

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.

Cath says goodbye to the Forum

Changes to European funding have meant an end to the Technical Assistance programme provided through the Regional Forum and with it an end to the work of the programme officer Cath Joyce.

Cath, who has been the Forum's unofficial photographer as well, joined the Forum in 2002 bringing with her more than 20 years of European funding knowledge and expertise which began with the East Leeds Women's Workshop.

The Workshop was unique in many ways - as an Industrial and Provident Society all the staff were members of the Management Committee and worked collectively and it was the first all women training organisation in the UK to receive any form of European funding for its work. That required a significant change in the funding rules which at the time did not allow payment for childcare. The group went on to manage all the European funding for women's training until the end of 'sector' focused funding programmes.

Having already worked in the sector for 30 years, Cath is now taking her experience to pastures new and undertaking some more training to work in Mental Health advocacy. All this is a far cry from her early working life in a Devon betting shop and selling bingo tickets. We wish Cath all the very best for the future.



Communities in control: real people, real power - The Empowerment White Paper

Communities Secretary Hazel Blears has published the White Paper setting out proposals to deliver a fundamental shift in power, influence and responsibility into the hands of communities and citizens.

“Communities in control: real people, real power” sets out how the Government plans to give citizens and communities more rights and more power through:

- * more information and greater influence over the local decisions that affect them;
- * new means of holding politicians and councils to account; and,
- * where they choose, more opportunity to get directly involved in managing and shaping how local services are delivered.

The Communities Secretary has also said she wants the White Paper to form the basis of a wider debate on what kind of communities we all want.

Whilst there is no formal consultation process in place at the moment, the Regional Forum is studying the lengthy document and will be working on a formal response to the White Paper on behalf of the sector in the region. The response will include the views of Forum members and reflect the views of the wider voluntary and community sector.

The White Paper can be downloaded free of charge from the Communities and Local Government website at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communitiesincontrol>

You can keep up-to-date with developments on this White Paper with a sector perspective at:

<http://www.ukpolicy.org.uk>

UK policy is the new online policy database from the Regional Forum.

A sportier VCS?

Many sports clubs and organisations are voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations in their structure and remit, but would not consider themselves to be part of the mainstream third sector. This is despite the fact that 26% of all volunteers volunteer in sport and that 47% of young people’s volunteering activities are sports-based. The support which many clubs need is no different to that offered to other clubs or organisations, in terms of capacity building, funding advice, networking, and information.

Even though many local infrastructure organisations provide information to sports clubs, a NAVCA survey found that in order to be able to answer enquiries they need more information on coaching, funding advice, facility information, qualifications/training, signposting to clubs and the 2012 Olympics.

Sport England, in a partnership with Volunteering England and NAVCA, is looking to change this situation. Sport England has funded NAVCA’s Sports Partnership Strategic Project for three years to forge better working relationships between sports and VCS bodies at various levels. Carrie Mackenzie, Sports Partnership Strategic Advisor, is working to:

embed a culture of collaboration between sport and local infrastructure organisations ensure sport becomes part of the wider third sector.

Carrie has recently secured further funding from Sport England to practically pilot this approach in Yorkshire and the Humber. In addition to improving take-up of mainstream VCS infrastructure services by sports clubs and associations, the pilot will also seek to make better links across Local Area Agreement indicators, particularly National Indicators 6, 7 and 8 that are around volunteering, the third sector and adult participation in sport.

For more information about the project, including examples of good practice, please visit:

<http://www.navca.org.uk/localvs/sport/workingtogether>

Staff update

The Regional Forum welcomes Ivelina Metchkarova-Taylor who joins us as Policy & Communications Officer (BME VCS Regional Panel Programme).

In this new role, funded through the Big Lottery Fund she will be engaging with service providers, regional agencies and local authorities, producing guidance for them with the aim of increasing engagement of BME groups as well as supporting the BME VCS Regional Panel in engaging with regional policy.

Yorkshire and Humber LAAs update

On June 30th, all 15 Local Area Agreements in Yorkshire and the Humber received ministerial approval. Of particular interest to the VCS in our region are those LAAs that adopted National Indicator (NI)6 (Participation in regular volunteering) and NI7 (Environment for a thriving third sector) as either designated or local indicators. 'Designated indicators' are indicators against which central government will be monitoring local progress; 'local indicators' carry the same statutory duties, but which central government will not be tracking.

Eleven out of 15 local authorities in this region have adopted NI6 or 7 as designated or local indicators. NI 1 (% of people who believe that people of different backgrounds get on well together in their local area) and NI 4 (% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality) have been adopted in some other areas with the VCS as named delivery partners.

You can see all the Local Area Agreements in our region via the following link:

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=8399555>

Each copy is available electronically (with the exception of North Lincolnshire at the time this bulletin was produced), and there is also a useful spreadsheet that enables you to search for specific indicators or specific local authorities.

SubNet

SubNet, the regional VCS infrastructure steering group, is leading the Third Sector Trends Survey in Yorkshire and the Humber.

Building on work funded by the Northern Rock Foundation in the North East and Cumbria, the project group is working with the University of Southampton and NCVO to measure the true size, reach and impact of the sector. The research will go beyond what has been done before by robustly mapping under the radar non registered organisations to give a comprehensive map of the sector in the region. The analysis carried out will be entirely novel and will provide lessons of wider relevance and applicability for the sector. The data will be useful in a range of contexts including funding applications and liaison with other agencies and sectors.

The Regional Forum is currently working with CVS' in the region to gather local intelligence about under the radar organisations to ensure that robust local data can be collected and analysed. Contact Ruth Beattie or Mark Crowe at the Regional Forum on 0113 394 2300 for more information.

Do you feel like you're climbing a mountain?

Does thinking about social change and how you can respond to it make you feel like you're climbing a mountain?

The Yorkshire & Humber Regional Forum's (YHRF) Head of Development, Mark Crowe, is making the most of the forum space on NCVO Third Sector Foresight website at: <http://www.3s4.org.uk> to talk about issues impacting on the voluntary sector. Join the network <http://www.3s4.org.uk/join> to read his posting on the response by the YHRF to the Sub National Review (and catch a glimpse of how he tackles his mountains!) This opportunity is part of the Improving Support programme, to help you plan strategically and function most effectively in changing operating environments.

For more information on Improving Support: <http://www.improvingsupport.org.uk/change/index.html>

National Offender Management Service (NOMS) - Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

The VCS Pathway has been a real success operating, within Yorkshire and the Humber, as an additional pathway to the seven nationally recognised groups. The success of the group, as well as the challenges it has faced, is detailed within a paper produced by its chair Jackie Lowthian. (Please contact emma.godley@justice.gov.uk if you would like a copy). However, in recent months with the strategic and operational landscape changing so significantly it has been recognised that a different approach is needed.

At a meeting in May 2008, VCS partners working with the Regional Offender Manager (ROM) recognised that the next two years would be a journey for NOMS as they moved to a unified structure with the Prison Service and the appointment of a Director of Offender Management. During this time it was identified that an arrangement which fostered a 'working with' culture would support positive relationships between the sector and NOMS. It was agreed that an open forum with the sector, chaired by the Prison Service Area Manager and ROM, would be an effective, interim structure. This is now being progressed and a first meeting is likely to take place in the autumn. If you work for a VCS group and would like to register your interest in the forum please contact Emma Godley at emma.godley@justice.gov.uk.

Train to Gain for the Third Sector

A new leaflet from the Learning and Skills Council sets out the value for voluntary and community organisations in the region of using Train to Gain to support the development of their staff and volunteers.

The leaflet uses a case study of St George's Crypt in Leeds to demonstrate how Train to Gain can be used by the voluntary and community sector. An extract from the leaflet explains: "As with many busy organisations, St George's Crypt does not have the extra time needed to source training. Because it is a charity, cost is also important. Train to Gain can be helpful to organisations in this position, because it provides experts to source the right training. They also ensure that it is delivered in a useful and timely way, and investigate whether the organisation can apply for funding". Six St George's Crypt staff are now studying for qualifications at NVQ Levels 2 and 3 in a variety of areas, including customer care, retail and IT.

Mr Patterson, the Manager of St George's Crypt said: "The Train to Gain service has enabled us to move the issue of staff training up the priority list, and we hope that this is just the beginning for us. With so many different types of training required here, this service is invaluable to us."

The leaflet can be viewed at:

<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/national/nat-traintogainandthethirdsector-jun08.pdf>

LSC Single Equality Scheme Support Programme

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Single Equality Scheme underlines the LSC's commitment to ensuring that in transforming the learning and skills sector, we transform the chances for all. As we move towards meeting the challenges set out in the Leitch Review (2006), our strategy is designed to place equality and diversity at the heart of what we do so that all can benefit and no one is excluded. This has been an essential part of our role from the inception of the LSC.

Christopher Banks, CBE, Chairman of the LSC says 'We want to do more than comply with the present legislation for equal opportunities. In doing this we look forward to working with the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights to make sure that the learning and skills sector contributes to fulfilling its vision'.

A Regional Seminar for Learning Providers run jointly by the LSC and NIACE took place in Leeds on 4th July to examine what Single Equality Schemes mean for providers of Learning and Skills.

Definitions you won't find in the dictionary:

Budget -- a plan for going broke methodically

Bureaucracy -- a method for transforming energy into solid waste

Boss -- someone who is early when you are late and late when you are early

Committee -- a group of people who individually can decide nothing but jointly can decide that nothing can be done

Experience -- the marvellous thing that enables you to recognise a mistake when you make it again

Gossip -- the only thing that travels faster than email

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Events

16th & 17th September - NAVCA Annual Conference and AGM, Nottingham
Join NAVCA members and local infrastructure groups and have your say!

2nd October - Ensuring Successful Negotiations workshop, Leeds
This one day course seeks to provide you with the practical skills, a pragmatic model and knowledge to conduct successful negotiations.

23rd & 24th October - UKES 14th Annual Conference, Bristol
Come along and examine the role of evaluation, take stock and the implications for evaluators and evaluation.

27th & 28th November - ACEVO Annual Conference, London
This conference will explore new thinking on how to drive up the engagement of third sector boards.

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



More examples of Cath's work during the last 6 years.



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