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Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations is a membership organisation representing the experiences and aspirations of Sandwell's Voluntary & Community Sector.

It offers a wide variety of capacity building and developmental services to charitable and community organisations.

Funders Have More Money for Sandwell!

SCVO and Sandwell MBC's External Funding Team are working in partnership with funders to increase the amount of money coming into the borough. Key funders tell us that although they receive a fair number of applications from Sandwell, the success rate is generally low. By developing closer relationships between funders and the Sector, we are determined this can change.

Our first approach to the problem is to bring funders into the borough to increase their awareness of Sandwell and our awareness of their programmes, priorities and local contacts. Back in March, SCVO and the External Funding Team met with the Big Lottery Fund's Development Officer for the West Midlands. We learnt that while Sandwell is close to the national average for Awards for All success, it fares much worse with the Reaching Communities programme. The key pointers for success were: to address a well-evidenced need, to have clear and measurable outcomes, to show value for money and to avoid duplication with other services. This meeting was just the first in a line of meetings planned. We are currently developing relationships



with The Arts Council, Children in Need, Comic Relief and Lloyds TSB.

We are also jointly enabling closer contact between funders and the wider sector. Sandwell MBC organise funding fairs where a variety of funders are available for one to one discussions and SCVO are developing a policy of inviting funders to be present at our training courses as co-facilitators. Last year's training programme saw the participation of Children in Need and the Heritage Lottery Fund and this will be replicated for our new training programme beginning in June.

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SCVO STAFF LIST

- Chief Executive Officer:
Mark Davis

CAPACITY BUILDING TEAM

- Capacity-Building Manager:
Jan Bottle
- Organisational Development
Officer: Steve Baylis
- Organisational Development
Officer: Carole Harte
- Small Groups Development
Officer: Helen Trueman

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT TEAM

- Strategic Engagement
Manager: Nick Drew
- Network Development Officer:
Leona Bird
- Project Officer: Martin Drayton

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

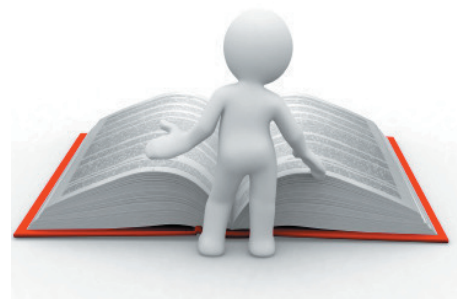
- Database Administrator:
Janet Turton

SCVO Training Programme 2011 - 2012

SCVO will soon be launching its training programme for 2011-2012, with a wider range of courses than ever.

This year we have split the programme into three categories: Community Basics – aimed at small, volunteer-led groups, Management Essentials – aimed at anyone running an organisation (employee or volunteer) and Management Masterclass – aimed at senior managers and leaders.

Topics range from basic fundraising to Equality Law and Leadership Skills. This year SCVO is introducing a charging structure,



although basic courses and attendance for small groups will remain free of charge.

A training brochure and booking form will be on the SCVO website and sent out in e-bulletins from mid-June.

Funders Have More Money for Sandwell!

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As well as working at this strategic level, both teams remain available to help your individual fundraising efforts. Between us we offer an online funding portal, www.scvo.info, training in fundraising skills, one to one support with sourcing funding and writing a bid, a critical friend review service and support with extracting evidence from the Sandwell Trends website, www.sandwelltrends.info.

In addition, SCVO is currently planning a new round of Funding Buddies, the project that matches skilled volunteers with small community groups.



For more information or support, contact SCVO on 0121 525 1127 or the External Funding Team on 0121 569 3971.

Together, we will ensure Sandwell receives its fair share!

Politicians Back Local VCS

SCVO recently welcomed Sandwell MBC Leader, Councillor Darren Cooper, to discussions centred on the changes at the Council and how we can best develop relationships with our Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).

SCVO were able to raise concerns over how some of the changes were adversely affecting local organisations, and challenge Cllr Cooper on how the council can ensure, that within the current budget constraints and the move towards more open competitive tendering, investment is made to ensure a healthy locally-rooted Sector. Cllr Cooper re-iterated

the council's support for the VCS and emphasised that their commitment is demonstrated by maintaining the ring-fenced voluntary sector support budget. He welcomed increased dialogue and the important contribution and constructive challenge the Sector gives on behalf of local communities in Sandwell.

The opportunity to speak more directly to central government was also presented to SCVO by way of a meeting with James Morris, Conservative MP for Halesowen, covering Rowley Regis. Aside from his constituency work, James has a particular interest in economic development, enterprise and how to address skills gaps and

worklessness in the borough. SCVO highlighted the important role the VCS play both as an employer and service provider, and the work they do in helping local residents move closer to the job market. Concerns were also raised on behalf of local providers over the lack of involvement of VCS partners in the Government's new Work Programme.

As James is a member of the government committee focusing on the forthcoming Localism Bill, SCVO will look to explore future opportunities to hear more from James about the Bill and what this might mean for local communities and the VCS.

Quality Venue for Sandwell VCS

SCVO's smart office base in central West Bromwich now offers high quality Board and training facilities for hire by local Voluntary and Community Sector organisations.

The office in Landchard House, Victoria Street is an ideal venue for Board and committee meetings, training events or briefings. It is conveniently located just off the High Street, walking distance from two metro stops and the bus station.

The Board Room seats up to thirty delegates in a variety of layouts including theatre style, cabaret and classroom. Conference and training equipment is available to hirers along with a range of catering and refreshment options.



Rates for room hire are competitive, with reductions for local not-for-profit organisations.

For more information please contact Maxine Calder on 0121 525 1127 or email maxine@scvo.info

GET INVOLVED

SCVO is working to help increase engagement between the Voluntary and Community Sector and public sector bodies. The Sector can also benefit from having the opportunity to meet more often with each other.

SCVO aims to achieve this in various ways, including:-

- Informal networking events
- Facilitating thematic VCS networks and groups
- Consultation events on important local strategies
- Developing ways for the VCS to be represented on key local partnerships
- Supporting VCS groups to understand and to lobby Sandwell Partnership, its members or VCS representatives
- Promoting understanding and use of the Sandwell Compact in relations between the VCS and public sector
- Receiving issues from the VCS and raising them with the appropriate public body

For further details and to get involved call the Strategic Engagement Team on 0121 525 1127.

Creating a Strong Voluntary and Community Sector

SCVO facilitates a wide variety of meetings and forums to support the work of the Voluntary and Community Sector.

This article summarises these to help you identify whether you are interested in finding out more.



Health & Social Care - Exploring Collaborative Working

Organisations in Sandwell have been exploring collaborative working in health and social care thanks to the support of SCVO 3Cs (Contracting, Collaboration and Consortia working) Pilot Project. Since December 2010, SCVO has convened bi-monthly meetings and workshops. Organisations are now ready to form a Working Group and SCVO are requesting expressions of interest from interested parties.

If your organisation is interested in delivering health and social care contracts as part of a Consortium arrangement, please contact Martin Drayton, Project Officer on 0121 525 1127 or email: martind@scvo.info

SCVO Contractors' Network

The Contractors' Network has

been meeting bi-monthly since September 2010. The aim of the Network is to encourage collaborative working and stimulate opportunities for organisations to deliver public sector contracts. By bringing together organisations with different work areas it provides networking, learning and information sharing opportunities.

The Network meetings are invitation only events and open to organisations identified by SCVO as currently 'contracting'. Contractors' Network meetings are currently under review but to find out more contact Martin Drayton as previously detailed.

PCT Contracts Focus Group

The PCT Contracts Focus Group was formed by SCVO and Sandwell PCT to enable organisations currently holding PCT contracts to have some input into future service specifications and help make contracting a more user friendly experience.

SCVO are currently unable to offer any new places on the focus group, but to find out more please contact Martin Drayton.

Health and Social Care Forum

A forum established in October 2010 for Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations working in the health and social care field. Meeting bi-monthly, the forum's main objectives are to enable the VCS to shape service provision to meet the needs of local residents, broker discussions around key issues and help identify best practice in the delivery of services and to represent VCS providers within the strategic boards in Sandwell and other key work streams.

To find out more about this Forum please contact Leona Bird, Network Development Officer on 0121 525 1127 or e-mail: leona@scvo.info

Leaders' Forum

This is a newly created Forum which had its inaugural meeting in May 2011. The Forum meetings are bi-monthly and exist to provide an opportunity for principal voluntary sector leaders in the Sandwell area to meet and discuss sector-wide approaches to common issues and to decide what action can be taken, either by members or by SCVO on behalf of the group. Issues will be escalated to senior individuals within the public or private sectors as necessary via the Chief

Executive Officer of SCVO. Once a year, the Group will promote a major VCS Leaders' Summit, attracting as many of Sandwell's senior VCS leaders, managers and chief officers as possible, to outline the work of the group and to take a broader sounding of the issues facing the VCS locally.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Leona Bird.

Commissioners' Forum

This group has met since December 2010. At present it is a meeting between SCVO and representatives from within the statutory sector who have a commissioning function. The aim of the meetings are to help identify what new commissioning opportunities there are for the VCS, to help to identify any barriers there may be to commissioning and to identify solutions and share learning from commissioning processes.

For further details, please contact Leona Bird.

Voluntary Sector Breakfast Meetings

These meetings have been running since November 2009 on a bi-monthly basis. The venues are rotated around the 6 towns of Sandwell and have primarily been aimed at smaller community led organisations. The meetings are very informal and offer an opportunity for organisations to network and find out about other services in their area, provide a space where organisations can promote their services and also to find out what support and advice SCVO can provide.

Please contact Leona Bird for further details.

SCVO have a dedicated area on the website for information and minutes on SCVO facilitated meetings. To find out more access the Resources section from www.scvo.info



CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Children's Workforce Survey

For the past few months, SCVO has been working with Sandwell MBC and the Children's Workforce Development Council to map the children's workforce in the Borough.

We are just about to refresh our data on children's organisations in Sandwell, so if you work with children, you should be receiving a survey from us, asking you a few simple questions about the staff and volunteers who deliver your service. This will help us understand the workforce in Sandwell, and offer better support and training to organisations. Please return this survey as soon as you can!

Health and Social Care Bill

It's been hard to miss the media coverage and controversy surrounding the Government's plans for the NHS and for the health and social system in general.

Since the publication of the White Paper "Equity and Excellence: liberating the NHS", Health Secretary Andrew Lansley has taken a battering from all sides about his proposed health reforms. Firstly, coalition partners the Liberal Democrats passed a strongly critical motion at their Spring Conference. Then, the British Medical Association weighed in, at an emergency meeting in March, raising concerns about the abolition of PCTs, the role of competition in the health economy, the remit of the National Commissioning Board and the powers of Healthwatch, the new body promoting patient voice. Then, the Public Accounts Select Committee took the unusual step of publishing a report on the reforms even though they were still before Parliament. The report expressed concerns that the localisation of healthcare would make it more difficult to monitor the spending of public money, and that the abolition of PCTs would mean that there would be

no "plan B" if new health bodies like GP consortia failed. Recent discussions have focussed on the extent to which the healthcare market in future will be based on competition, and whether this will lead to the privatisation of healthcare.

The Government was forced to announce a "pause" in NHS reform in early April to take stock, and embarked on a "listening exercise" to take soundings on how their planned reforms might need to be adapted. The principal change which has been mooted is that other professionals, for example nurses, may also have a commissioning role alongside the GPs. However, the process of GP consortium formation (and, in many areas, the dismantling of PCTs) is now very well advanced, so it is probable that, whatever changes are made, the GP consortia will still have a major role in commissioning. It is therefore still very important, despite some possible scaling back of the original commissioning proposal, that the VCS prepares itself for greater interaction with individual GP consortia and, in Sandwell's case, groups of consortia. And, if further competition is permitted in the health market, the VCS will need to be ready to compete with providers from other sectors, both mutuals launched by ex-public sector workers, and private companies.

Although the "listening exercise" is now over, it is likely that there will be further changes to the Government's plans for healthcare. SCVO will keep you abreast of what this means for us in Sandwell.



Election Results - What do they Mean for the for the VCS?

The local elections in England were widely seen as an early referendum on the Coalition Government and its economic and social policies.

The most striking feature of the results was that the Conservative vote held up across most of the country, with a net gain of 4 councils, whilst the Liberal Democrats suffered major losses, widely seen as a punishment for their support for deficit reduction. Deficit reduction has been at the heart of the Coalition Government's policies, with the repeated refrain "we are all in this together" and the emphasis on rebalancing the country's books. This has meant changes to the funding settlement with local

authorities across the country, resulting in a number of councils facing reductions of up to 8.9% in their total funding allocation over the next two years. Commentators generally agree that any cuts in services resulting from these reductions have not bitten yet, but are likely to do so in the next 18 months.

When cuts do come, they are likely to be unevenly distributed, as different Councils have received different levels of funding reduction. Sandwell has seen a year-on-year cut between 2010-11 and 2011-12 of over 9%, but made a decision to protect the core voluntary and community sector budget in this financial

year. This does not mean that the financial pain which the Council experiences won't be passed on through lower budget allocations for commissioned services, or that such protection will still be possible next year.

The Conservatives' relatively good showing in the elections means that there is unlikely to be a change of course on economic policy – indeed, even if it had gone badly for them, they are too far advanced along the road of deficit reduction to turn back now. SCVO will keep monitoring the funding environment and stay in close contact with key individuals at the Council and PCT, to ensure that you're kept informed.

Advice and Guidance Providers Review

SMBC is conducting a review into the provision of advice and guidance services in the Borough. How do such reviews work, and what potential opportunities for the VCS do these reviews afford?

In the current financial climate, public authorities are taking the opportunity to look again at the way in which services are delivered. In Sandwell a review of advice and guidance services is underway. It includes specialist advice providers, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, alongside other social and welfare services, such as the Bangladeshi Islamic Centre (see Spotlight Interview). The aim of the review is to make advice and guidance across Sandwell more strategic,

limiting the "carrier-bag-of-leaflets syndrome" of clients being passed from one provider to another for different types of advice, and to make the provision of advice more focussed on outcomes.

SCVO has convened two meetings of advice and guidance providers across Sandwell to discuss and influence the way the review is being conducted, and to encourage greater collaboration between organisations through an Advice Providers' Network. Mapping is under way of the advice and guidance provision, with a view to implementing a new commissioning framework in 2011-12.

SCVO is working to influence both the way individual reviews are

conducted and their outcomes, and the overall process which Sandwell MBC uses to conduct such reviews. At present, there are a wide range of approaches to consultation, mapping, data analysis, performance management and engagement. Service providers have found themselves subject to a number of different reviews for different aspects of their services, or asked to respond to very fundamental reviews of their service in relatively short timescales. Voluntary sector providers need to be adaptable to changing priorities, and prepared for increased collaboration, in the current climate. SCVO will be working to make sure there is a level playing field and common process when reviews are carried out.

CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATIONS UPDATE

The Charity Commission has published guidance and model constitutions for charitable incorporated organisations (CIOs).

However there are still no final draft regulations and no implementation date. When they do arrive these will come from the Office for Civil Society rather than the Commission.

A CIO brought in by the 2006 Charities Act, is an incorporated form of charity which is not a company. It only has to register with the Charity Commission and not Companies House.

Sam Younger, Chief Executive of the Charity Commission said; "By making the CIO guidance and constitutions available now, there is the opportunity for people to look more closely at whether the CIO structure is the right one for their needs, and what will be involved. The guidance will help ensure people are clear about what being a CIO would mean ahead of the new structure being implemented."

The guidance and constitutions can be accessed at from the Start Up A Charity, CIOs section at www.charitycommission.gov.uk

SCVO will keep you updated on further developments for CIOs.

June Charities Update

Understanding Your Responsibilities as a Charity Trustee

The government's Big Society agenda is encouraging us all to give back to society. One of the ways to do this is to consider joining the committee or board of a local community group. In doing so you become a Trustee, which means that you accept ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of the group, and ensuring that it is solvent, well-run, and meeting the needs for which it has been set up. Anyone taking up the role should know what legal duties, responsibilities and potential liabilities are involved. SCVO can assist groups to establish and maintain good governance to minimise the risk to trustees. For information call Carole Harte, Organisational Development Officer on 0121 525 1127.

Updated Guidance on Insurance

The law requires charities to have certain types of insurance and the decision to buy additional insurance is one way that charity trustees can carry out their duty to protect their charity's trustees, assets and resources. Updated guidance from the Charity Commission clarifies what legal obligations there are in connection with insurance and helps trustees decide when and what insurance will be appropriate for their charity. For more information go to the www.charitycommission.gov.uk and find guidance paper CC49.

Cheques Set to be Phased out in 2018

Cheques are set to be phased out in 2018, with potentially devastating consequences for charities according to The Institute of Fundraising. Charities have been at the forefront of the battle to save the cheque, or at least delay the abolition. The Institute of Fundraising has told MPs that more than 70% of charity donations are made by cheque. The chief executive of the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) bank, said that figures prove there are still huge amounts of cheques being used in the charity sector and that this represents a significant part of charitable income. He recommends that alternatives to cheques must be in place and widely used by both the public and charities, before the decision is taken to abolish them.

Vetting and Barring

The government has changed its mind about scaling back the age limit on vetting and barring arrangements for children's professionals. After consulting children's charities the government has amended the Protection of Freedom Bill to include people working with 17 year olds. Originally the cut off was going to be at 16. Andrew Flanagan, chief executive of the NSPCC said, "Young people can be particularly vulnerable to grooming and abuse from adults who work with them and wish to develop inappropriate relationships. It is important that adults working closely with these young people are subject to robust checks."



Spotlight on ... Bangladeshi Islamic Centre

This month we talk to Abdul Subhan (Centre Manager) Faruque Khan (Youth Outreach Worker) and Alamgir Khandoker (Bangladeshi Men Health Development Officer) from Bangladeshi Islamic Centre. 0121 558 8204/www.bicentre.org.uk

1. Tell us what you do.

We are a community based organisation working for and being run and led by the community, based in Smethwick, our services and activities cover all of Sandwell. We offer free, fair, impartial and confidential Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG), assisting people to make well informed and realistic decisions about benefits. Since 2007 the organisation has been registered with OISC to provide Level 1 Immigration Advice. We also run workshops on the prevention and treatment of health related problems and issues including diabetes, smoking, strokes and coronary heart disease. A major thrust of BIC's health related work has been the promotion of physical activity and encouragement of healthy lifestyles. We support local women with training, social activities and skills development. The activities break the cycle of isolation and promote social exclusion for many disadvantaged women. We have many activities taking place at the centre including pool, table tennis, board games and other

activities such as football, cricket and canoeing. We assist children with literacy and numeracy and homework support. We have a programme to encourage parents to take an active role in their children's education and development. We have an employment advisor that provides support in finding work, writing CV's and interview techniques.

2. What is your proudest achievement?

It is hard to highlight just one, however, our support to young people around education and attainment has helped many of them to graduate from Universities such as Cambridge and go on to secure professional employment as doctors and general practitioners.

3. What is the most valuable lesson you have learnt about working with people in Sandwell?

With a little support, a lot can be achieved. Small pots of funding enable activities to be provided and unlock the potential in people making a huge difference to people's lives. Awareness raising events can reach many people and working together with other organisations has helped us to promote holistic services to the communities of Sandwell.

4. What are the plans for the future?

To continue to deliver the services



we provide. We are expanding our building and also have plans to have a new building. The demand for our services is growing and we need to ensure that we expand to meet the needs. We want to work with SMBC to make Smethwick and Sandwell a better place to live and work in for its residents.

5. What are the most important challenges for the voluntary sector in Sandwell in the coming years?

Ensuring that they can deal with the demand for services, given the reductions in funding available. The changing funding environment is creating competition for organisations and the sector needs to make sure that the added value they bring is recognised. It is not necessarily the case that reinventing new things is the best way and there needs to be a focus on what is working well and building on this. We need the great support we are getting from the elected members and Local Authority to continue.

6. How can SCVO help strengthen the sector over the coming years?

Continue with networking support as this helps with the sharing of ideas. Build on the training sessions that have been provided to groups and continue to provide a voice for the sector and challenge on behalf of the sector at a local and national level.

GET SUPPORT

SCVO offers a range of services to support the development and sustainability of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations in Sandwell, however big or small.

We achieve this through one-to-one support, workshops and training events, and signposting and referrals to specialist services.

- Funding advice and information
- Governance support including start-up, constitutions, forming and running a committee and charity registration
- Planning activities, services and projects
- Recruiting and managing staff and volunteers
- Implementing quality systems and improving performance
- Monitoring, evaluating and reporting to stakeholders
- Working collaboratively and in partnership
- Information on local, regional and national issues affecting the Voluntary & Community Sector

For further details and to request support call the Capacity Building Team on 0121 525 1127.

Television is Going Digital!

The digital TV switchover is starting in Sandwell from September 2011.

Analogue TV signals will be turned off and Freeview services boosted to reach all areas. After switchover, virtually all homes will be able to receive digital TV free via an aerial, including those served by local relay transmitters. When you switch depends on which transmitter your TV gets its signal from.

To find out when you switch and what your digital options are, visit www.digitaluk.co.uk or call Digital UK on 08456 50 50 50.

What do you need to do?

- If you have Freeview, Top Up TV or BT Vision, you will need to retune your digital TV or box at switchover or you will lose channels. Switchover is a two-stage process and you need to retune at both stages.
- If you have a satellite or cable service on all your sets, you will not need to retune as these are not affected by switchover.

- If you have 5 channels or fewer (i.e. analogue TV) on any of your sets, you will need to convert them to digital.
- If you're 75 and over, or eligible disabled, call the Switchover Help Scheme - they can provide everything you need to keep watching your TV.

Age Concern Birmingham can provide grants, materials, free training, support and guidance during the run-up to the digital TV switchover to organisations that support:

- older people
- people who are socially isolated
- people with sensory, mobility or dexterity impairments
- people who have mental health conditions
- people with English as a second language
- people with learning difficulties.

For more information contact Shirley at s.bate@ageconcernbirmingham.org.uk or phone 0755 726 2725

Computers for Charities

Oasis Computers for Charity works in partnership with Microsoft to carry out high quality refurbishment of computers before providing them to charities.

Their passion is to ensure that the computers end up where they are needed most, so some of their stock is made available free of charge to charities, and they also seek to pay or subsidise delivery costs. To fund this, they ask most

charities to pay a small amount for the computers they receive.

For more information contact Oasis Computers for Charity on 01926 419744. Website: www.oasiscfc.org



Getting Sandwell Active

With the upcoming Olympics, a new community facility and Sandwell's first 'app', Sandwell Leisure Trust is geared up to get Sandwell active.

In the run up to 2012, Sandwell Leisure Trust (SLT) will be showcasing in its centres, local performance athletes that have Olympic potential in its centres. If you know anyone that would be interested in telling us about their achievements please contact 0121 506 4980 or email leisure@sandwell.gov.uk.

Sandwell Council is considering developing a dedicated Sandwell for 2012 web page to keep residents up to date with activities in the Borough. The Council is also considering an Olympic theme for the Sandwell Show. Keep on eye on the SLT website.

Clubs, organisations and community groups can hire new



facilities at Rowley Regis Learning Campus including meeting space and sports facilities. Please see further details about the new facilities in the article below.

In addition, SLT has launched what it believes to be the first Sandwell iPhone app. The app helps residents find their leisure centre, times of activities and special

offers. The app is now available to download for free from the Apple iTunes App Store

For information on what's happening in Sandwell, visit SLT's dedicated Sandwell for 2012 web page www.slt-leisure.co.uk/sandwell-for-2012. If you have any useful information that can be added to the page, please let us

Rowley Regis Campus for Community Use

The new Rowley Regis Learning Campus will offer a range of facilities for hire including meeting space and sports facilities. It will be ideal for use by the community and for events.

With the development of the new Campus, Sandwell Leisure Trust (SLT) is now committed to working in partnership with Sandwell Futures Ltd, Sandwell Building Schools for the Future programme, Whiteheath Education Centre, Westminster School and St Michaels C of E High School, in order to provide an holistic

programme of opportunities, learning and non-learning, including sports and arts.

Community Liaison Officer, Raji Takhar will work with the local community, clubs/groups and key partner organisations in order to develop and establish a comprehensive programme of opportunities which will meet the needs of local residents, and support the integration of the new facilities into the community it serves.

The campus has a sports hall, activity studios, multi use games

areas, a floodlit pitch, a theatre and drama studio plus much more.

SLT are aiming to start a phased programme of community activities from the end of June, with the main programme of activities commencing Sept 2011.

If you wish to make an enquiry about booking facilities at the Rowley Regis Learning Campus or if you wish to discuss what type of activities you would like to see taking place at this facility please contact Raji Takhar on 0121 506 4980 or email raji_takhar@sandwell.gov.uk

SANDWELL VCS DIRECTORY

This internet-based directory lists details of a large number of voluntary organisations and community groups in Sandwell. It can be searched to identify groups that work with a particular client group, in a particular location, etc..

To add your group's detail to the directory call Janet on 0121 525 1127.

To view and search the database visit www.sandwellvcs.info

FUNDING PORTAL

SCVO's funding portal allows instant, online access to hundreds of funders and contractors. Situated on the home page you can search the portal for funding tailored to your organisation's needs.

To view and search visit www.scvo.info

E-MAIL UPDATES

Did you know that you can receive e-mails on SCVO services and events?

Currently more than 900 people receive 'SCVO.INFO' by e-mail each month and this list is also used to circulate up to the minute information on news, events and services arranged by SCVO.

To sign up to this list contact the Capacity Building Team on 0121 525 1127.

New Travel Agency With a Difference!

A Hawaiian beach party was the theme for the launch of a brand new travel agency, IQS Travel, which is offering a much needed service for people who have specific accessibility needs when going on holiday.

The service was officially launched by the Patron of Ideal For All, Dave Heeley.

The IQS Travel agency will not only provide a specific focus when booking holidays for disabled people, but will also be available to the wider community.

Carol Goff, chairperson of Ideal For All said, "We have opened IQS Travel because we want to make a difference for the people who find it hard to book their holidays due to an illness, disability or limited mobility. We have dedicated, experienced advisors who have the knowledge to go the "extra mile" to ensure that their holiday experience is as stress free as possible. It is a one-stop-shop

where customers can also book extras such as airport parking, car hire and foreign exchange." She further added that, "the IQS Travel service is dedicated to provide a personal touch."

With the backing of TTA Worldchoice, IQS Travel is part of a large powerful group that has access to many commercial deals. It is able to offer amongst the best and more competitive prices in travel. The agency is also fully ABTA bonded meaning that customers are completely protected should the airline, tour operator or company they are travelling with encounter financial difficulties.

IQS travel agency is being run as a social enterprise. Any profits made will be reinvested for the benefit of disadvantaged communities of Sandwell and beyond.

For more information, please contact Vicki Phipps or Jade Gull on 0121 558 5555.



Volunteers Wanted for Befriending Service

Sandwell Primary Care Trust (PCT) is looking for volunteers to support their befriending service.

The Sandwell befriending service is for the benefit of people living in the borough aged between 16 and 65 years old, who have experienced low level mental health issues.

Volunteers, or 'befrienders' as they are known, help people to increase their confidence by participating in social or leisure activities, or by seeing them on a regular basis for a cup of tea and a chat.

Tony Kirk, Community Involvement Officer at Sandwell PCT,

said: "Our befriending service has been really successful, and given a number of local people a helping hand to get back on their feet. We have plenty of people who would like somebody to support them, but we need more volunteers."



Tony added: "Volunteers on the programme are not social workers or carers. They are not asked to take on great responsibilities. We need people who are willing to listen and to spend a couple of hours a week with somebody that needs the company. It's incredibly rewarding."

All volunteers will receive free training and a Criminal Records Bureau check will be completed.

To find out more, contact Tony Kirk on 0121 612 1403 or email Tony.Kirk@sandwell-pct.nhs.uk or Jean Winkett on 0121 612 1466 or email Jean.Winkett@sandwell-pct.nhs.uk

Learning to Engage Service

A new initiative to encourage more employees to take up Aspergers Syndrome, Dyslexia, Autism and Downs Syndrome awareness training is now available to all volunteers.

Award winning Signs4Life are showcasing this local initiative to help staff to communicate and engage with their colleagues, service users and volunteers who may have learning disabilities.

West Midlands based Signs4Life also offer deaf, disability and visual impairment awareness workshops.

Ms Fozia Parveen, Signs4Life managing director explains..

"You never know when you will come into contact with a client, a colleague or member of the public who is autistic, deaf or visually impaired. We are working with organisations as varied as The British Red Cross, Mencap, Barnardo's and Age Concern. Each of our workshops help you comply with the Disability Discrimination Act and Equality Act 2010 and encourage a 'can do' approach to the 12 million people in the UK who have a physical, sensory or learning disability,"

Fozia, herself has a younger sister Aneesa, who was born hearing impaired which encouraged Fozia to learn sign language.

Fozia is a qualified optometrist and was recently nominated as one of Oxfam's 100 most inspiring women of 2011 as part of their International Women's Day centenary celebration. She was also chosen to be featured in the book 'Everywoman's Modern Muse' showcasing 100 businesswomen chosen nationally to inspire and mentor the next generation of businesswomen.

If you would like further information about the Signs4Life volunteer courses please get in touch with Fozia on 07964 019 764 or visit our interactive website www.signs4life.org.uk

FUNDING EXTRA

£30,000 Community Chest Fund To Support Community Groups

Sandwell residents are being invited to apply for grants of up to £500 to support events, schemes and small scale projects that benefit the local community.

Following a hugely popular 'community chest' scheme last year, Sandwell Homes has secured a further £30,000 in funding to run the scheme again.

Grants of up to £500 can again be applied for to support one off bids associated with a project. Examples of projects that may be funded include youth activities, sports events, community environmental schemes and good neighbourhood projects.

Applications are open to individuals and groups alike, and application packs are available on the Sandwell Homes website and can also be obtained by calling the Business Development team on 0121 569 5191.

For more information please contact Community Involvement Officer, Gail Ashfield, on 0121 569 5046 or via email at gail_ashfield@sandwellhomes.org.uk

June Funding Digest

Grant Making Trusts and Foundations

Sita Trust, Enhancing Communities Programme

Under the Sita Trust's Enhancing Communities Programme Core Fund, grants of up to £60,000 are available to not for profit organisations, community groups, parish councils, local authorities and charities for projects that make physical improvements to community facilities and historic buildings / structures. Projects must have an overall cost of less than £250,000. SITA will accept applications from projects which are within 3 miles of qualifying SITA UK waste processing sites. Grants of up to £20,000 are also available through their Fast Track Fund for projects with an overall cost of no more than £40,000.

Projects on school or pre-school sites where the facilities will primarily benefit the school are not eligible. However, an application may be considered from a school if the following can be clearly demonstrated:

- The wider community has significant opportunities to use the facility;
- The facility is run by an organisation that is separate from the school (although the school may be represented);
- Access to the facility for community use must be via an entrance that is separate from the school.

The next closing date for applications is 20 June 2011 for the Fast Track Fund (formerly Small Grants Scheme) scheme and 25 July 2011 for the Core Fund (formerly Large Grant Scheme). Visit: www.sitatrust.org.uk/

community-funding

The ASDA Foundation Trust (UK)

Charities, schools and community groups have the opportunity to apply for funding for local projects to the ASDA Foundation. The ASDA Foundation Trust was set up in 1988 to support local good causes chosen by employees and is funded by profits from the mid-week national lottery. Organisations can apply for funding for a wide range of projects as long as they have the support of local ASDA colleagues.

Some of the projects that the ASDA Foundation has supported in the past include:

- Transforming a large tarmac playing ground at Haslingden Primary School, Lancashire, into a place where children can play, learn, enjoy, plant and grow, and most of all have fun.
- The Foundation also provided funding for the Southglade Park community allotment, a non profitable initiative where the produce grown is used to educate young children and adults on healthy eating.

Potential applicants should contact their local Store or Depot in the first instance. Visit: <http://your.asda.com/asda-foundation>

Nationwide Foundation

Nationwide Foundation seeks applications under its Small Grants Programme (UK). Following the review of its funding programme, the Nationwide Foundation has announced that it is currently accepting applications for funding under its Small Grants Programme. Under the programme, grants of between £500 and £5,000 are available to registered charities with a yearly income of less than

Funding and Sustainability

£750,000. The Small Grants Programme supports projects that:

- tackle financial exclusion affecting disadvantaged groups across the UK
- address housing issues & homelessness among vulnerable groups across the UK.

For more information visit: www.nationwidefoundation.org.uk/grants.asp

The Britannia Foundation

The Foundation offers grants and donations between £1,000 and £25,000 to registered charities and schools working within education, particularly numeracy and/or financial literacy. It is an independent registered charity, and has its own Board of Trustees who evaluate all grant applications. The Foundation believes that community involvement provides a significant way of putting the Foundations values into practice and of contributing to local communities. They welcome applications from registered charities and schools working within their key priorities. Any national charity working within their key priorities that can ringence their activities to a local community is eligible. The Foundation prefers buying specific items of equipment but in some circumstances will consider capital expenditure and salary costs. Please see the list of exclusions before you apply. E-mail charitable.foundation@britannia.co.uk for an application form, or call on 01538 391806.

Funding for Community, Heritage and Environmental Projects

WREN provides funding for community, heritage and environmental projects in areas close to landfill sites they award

grants for environmental, heritage and community projects and have announced the details of the deadlines for their Main Grant and Small Grant programmes for 2011. Areas have now been allocated one of four deadline dates for each funding round in May, August and November. The small grants programme provides grants between £2,000 and £15,000 with a total project cost of under £50,000. The WREN Main Grant Scheme offers funding of between £15,001 and £50,000. Eligible organisations that can apply for funding include environmental organisations, voluntary groups, charities, not-for-profit organisations and community groups. For further information on the different deadlines and areas visit: www.wren.org.uk

Deutsche Bank Community Development Fund

Projects must demonstrate a local community need and meet with your group's aims and objectives. The fund seeks to target projects tackling education and community development, with a specific emphasis on working with those who are NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training). There are two grant programmes but groups can only apply for one. The programmes are as follows:-

1. Grants range from £250 minimum to £5,000 maximum. Grants will need to be spent within 6 months of receipt, or
2. A one off grant available of up to £15,000 maximum to be paid over 2 years i.e. £10,000 in the first year and £5,000 in the second year.

Applications are welcome from not-for-profit, third sector voluntary or community group, active in their local community for not less than 12 months. Groups must be

based in the Birmingham or Black Country areas (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton)

They must be carrying out projects benefiting young people aged 11-25 in the following key areas:

- Education (Retention, Achievement and Progression)
- Community Development (Community Sport, Educational Outreach, Employment and Employability, Homelessness and Neighbourhood Renewal)

Examples of what can be funded are: projects that ease the transition between primary and secondary schools, reduce absenteeism, and help prevent exclusion and projects that raise aspirations, achievement and attainment levels, with a particular focus on financial literacy, business awareness, functional and soft skills

Closing date for applications is Friday 17 June 2011. Tel: 0121 322 5560. Email: team@bbccf.org.uk

Before applying for this fund, please visit www.bbccf.org.uk for more detailed guidelines.

For support with identifying and applying to these and other funding opportunities, contact Steve Baylis at SCVO on 0121 525 1127 or e-mail: steve@scvo.info.

To download the full Funding Digest visit www.scvo.info (under 'Get Support').

Visit our Funding Information Web Portal at www.scvo.info

SCVO MEMBERSHIP

Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations is a membership organisation open to all community groups and voluntary organisations active in Sandwell. It's Board of Directors is elected from it's membership and oversees the strategic direction of SCVO.

Its broad base of members therefore provides strength and credibility for SCVO in giving a voice to the experiences, views and aspirations of the Sector and in delivering capacity building services relevant in a diverse and ever-changing environment. SCVO are always looking to increase their membership and welcome applications from organisations and groups serving any part of Sandwell's community.

For further information about membership and how to apply please call 0121 525 1127.

SCVO.INFO NEWSLETTER

If you would like to submit an article for inclusion in this newsletter or give feedback on any aspect of it, please call 0121 525 1127 or e-mail leona@scvo.info.

The deadline for articles for the August/September 2011 issue is Friday 22 July 2011.

Sandwell Compact in Action

The Compact is a set of principles setting out good practice for how the relationship between the statutory and voluntary and community sector (VCS) should operate. It is sometimes difficult for partners to see what benefits the Compact brings to these relationships. Sandwell has developed some case studies to highlight how the Compact had been used to overcome barriers and issues to the sectors working together. Here is an example case study.

What was the issue?

Connecting Communities was a short term Government funding opportunity with which Sandwell Partnership commissioned services from four medium sized voluntary organisations. Services were targeted at disaffected, hard to reach young people. A range of issues emerged linked to the administration of the funding and the financial monitoring arrangements. These were raised by one organisation with the head of the Council's Strategic Investment Unit who asked Sandwell Partnership to look into the matter.

What has been done about it?

Sandwell Partnership talked to all of the parties involved and produced a

report that summarised the issues and made 9 general recommendations, 3 of which were specific to the Connecting Communities programme. These recommendations have been accepted.

What outcomes were achieved?

Sandwell Compact gave the framework for the VCS to air their concerns openly and this led to a commitment from the council to:

- look at their financial monitoring requirements
- rethink their position on risk in line with the Compact
- look at how they make payments to the VCS

Further case studies can be viewed on SCVO's website: www.scvo.info/get-involved/sandwell-compact/

Sandwell Compact and Funding Code of Practice are currently being reviewed and a consultation is running until Friday 24 June 2011. For further information and details on how to respond, please view: www.scvo.info/get-involved/current-consultations/

If your organisation hasn't already signed up to the principles of the Compact or would like to know more, please contact Leona Bird, Network Development Officer on 0121 525 1127 or e-mail: leona@scvo.info

