultation signals the possibility of a new valuing of informal adult education in the aftermath of adult education suffering decades of political and financial marginalisation since the early 1980s. Despite the present 'emphasis the Government has rightly given to adult vocational education' (John Denham, as above) the new DIUS intends to recognise the demonstrable social and economic benefits of the type of informal learning opportunities that the voluntary and community sector has always excelled at providing.

Three learners, from Leeds-based voluntary organisations People in Action and Swarthmore Education Centre, gave personal testimonies that paid tribute to the accessibility, caring nature, and breadth of learning opportunity they encountered in the voluntary sector. At a time when their self confidence was low, and with multiple barriers to learning, they could never have entered mainstream further education. Each of the inspiring learner stories served to underline how vital this type of provision is for turning around these three lives and many like them.

The Bradford event covered questions such as 'What are the conditions most likely to foster innovative approaches to adult learning?' and 'Whether, and if so how, Government support for adult learning can be improved?'

The formal response from the event is still being collated, but you can respond to this consultation by visiting: www.adultlearningconsultation.org.uk

Report from the Rural Advocate

The Rural Advocate, Dr. Stuart Burgess, has issued his annual report for 2007. The Advocate is a non political appointment made by the Prime Minister, and is responsible for making the case for rural people to Government. Dr. Burgess is also Chair of the Commission for Rural Communities which has a particular focus on people who are disadvantaged.

The report makes a number of recommendations and observations which include;

- Government policies need to reflect the scattered and hidden nature of rural disadvantage. Policies and funding mechanisms should target people in need, rather than places.
- All Government policies have a responsibility to ensure that rural needs are consistently addressed at all stages of policy development.
- The Communities and Local Government Department needs to ensure that its targets for rural development are fully reflected in Regional Spatial Strategies, and give specific attention to increase the provision of housing.
- Rural communities continue to lose access to essential services like Post Offices, and there is now a threat to the future of "cottage" and small hospitals.
- Communities perceive a general trend to centralising services into towns and cities for cost and quality reasons. Greater investment should be made in rural community transport to overcome the potential isolation of rural people without private means.

The Rural Advocate's Report can be downloaded from: <http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk>



i - Cross Cutting Themes

The new European programme is keen to make sure that its impact on the environment and excluded people works well. So "Cross Cutting Themes" - respecting environmental limits and promoting equal opportunities - have to be written into projects that are funded through the European Regional Development Fund.

The Managing Committee for the Programme has set up a dedicated sub committee to deal with this and the Regional Forum is closely involved.

For more information contact Judy Robinson, Director of the Regional Forum on 0113 394 2300 e-mail judy.robinson@regionalforum.org.uk



i - Regional Futures Group

This Group is chaired by Isobel Mills of Government Office and involves the regional voluntary sector and key regional public agencies.

It is concerned to ensure good public/voluntary sector relationships and to promote joint work particularly tackling disadvantage and disconnection in the region. Its first theme is worklessness.

For more information contact Judy Robinson, Director of the Regional Forum on 0113 394 2300 e-mail: judy.robinson@regionalforum.org.uk or Neil Bennett, Capacitybuilders Yorkshire and the Humber e-mail: neil.bennett@capacitybuilders.org.uk

Events

21st June - Raising Resources for Community Buildings, Gilberdyke

To assist groups with identifying and raising financial, human and in kind resources inside and outside their community.

25th June - The Fundamentals of Local Government, London

Unravel the complexities and challenges facing local government with the help of national experts.

28th & 29th July - NUREC - Northern Urban Regeneration Exhibition and Conference, Liverpool

The key event for regeneration practitioners to listen, learn, discuss and debate.

9th September - The Art of Resilience, Leeds

Techniques to ease the pressure of being a Chief Executive Officer.

Visit our website for more information and contact details: <http://www.regionalforum.org.uk>



Yorkshire & the Humber Regional Forum
Suite D10, Joseph's Well
Hanover Walk
LEEDS
LS3 1AB

0113 394 2300
<http://www.regionalforum.org.uk>