

Monthly Update Providing Key Information about the Third Sector

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NEWS FOR SUPPORT AGENCIES

DH Third Sector Strategic Partner programme

The Department of Health has announced its Third Sector Strategic Partner programme. NAVCA is one of 11 organisations who will work to strengthen links between the Department of Health and the third sector.

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories>

Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities - statutory guidance

A reminder that the guidance states (in paragraph 6.16) "Grants, alongside contracts, have a crucial role and should be used where they are more appropriate, particularly when building the capacity of partners, piloting new approaches to services and outcomes and in investing specific projects led by other partners. While there is a role for short-term grants for example in promoting new community-based organisations the starting point, subject to overall affordability and purpose, should be three years (or more). Though in all cases, the particular conditions attached to payments, incentives or to length of contract or grants should be determined according to the duty to achieve best value". A useful quote for your local authority.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/strongsafeproperous> and <http://www.navca.org.uk/news/communityempowermentbrief.htm>

Cornwall's Community Advice Network

NAVCA worked with Citizens Advice and Cornwall County Council to produce this case study about Cornwall's Community Advice Network. A copy will be sent to all NAVCA members with the May mailing to inspire NAVCA members to work with CABx and other local advice centres, and with local government, to resist the procurement model proposed by the Legal Services Commission. Both

the local authority and the local sector have rejected this model in Cornwall in favour of continued grant for local advice organisations. The case study will also be sent to your local authority and to local advice organisations. <http://www.navca.org.uk/publications/cornwallcan>

Care Quality Commission

The Care Quality Commission, the new independent regulator of health and social care in England, was launched on 1 April. <http://www.cqc.org.uk>

Demonstrating the difference

Charities Evaluation Services research for the National Performance Programme, investigating how infrastructure organisations are approaching the challenge of demonstrating the difference they make. <http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/index.cfm?pg=472>

Cracking the Code

Cracking the Code is an NCVO bursary scheme to help infrastructure organisations to improve their governance, based on all or any of the principles of 'Good Governance: a Code for the Voluntary and Community Sector'. Next deadline is 30 June. <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/governanceandleadership/?id=13148>

BoardsCount

BoardsCount governance benchmarking helps organisations to review their governance by comparing practices anonymously to others within the sector. It also shares governance best practice examples from other organisations. There is also a 20% discount for infrastructure organisations participating in the scheme <http://www.trans4mgt.com/boardscount/future>

Skilling up for Stronger Voices learning

The Improving Local Partnerships team is developing a new learning resource in partnership with NAVCA's Learning and Development team. This resource will compliment the findings of NAVCA's 'Skilling up for Stronger Voices' publication and is for anyone working as, or supporting, third sector representatives on local strategic partnerships, children's trusts, primary care trusts, police authorities, local liaison forums and other public bodies. If you would like further information, or to register your interest, visit <http://www.navca.org.uk/roistrongervoices> . Closing date for receipt of forms is 29 May.

Government funds for campaigning

Capacitybuilders is to manage the government's Campaigning programme recently announced by Liam Byrne, Minister for the Cabinet Office. Three quarters of a million pounds will be given in packages of grants and support services over two years to up to 30 small organisations to strengthen their ability to campaign for change. Further details will be announced later this spring. The media response has been varied, but NCVO declares itself "delighted". Read

ActionAid view at <http://preview.tinyurl.com/d4ry93> or go to Capacitybuilders at <http://preview.tinyurl.com/crewwww>.

East of England Implementation Plan, 2009/31: The plan went out for consultation at the beginning of April. Consultation closes on July 3rd. The VCS is bundled in as part of the 'Third Sector' In the Skills and Employability Section, Table 59, Creating an Environment for a Thriving 3rd Sector. This offers hope that national policy, regional plans and investments and local delivery through the LAAs will see threads of investment, national, regional and local put in place to support a 'thriving 3rd sector' across the region in the years to come. To see the plan/ respond to the questions: www.eeda.org.uk/implementationplan

Volunteering and the recession

Volunteering England has reported a dramatic increase in the number of people looking for opportunities to volunteer. Institute of Volunteering Research reveals that 87% of Volunteers Centres have seen an increase in enquiries about volunteering opportunities over the last six months as unemployment figures rise. <http://digbig.com/4yqgf> or <http://www.volunteering.org.uk>

Disputes with Public Bodies

The Empowering the Voluntary Sector partnership is continuing to deliver advice and training on managing disputes with the public sector until late 2011. The partnership now consists of Compact Advocacy, NAVCA and the Public Law Project. The first line of contact for advice is now Compact Advocacy, tel: 020 7520 3161 or email evsAdvice@ncvo-vol.org.uk. The Compact Advocacy team will review any dispute with a public body and provide support, if organisations require legal advice to manage a public law dispute they will be referred to the lawyers at the Public Law Project.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Developing your Comprehensive Community Engagement Strategy

This practical guide provides the essential information that local authorities and LSP partners need to develop a joined-up approach to community engagement. <http://www.navca.org.uk/publications/cces>

Key Principles for the Economic Downturn and the Compact

Two page practical guide to help identify key compact commitments relevant to current times. <http://www.compactvoice.org.uk>

Refresh time for the compact

Kevin Brennan MP, Minister for the Third Sector, and Simon Blake, Chair of Compact Voice, have asked the Commission for the Compact to lead a process

to redraft the Compact documents for public consultation later in 2009.

<http://www.thecompact.org.uk/news>

Community engagement strategies

Urban Forum, along with NAVCA and the Improvement and Development Agency for local government, has published 'Developing Your Comprehensive Community Engagement Strategy: A Practical Guide For LSPs', providing "essential information that local authorities and LSP partners need to develop a joined-up approach to community engagement".

<http://preview.tinyurl.com/dgmtpx>.

LEGAL MATTERS

Employment practice advice from NCVO

The Workforce, Human Resources and Employment section of NCVO's web site has been updated, covering Employment Practice advice, sample HR policies and job descriptions, and more. <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/askncvo/hr/>.

LawWorks factsheets

LawWorks has compiled a range of factsheets for the third sector. They include: Company Formation, Charitable Entities, Trade Marks, Copyright and Redundancy, Dismissal and Handling Employee Grievances.

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

Simplifying Health and Safety regulations

Changes to regulations administered by the Health and Safety Executive from 6th April include a new, easier to read version of the law poster that employers must display (the existing poster and leaflet can be used until 5th April 2014 as long as they are readable and have up-to-date addresses of the enforcing authority and the Employment Medical Advisory Service). To obtain the poster

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/lawposter.htm>.

VAT and membership subscriptions

HMRC allows non-profit making membership organisations to apportion the membership subscription between standard-rated, zero-rated and exempt elements. However, this concession may not be used retrospectively where you have previously treated the subscription as a single supply.

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/briefs/vat/brief0609.htm>

Official scale rates for subsistence allowances

HMRC has introduced an advisory system of benchmark scale rates which employers can use to make daytime subsistence payments to employees who incur allowable away from home/work expenses, without incurring tax or National Insurance liability. <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/briefs/income-tax/brief2409.htm>

SANDY ADIRONDACK: AMENDMENTS TO THE LEGAL UPDATE WEBSITE FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

Money (postage, tax, VAT) – Legal Changes April 2009

- **Postage:** Postage rates go up on 6 April. <http://tinyurl.com/cqstj4>
- **VAT on temp salaries:** The concession which meant employment agencies and employment businesses did not have to charge VAT on the salary element of their charges is withdrawn from 1 April. So in most (but not all) cases VAT will now be charged on the full amount charged by an employment agency or employment business which supplies temps, rather than just on its commission or management/admin fee as it has been. www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#vat-staff or go direct to the HMRC briefing via <http://tinyurl.com/dbvdu4>
- **VAT threshold:** VAT registration threshold up from £67k to £68k from 1 May, deregistration up from £65k to £66k. VAT back from 15% to its normal 17.5% from 1 January 2010. www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#vat-threshold
- **Time limit for VAT claims:** Time limit for claims for repayment of overpaid VAT, the correction of errors, and late recovery of VAT is increased from three years to four years (from 1 April). www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#vat-claims
- **VAT flat rate scheme:** Simplification of eligibility rules for VAT flat rate scheme (from 1 April). www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#vat-flatrate
- **HMRC compliance checks:** Compliance checks for PAYE, VAT, income tax, capital gains tax, corporation tax and the construction industry scheme are being aligned (from 1 April). www.hmrc.gov.uk/about/new-compliance-checks.htm
- **New rules on penalties for tax errors:** HMRC will no longer charge penalties for honest errors on PAYE, VAT, income tax, capital gains tax, corporation tax and construction industry scheme returns (for returns filed on or after 1 April) www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#taxpenalties or go direct to www.hmrc.gov.uk/about/new-penalties/penalties-leaflet.pdf

Premises and property – Legal changes April 2009

- **CORGI replaced by Gas Safe Register:** Only gas fitters on the new Gas Safe Register can carry out approved gas work (from 1 April) www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#gas-safe or go direct to www.gassaferegister.co.uk
- **Land registration may be triggered when new trustee is appointed:** Of particular relevance to trusts and unincorporated associations, Land (including leases of more than seven years) not already registered with the Land Registry will be subject to compulsory registration when a new holding or custodian trustee is appointed (from 6 April). www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#land-registration or go direct to www.landregistry.gov.uk

- **No more registration of offices and shops:** Premises which had to be registered with the local authority or Health & Safety executive under the Offices, Shops & Railway Premises Act 1963 or Factories Act 1961 no longer have to be registered (from 6 April).
www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#premises-registration
- **Business rates**
Empty non-domestic properties are exempt from business rates if their rateable value is less than £15,000 (from 1 April). Prior to this their value had to be below £2,200. www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#emptyproperty

Economic crunch + changes announced in Budget 2009

- Wrigleys Solicitors has written an excellent introduction to recognising and managing insolvency risk in charities and other organisations, which they have kindly allowed me to reproduce.
www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#insolvency-risk
- A round-up of recession resources, from ACAS, ACEVO, Business Link, CAF, Charity Commission, Charity Finance Directors' Group, Development Trusts Association, Institute of Fundraising, NAVCA, NCVO, Office of the Third Sector, South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau....
www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#recession

The government has introduced various measures to help businesses (and where applicable, voluntary organisations) through the economic mess:

- Business rates went up 5% from 1 April (based as the annual increase always is, on the retail prices index last September), but only 2% will be charged in 2009-10, and the remaining 3% during 2010-11 and 2011-12. Charities get 80% mandatory rate relief but charities which pay the other 20%, and non-charities, will not have to find the full increase this year.
- The HM Revenue & Customs Business Payment Support Service can make an arrangement for organisations to pay tax, national insurance, VAT or other payments owed to HMRC over an extended period. Interest will be charged on payments covered by the arrangement, but there will be no late payment surcharge. Details at www.hmrc.gov.uk/pbr2008/business-payment.htm or ring 0845 302 1435 Mon-Fri 8am-8pm, Sat-Sun 8am-4pm.
- For organisations that pay corporation tax on their profits (such as non-charitable voluntary organisations, and charities' trading companies) and are now making a loss, the period for which a loss can be carried back has been temporarily extended from one year to three years. Details from your organisation's accountant or auditor.
- 'Weekly pay' for calculating statutory redundancy pay is to go up from £350 to £380 - but that's all the Budget said. No indication of when it might happen, or whether weekly pay for calculating unfair dismissal awards,

which is usually the same as for redundancy pay, will also go up. Details will be in my employment update when we know more.

Charity law changes in April 2009

- For financial years starting on or after 1 April 2008 (i.e. generally ending **on or after 31 March 2009**) charity trustees must include in their annual report an explanation of how the charity has met the public benefit test. www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#publicbenefit or go direct to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit reporting and fictional report examples www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publicbenefit/default.asp

For financial years **ending on or after 1 April 2009**:

- the threshold for unincorporated charities having to prepare accruals accounts rather than a receipts and payments account is increased from £100,000 to £250,000.
- Unincorporated charities with annual income under £25,000 no longer need to have an independent examination or audit, unless required by their governing document or funders, and no longer need to submit their annual accounts and reports to the Charity Commission unless requested to do so (thresholds increased from £10,000).
- The threshold for requiring a full audit remains £500,000, or is increased from £100,000 to £250,000 if the charity's total assets are more than £3.26 million. www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#finance or go direct to www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc15b.asp
- All charitable companies must prepare accruals accounts. The thresholds for independent examination and audit of companies that qualify under company law as small companies are the same as for unincorporated charities (above). If the company is a medium or large company, its audit is done under company law rather than charity law. www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#charcoaudit
- Revised **HMRC gift aid** declaration - should be used effective **immediately** for new gift aid declarations. Transitional gift aid relief has to be claimed within two years from the end of the tax year to which it applies. From April 2010, the six-year time limit for recovering (ordinary) tax on gift aid - not transitional relief - is likely to be reduced to four years. www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#giftaid
- From **1 April 2009**, the thresholds for a person being defined as a 'professional fundraiser' are increased to £10 per day, £1,000 per year or £1,000 per collection or event (increased from £5 and £500). www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#prof-fundraisers
- For the Office of the Third Sector's guidance on the 'solicitation statements' that have to be made by professional fundraisers and commercial participators, go to <http://tinyurl.com/dgdj68>.
- From **1 April 2009**, the threshold over which a donor can cancel a donation made in response to a broadcast or telephone appeal by a

- professional fundraiser or commercial participator, is increased from £50 to £100.
- www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#cancel-donation
- From **23 April 2009**, the six-year donation threshold for a person or business being a substantial donor is increased from £100,000 to £150,000.
- www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#substantialdonor
- From **1 April 2009**, organisations registered with HM Revenue and Customs as community amateur sports clubs (CASCs) are no longer charitable even if their objects are charitable. CASCs have some, but not all, of the tax advantages that charities have. www.sandy-a.co.uk/managing.htm#casc

Employment Updates

Check items on Sandy Adirondack's Employment legal update:
<http://www.sandy-a.co.uk/employment.htm>.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Every Child Matters Conference

NAVCA held its first Every Child Matters Conference on 30 March. The event attracted over 80 delegates from around the country representing LIOs and groups and organisations delivering and providing services for children young people and their families. Focusing on the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters framework and detailing the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme, the day was a mixture of presentations and interactive workshops. Presentations and more information about the event is available at:
<http://www.navca.org.uk/events/pastevents/ecmconference>

Workforce development health check

A tool has been designed by the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services for specialist workforce development staff within local infrastructure organisations to use with third sector organisations who work with children, young people and/or families. <http://digbig.com/4ypnj> or <http://www.ncvys.org.uk>

Supporting the Children's Workforce: A guide to structuring services

This new guide from NAVCA and CWDC provides a snapshot of different models of support for the third sector children's workforce.
<http://www.navca.org.uk/publications/structureguide>

Championing the children's workforce - Learning from experience

This publication showcases six examples of third sector organisations supporting local organisations to join the children's workforce reform revolution.
<http://www.navca.org.uk/stratwork/children/cwdc/resources>

Safe from Bullying

The Government has published a suite of guidance and resources to help practitioners tackle bullying.

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/stayingsafe/bullying>

ECDM Local Authority Charter

Campaign group Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM) is challenging every council in England to sign up to its Local Authority Charter, which commits them to providing decent services for families with disabled children.

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

THE ENVIRONMENT

Changing for good - An EAC guide to sustainable planning

The latest EAC guide shows how to put sustainable development into practice inside your organisation by planning. <http://www.everyactioncounts.org.uk/guides>

The Sustainability Challenge: implications for chief executives in the third sector

New ACEVO publication.

http://www.acevo.org.uk/index.cfm/display_page/publications

The Big Lunch

The Big Lunch is a new initiative being run by the Eden Project aimed at bringing communities together. The idea is that once a year, on 19 July, as many of the 61 million people in the UK as possible will simultaneously sit down to lunch together, with their neighbours, in the middle of their street, as a simple act of community.

<http://www.edenproject.com/visiting-eden/whats-on/the-big-lunch.php>

Every Action Counts

Every Action Counts guides (<http://www.everyactioncounts.org.uk/guides>) and information (<http://www.everyactioncounts.org.uk/information>) can be downloaded and used by your voluntary or community group. These are published under Creative Commons and can be used and distributed as long as authors are acknowledged.

EAC pledges

This month EAC is asking you to pledge to travel wisely. Pat Fitzsimons, Chief Executive of the Community Network has already pledged to introduce a bike voucher scheme for Community Network staff and to report on uptake to Board Meetings. <http://pledge.everyactioncounts.org.uk>

PUBLICATIONS

Surviving the recession

NCVO guide looking at topics such as future sustainability, strengthening key relationships and tightening up financial systems. <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/recessionresources>

Backing communities: local solutions

Joint report by LGA and NCVO highlighting work that local authorities are doing with third sector partners to support local people through the recession. <http://digbig.com/4ynsd> or <http://www.lga.gov.uk>

Comprehensive Area Assessment FAQs

Urban Forum. <http://www.urbanforum.org.uk/briefings>

Delivering equality and diversity

ACAS. <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=818>

TRAINING/EVENTS

How to grow and sustain your membership

NCVO. 27 May, London. <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/membconfmay09>

Leading Change - Steering your organisation through the recession and beyond

ACEVO summit. 11 June, London.

http://www.acevo.org.uk/index.cfm/display_page/ProfDev_Events

FUNDING

Big Lottery Fund's Helper Agency – Update

Big Lottery Fund's Helper Agency website is a useful resource for those supporting organisations who are applying for funding. It includes statistics showing application and success rates in the East of England (updated on the 10th of each month), training resources, information about programmes, details about events taking place in the region, and links to useful websites, publications and documents. Recent updates include a new Awards for All presentation and quiz to reflect changes to the scheme from 1st April onwards. Go to [helper agency section](#) . New users can register for access.

Fundraising healthcheck tool

The Fundraising Healthcheck online diagnostic tool to help organisations understand the impact of the recession on their fundraising portfolio is now open to all, not just members of the Institute of Fundraising,

<http://www.fundraisinghealthcheck.org>. Reports give a prognosis for each area of your fundraising, based on past experience and current trends, and practical advice and guidance on how to survive and thrive during the economic downturn. A video explaining its creation and use is on UK Fundraising at <http://preview.tinyurl.com/d2x9nq>.

Awards for All

The Big Lottery Fund's new-look Awards for All fund is now open. Awards of between £300 and £10,000 are available for grass-roots social and environmental projects that benefit local communities in England. <http://www.awardsforall.org.uk>

East of England Community Grants

Small third sector organisations are invited to apply for up to £12,000 to work with people in the East of England who are unemployed or economically inactive. All projects should help people to move closer to the labour market or mainstream skills provision. http://www.grantsadmin.co.uk/eastengland_grants

Funding for trustee training

Charity Trustee Networks has a news item on how organisations can get up to a thousand pounds towards training for board members and senior managers. <http://www.trusteenet.org.uk/news/receive-1000-funding-help-your-organisation-grow>.

OTHER NEWS

Swine flu

The Department of Health website home page has an information leaflet on swine flu and links to further advice and information, <http://www.dh.gov.uk>. Business Link has a page on how businesses can prepare for an outbreak, <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/swineflu>

Volunteers Week

The 25th anniversary of Volunteers' Week takes place from 1-7 June. This annual celebration of volunteers and volunteering plays a huge part in raising the profile of the millions of volunteers who regularly contribute to society, while inspiring others to get involved too. It's your chance to thank the volunteers that help your organisation. The Volunteers Week website contains branded merchandise for events and activities, free marketing materials and certificates, media tips and hundreds of real life volunteering stories. <http://www.volunteersweek.org.uk>

ICT Development Project

Part of Herts Infrastructure Consortium (HIC), project provides free advice on the best use of ICT to help you do what you do. Email ict@herts-ic.org.uk for further information.

Community Kit

BT has teamed up with Recipero to give community groups the chance to create and build a website - free of charge. You will have a choice of appearance and designs from a range of style options and can add information about your group. <http://www.communitykit.co.uk>

Princess Royal Trust for Carers - Professionals' Website

For people who work professionally with carers. <http://www.carers.org/professionals>

AskSARA

Guided advice about daily living from the Disabled Living Foundation. <http://www.asksara.org.uk>

Junction 49

A social networking website for young people aged 16-25 who want to make a difference by volunteering. <http://www.junction49.com>

DISCLAIMER: *This Info Bulletin contains extracts from key Third Sector updates received by Herts CVS from different sources. Herts CVS does not endorse any publications, events and services mentioned and is not responsible for the content of external websites*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: *Contact Sue McClinton, Herts CVS Information Co-ordination Project. Email: sue@cvsstalbans.org.uk*

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