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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.

A Step in the Right Direction?

New guidance has been published by the Department for Communities and Local Government advising Local Authorities that they should avoid making disproportionate cuts to the voluntary sector. They have also warned that local charities must play a key role in making sure the guidance is following in practice.

The department's new "best value" guidance, a shorter document than that introduced by the previous government, says that local authorities "should seek to avoid passing on disproportionate reductions by not passing on larger reductions to the sector and small businesses as a whole, than they take on themselves". NAVCA, the national body that represent infrastructure organisations such as SCVO, have stressed that although they thought Councils would follow the guidance, there were no sanctions set out should they fail to do so.

The guidance further states that:-

- An authority intending to reduce or end funding or other support to the voluntary and community sector should give at least three months notice.



- An authority should actively engage the organisation and service users as early as possible before making the decision on: the future of the services; any knock-on effect on assets used to provide the services; and the wider impact on the local community.
- Authorities should make provision for the organisation, service users, and wider community to put forward options on how to reshape the service or project.

To access the Best Value Guidance please view: www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/1976926.pdf



SCVO STAFF LIST

- Chief Executive Officer:
Mark Davis

CAPACITY BUILDING TEAM

- 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

SCVO Update

Survey Checks Health of the Sector

SCVO are inviting leaders of voluntary organisations and community groups to share their experiences, hopes, fears and expectations through its latest Survey.

The '5 minute Leaders Survey' was last conducted in autumn 2009, and the excellent response was invaluable in helping SCVO to draw together a picture of the size of the Sector, the additional funding it draws into Sandwell, how effective partnership working is locally, and identify common challenges and opportunities at that time.

The short survey can be completed online at www.scvo.info.



info/news/ up until Friday 21st October 2011 and SCVO will share findings through 'SCVO. INFO'.

For further information please contact Leona Bird on 0121 525 1127, email leona@scvo.info.

Staff Changes at SCVO

SCVO bade a fond farewell to two members of its team during the month of August.

Jan Bottle, Capacity-Building Manager, joined SCVO during 2010 and took the reins quickly, overseeing the important support and development work given to numerous community groups by the team. Jan has made a big impression in a short space of time, and SCVO wishes Jan the very best in her new life in the United Arab Emirates where she is moving with her family.

Janet Turton joined SCVO in 2006 as a database administrator and

will be known to many in the Sector as the friendly voice at the end of the phone line or on the email getting updates on group's database listing. Janet now has plans to enjoy her retirement and will be missed by all at SCVO.

For the time being, enquiries relating to SCVO's database are being managed by Maxine Calder maxine@scvo.info whilst Nick Drew, nick@scvo.info is overseeing capacity-building activities.

SCVO Update

SCVO AGM and Conference

As announced in the last issue, SCVO will hold its AGM and Conference on 3rd November 2011 in the Council Chamber of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Oldbury, starting at 9:30am.

You will find a flyer inside this issue of the newsletter. For more information and to book a place, please contact Maxine Calder on 0121 525 1127.

Leaders Forum Update
Sandwell's Voluntary and

Community Sector Leaders' Forum was formed in May 2011, to provide an opportunity for key individuals from the



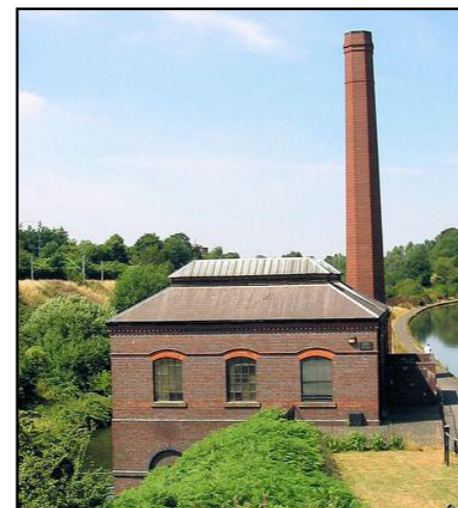
VCS to discuss the issues and opportunities which face the sector in the Borough. Since its formation, it has decided on a work programme, and has met with Martin Samuels, SMBC's Director of Commissioning, and Jan Britton, SMBC Chief Executive.

There will be an opportunity at SCVO's AGM and Conference to learn more about the work of the Leaders' Forum and its future plans.

New Support Offer for St Pauls and Smethwick

St Pauls and Smethwick are being alerted to a Lottery funded project providing advice, guidance and support to community groups.

Funded by the Big Lottery Fund SCVO's Community Support Programme got underway in February 2010. The aim of this 4 year initiative is to provide focused



and committed development support for small voluntary and community sector groups working at neighbourhood level in Sandwell. Five areas in total will be selected and will each receive dedicated support over 12 months. Support has already been provided in Rowley and Cradley Heath and Wednesbury South and Friar Park. In these areas over 40 groups have accessed support and more than £110,000 of funding has been secured.

The programme has now been rolled out to groups who are based and active in Smethwick and St Pauls wards. The type and range of support includes writing constitutions or a set of rules, options for organisational structure, charity registration, forming an effective committee,

writing policies and procedures, identifying funding, support with writing funding bids, engaging in partnerships and networks plus much more.

SCVO will be holding events in Smethwick to provide an overview and explain the range of support available. Further details coming soon!

If you are a group or know of a group that could benefit from this support please contact Helen Trueman at SCVO on 0121 525 1127 or email helen@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.

Local Public Service Delivery

Protecting Vulnerable Children in Sandwell

Sandwell Safeguarding Children Board is made up of representatives from statutory, voluntary and community organisations and services and members of the public. The board meets regularly to agree and oversee the co-operation and effectiveness of agencies working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Sandwell.

It provides training for both statutory and voluntary organisations and produce policies and procedures. The board and its sub groups play a key role in raising awareness across the children's partnership and within the community about safeguarding children and young people from harm.

It ensures that agencies work together by coordinating and monitoring local work. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families in their everyday work has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The expectation now is that not only statutory agencies but a range of other agencies identified in national guidance should have some form of internal document to guide anyone working or volunteering with children. Many smaller groups or community organisations will find that where they seek funding from most sources now they will be expected to have a document in place in order to be successful in accessing any funding.

Further information on how to formulate a Child Protection Policy can be found in our inter-agency procedures via our Website. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

If you suspect or believe a child is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm, including any form of mistreatment or abuse, you should report your concerns. If your agency or organisation has a policy/procedure, you should follow them. If your agency/organisation has no policy or procedure, you should follow these steps:

Emergency

If a child is in immediate danger, you should contact the police (call 999 or 0845 113 5000) or call an Ambulance (Call 999).

Non Emergency

If there is no immediate danger or you need advice or information, you should discuss your concern with a Manager or Designated Professional. You could also contact Sandwell's Access Service (ACCESS) (Children's Social Care) on 0845 351 0131 (out of office hours is the same number)

Further information on this and the work of the board can be found on our website: www.sandwellscb.org.uk



Public Sector Update

Changes to Service Commissioning – How Do they Affect You?

It feels like we have been talking about the transition to “commissioning” of public services forever – it’s been a reality in the NHS since the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 created it as a distinct function, but other public bodies have been slower to follow suit. The pace has certainly increased in Sandwell recently with the appointment of the Council’s first-ever Director of Commissioning. In this article, we look at how the commissioning process might affect you, and how SCVO can help you get involved.

“Commissioning” has been on the cards for a while, and we’ve had a succession of Governments championing it as part of the public service reform agenda. As public bodies are increasingly shorn of their delivery role, commissioning is the process by which they specify, procure and monitor the services that the people in their area need. It should be a cycle of: identifying need; defining the service required to meet that need; finding and contracting with a service provider to deliver that service; monitoring and evaluating the service, to check it is meeting needs; and reviewing the need if necessary and commencing the cycle again. It has been repeatedly stated, nationally and locally, that the VCS should be involved in some way at every stage of this cycle.

Until now, individual commissioners within Sandwell Council have operated largely

independently. Whilst they have had broadly the same function, they have operated in different ways, which has made life very confusing for voluntary sector organisations, despite the best intentions of those commissioners. To try to counter this, SCVO has convened a Commissioners’ Forum, the purpose of which was to allow commissioners an opportunity to meet, exchange ideas and issues in relation to working with the VCS, and share information and learning about commissioning processes.

However, Sandwell Council’s new Director of Commissioning, Martin Samuels, has been working to bring together all the commissioners working on the “people” side of the Council (i.e. those working on children and families, adult services and learning and culture) into one team, with common procedures and practices. On the one hand, this will be helpful for the VCS, in that it will ensure that there is a single process for commissioning across the main people-centred services which many organisations deliver. On the other, it is becoming clear that Sandwell’s VCS will not necessarily be a “preferred supplier”, and that open and transparent tender processes will be a priority across this new commissioning team. It is also clear that some confusion remains over how commissioners can involve VCS organisations in the needs analysis and service design process, if they are potential bidders for the resulting service contract.



SCVO has seen some specific examples of concerns being raised over individual commissioning processes, mainly around information about or involvement in the process. For example, we organised meetings between concerned providers and representatives of Sandwell Council around the process for recommissioning domiciliary and community care for disabled children and young people. We have also worked closely with public bodies to make the process more transparent, and are currently working with Sandwell PCT to help improve engagement between the organisations commissioned to deliver their “Lifestyles” contracts and the wider VCS.

We are keen to hear from you about your experience of commissioning processes, so we can keep up our engagement and lobbying with the Council, the PCT and others. Please contact Nick Drew, Strategic Engagement Manager, if you want to discuss any aspect of commissioning: nick@scvo.info / 0121 525 1127

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.

Partnership Opportunity

Jobcentre Plus in the Black Country

The Black Country Jobcentre Plus are offering the opportunity to supplement existing, or develop new, partnership activities in the Black Country

The team exist to help our customers move into work as quickly as possible. They work collaboratively with employers, partners and providers to help make the Black Country a great place to work and live. Together they strive to reduce unemployment and welfare dependency and so increase economic independence in the Black Country.

The Black Country Jobcentre Plus District covers the Local Authority areas of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

Jobcentre Plus wants to work together with partners across the Black Country to improve the job prospects for local people. It will focus on developing creative and innovative solutions to help unemployed people move into work.

They aspire to join up public services such as health, housing, transport, employment and skills to help local people back into work. They seek to achieve value for money and alignment of funding which supports their primary aim of getting as many people back to work as quickly as possible.

They are flexible and open to

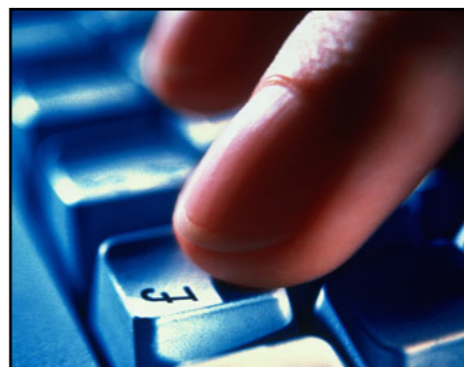
ideas that complement existing Jobcentre Plus services to unemployed people before they join the Work Programme. They are also keen to receive applications that support the wider Get Britain Working measures.

They are looking for support for all Jobcentre Plus's customers regardless of their benefit type (i.e. including Jobseeker's Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Employment Support Allowance, Income Support and Carer's Allowance) and for them to gain work within a maximum of 52 weeks of making their claim.

Applications are invited for initiatives worth up to £90,000 to pay for activity during this financial year (2011/12). The financial year ends 31 March 2012.

Applications can be submitted at any time before the 30th November 2011 and will be considered at the next Assessment panel.

For further information about applications in Sandwell please contact Neil Bunch on 01902 435141. Email: neilbunch@



Collaborative Working

Sandwell Working Together

SCVO is committed to encouraging collaborative working between organisations. Our successful "3Cs" (Contracting Collaboration and Consortium-Building) Project helped to build a number of collaborative consortia of voluntary organisations, which are now actively working together to bid for contracts. But now the 3Cs is complete, what does the future hold for collaboration in Sandwell?

Commissioning processes are changing. Public bodies are offering longer, larger contracts to achieve efficiency and economies of scale. The amount of risk associated with contracts is growing in proportion to the size of the contract. Increasingly public sector contracts are put out to competitive tender. This opens the door to large private sector providers, attracted to large size contracts. In order to compete in this new environment, voluntary sector organisations need to think differently about how they work together and about their own organisational identity.

SCVO set up the 3Cs Project, to ensure that VCS organisations remained sustainable and competitive by encouraging organisations to explore working together to share resources, risk and manage larger contracts which could not have been handled alone. Formal collaborative groups of organisations are now becoming



established in Sandwell, including a collective of community centres and buildings across the Borough which will emerge as Sandwell Community Hubs Co-operative. In the current financial climate, collaboration could be the key to ensuring the sustainability of many organisations across the Sector. We are currently evaluating the 3Cs Project with a view to ensuring that we continue to provide effective support for collaborations in the future. A summary of this evaluation will be available in the next issue of this newsletter.

Setting up New Consortia

SCVO welcomes enquiries from organisations who would like help and support in setting up new consortia. Where appropriate we adopt a facilitation role, helping organisations to understand collaboration and its benefits, types of collaboration and offering an impartial and objective perspective on a strategic relationship. For more information about the support

which SCVO can offer, please contact Nick Drew, Strategic Engagement Manager, tel: 0121 525 1127 or email: nick@scvo.info

Health and Social Care – Exploring Collaborative Working

SCVO continues to support the development of further collaborative ventures, by actively identifying areas in which consortium development can make the most difference. By exploring collaborative working in health and social care, SCVO has helped to convene a Working Group in early October 2011 with a view to building a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) or Consortium to deliver services to Sandwell's three emergent Clinical Commissioning Groups and other public sector contracts.

Martin Drayton, 3Cs Project Officer said: "It's both an exciting and challenging task to build a Consortium and with stakeholder involvement we hope organisations will own a legacy for collaborative working in Sandwell."

If your organisation is interested in delivering health and social care contracts as part of the emerging Consortium, please contact Martin Drayton, Project Officer (3Cs), tel: 0121 525 1127 or email: martind@scvo.info

ROOM HIRE

SCVO offers high quality Board and training facilities.

Rooms for hire include a Board room that seats up to thirty people, a meeting room that seats up to six and a smaller one to one meeting room.

Conference and training equipment is available to hirers along with a range of catering options.

Rates for room hire are competitive, with reductions for local not for profit groups. For more information call SCVO on 0121 525 1127.

Health and Social Care

A Carers Hub for Sandwell

Sandwell's voluntary and community sector has a long history of providing support for carers. Now some of the organisations which provide that support are looking at what the future holds – and contemplating whether collaboration is the way to ensure sustainability.

The idea of a “carers’ hub”, bringing together a variety of services for carers, has been discussed between delivery organisations and commissioners for some time. A “hub” could provide an opportunity to access better quality accommodation than organisations currently have, simplify access to services, and

reduce running costs. However, we must also be careful to ensure that organisations, in working together, do not lose what makes them distinctive and popular with carers.

The new Sandwell Carers’ Strategy provides an opportunity for a carers’ hub to become a reality. If successful, it might be a model which other groups of service providers could emulate.

SCVO is playing an active part in facilitating the discussions that providers need to have, in order to decide if a carers’ hub is viable or desirable for them. We will keep you informed of developments via this newsletter.

Value of Carers Contribution in Sandwell

The value of Carers contribution in Sandwell has increased by £150million.

The Carers Advice & Resource Establishment, Sandwell (CARES) can reveal the value of the Carers contribution to Health and Social Care in Sandwell has increased by £150million (29%) over the last four years.

Recent research published by the University of Leeds shows the value has increased from £513million in 2007 to £664million in 2011. This value is calculated by working out the cost to the local authority and the NHS of replacing all of the caring undertaken by unpaid family

Carers in the borough over a year. Commenting CARES’ Chief Executive Officer, Geoff Foster said of the new research, “At a time when Sandwell Council is consulting on a new Carers Strategy for the borough, this information emphasises the value of the caring undertaken by unpaid family Carers. Without this contribution, which is given willingly by family members and friends, the whole Health and Social Care structure in Sandwell would collapse”.

cares
S A N D W E L L

Sandwell VCS Feature



Spotlight on ...

Centre Spot (CIC)

This month's 'SCVO.INFO' shines a light on one of Sandwell's community sports organisations, Centre Spot Community Interest Company (CIC). Manny Abbeyquaye, it's Executive Director, sits under the spotlight.

1. Tell us what you do.

Centre Spot was established in 2008 as a project which builds young people's capacity, especially focusing on disadvantaged and socially excluded groups in Sandwell. We use the power of sport to engage young people and as a catalyst to re-ignite their passions, whether that's for learning, gaining new skills or helping others through volunteering. Through our physical activities, sports, fitness classes and sports mentoring we see their confidence and self-esteem rise and their soft skills develop.

2. What is your proudest achievement?

Without doubt our work to achieving PQASSO Level 3 quality standard has been the most difficult thing we've had to do. Centre Spot's always been a well-run organisation but we quickly realised that we didn't have a lot of systems in place, especially for recording or measuring impact – the sorts of things that funders want to see. PQASSO was a great achievement for the work we put in

and the benefit it's given us. I'm also very proud of the opportunity to address the Third Sector Assembly, talking about sport and informal learning and the work we did through the government's Transformation Fund. It was great to be addressing ministers, talking about Centre Spot and the good work we've done.

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

There's a lot of work to be done in Sandwell and targets Sandwell aren't meeting, especially around sports. So far our experiences of partnership working have been excellent – everyone seems to be focused on making a change and Third Sector organisations keen to work together and make a difference.

4. What are the plans for the future?

We are looking to keep growing. We have grown from being very reliant on grant funding when we started to being almost self-sufficient through delivering contracts. We aim to be sustainable and to let more people know about the Centre Spot brand and what it represents. We'd like to be a stronger name in the community and to be known and trusted.



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

We need to get the credit that Third Sector organisations deserve and to be judged fairly, so that organisations doing good work are recognised for it. The challenge is to position yourself in a way that's attractive to commissioners and big funders by meeting all the criteria – the monitoring, evaluation and other information they're looking for. We should not be afraid of working together and sharing best practice as Third Sector organisations – partnership work is the way forward.

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

By training and support, and making sure Third Sector organisations are not just looking for money, but know how to use it properly and make it measurable. We will struggle to meet our potential as a sector until we overcome that hurdle. SCVO can also encourage everyone to do the PQASSO quality standard or a generic framework for development like that. Perhaps it could be linked into funding criteria to encourage organisations to look at themselves and understand how to improve.

WEBSITE BUILDER

BT have launched a Community Web Kit.

If you haven't already built a web site for your charity or not for profit community group, the internet is a great way to be seen - and a great way to reach out to people.

In just a few simple steps you can have an easy-to-build web site to help promote your charity or community group.

It's a straightforward to set-up and maintain. And once it's up-and-running, it provides an easy way to publicise your group and stay in touch with people.

Best of all, it's free and the kit is packed full of amazing features that will give your website the professional look and feel to really make an impact.

Whether you're a tech novice or a computer whizz, the BT Community Web Kit can really put you on the map. Visit: www.btck.co.uk

Attention all Sports Clubs

All sports clubs in Sandwell are being urged to get involved in a programme that will help them to develop and increase levels of participation in sport.

Sandwell Council has recently commissioned The Albion Foundation to deliver the 2 year 'Club Development' programme which is funded by Sport England's Community Investment Fund. Joe Bates, the projects lead officer said "We are currently updating our club database to ensure that every community sports club in Sandwell has the chance to find out about exciting funding opportunities and have access to expert advice."

If you run or work with a local sports club please get in touch with Joe Bates 0871 271 9840 or joe.bates@albionfoundation.co.uk.



The Albion Foundation will be working hard to help clubs develop, improve their infrastructure, increase participation levels and assist the development of coaches and volunteers. A number of 'target clubs' will also benefit from additional targeted funding.

The Albion foundation is a charitable trust that has been in existence since 1991 and is recognised for delivering high quality sport and educational programmes.

Caring in a Crisis

St Albans Community Centre offers a free and confidential support and advice service.

The Caring in a Crisis advocacy service provides support for a wide range of reasons. Some people find advocacy helps when they feel they have no-one else to help, or are not being listened to. The service supports people with a range of issues including: benefits, debt, housing, care and education. No problem is turned away no matter how big or small.

For more information please contact St Albans Community Association, St Albans Road, Smethwick, B67 7NL. Tel: 0121

558 0018. Email: advice@stalbans-cc.co.uk.

For more information and to find out what other services are available please visit: www.stalbans-cc.co.uk



Funding Success for Volunteer Centre

The Volunteer Centre Sandwell have been awarded a two year grant of £45,200 from Lloyds TSB foundation for the continuation of their extremely successful Supported Volunteering Project. (Originally funded with Big Lottery Basis two funds)

Over a period of time the centre recognised that a high proportion

of volunteers asking for help had mental health concerns, and needed extra support to engage in volunteering. The Lottery funded this project for three years until May2011.

With the recession and impending cuts a number of applications to funders had been submitted by the Centre without success. Jean Taylor - Chief Executive Officer

commented 'I am delighted that the centre has now secured funding for this project to continue for a further two years.'

If anyone would like to find out more about this unique service contact Mina Sonariwo Project Co-ordinator on 0121 544 8326 or email minavcs@gmail.com



Centre Achieves Quality Accreditation

Volunteer Centre Sandwell has completed and passed Wave 3 of Volunteering England's Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation.

Working in collaboration with Dudley, Walsall & Wolverhampton Volunteer Centres, this externally assessed standard measures a Volunteer's Centre ability to deliver the six core functions Volunteering England believes are required to create an environment within

which volunteering can flourish at a local level.

The process of completing VCQA requires a Volunteer Centre to identify and tackle it's weaknesses as well as build on its strengths, ultimately creating a stronger organisation.

Jean Taylor Chief Executive Officer commented "I would like to thank very much the hard work done by our staff and volunteers most of which is done behind the scenes. Everyone working together has enabled the Centre to achieve this significant accreditation"



Make a Difference Day

The Volunteer Centre Sandwell is inviting voluntary and community groups based in Sandwell to be part of Make a Difference Day!

Join them for a market stall event to be held on Friday 28 October 2011, 10.30am - 2.00pm in the market square by Sainsburys in Oldbury.

This is a fantastic opportunity for you to:

- raise the profile of your group, promote and share information on what you do
- attract new volunteers to your group
- find out more about how the Volunteer Centre can support your group
- network with other groups and

organisations

Spaces on stalls are limited. If you are interested in attending, please confirm your place to Jean Taylor at Sandwell Volunteer Centre on 0121 544 8326 or email jean@volunteercentresandwell.co.uk by Monday 17 October.

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 SCVO 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.

Funding Extra

Top Tips for Applying to Grant-Making Trusts

Based on Directory of Social Change's in-depth research into grant-making trusts and foundations over many years here are some top tips to help you ask the right funders for the right amount in the right way.

- Read the guidelines!
- Do you meet the funder's eligibility criteria? If not, move on and find one where you do.
- If the funder does not have specific guidelines then try to ensure that you are at least familiar with any geographical preference the trust may have and note organisations that have been funded in the past – is their work similar to yours?
- If the trust or foundation states that they are willing to offer help and advice before an application is made then contact them to discuss your proposal beforehand – an initial telephone call could save both of you a lot of time and effort in the long run if your proposal is unsuitable or they are currently over-subscribed. Please remember that many trusts don't have paid staff and rely on volunteers or trustees to deal with applications
- If the funder uses an application form, make sure that you complete it as fully as you can – incomplete application forms are likely to be the first ones to be filtered out
- If the trust has an online application form, prepare your proposal beforehand as some online forms cannot be saved to return to later.
- Where no application form is used – be concise in your written letter of application and include your latest annual report and accounts. Don't enclose any unnecessary materials at this stage – most trusts don't have time to read them and if they are interested in your proposal they will request this material at a later stage
- Application letters should be no more than four sides of A4 – brevity is the key to getting your application read!
- Don't use jargon or specialist language that a lay-person
- The proposal should be written by someone who has a thorough understanding of your organisation and the project that you are requesting funds for – this person should be the named contact should a potential funder require further information
- You must be able to demonstrate a need for the funding and be able to directly relate this to how it will help you serve your beneficiaries
- Be realistic about how much you are asking for
- Don't rely on a positive response from a single trust or foundation – apply to as many relevant funders as you can to maximise your chances.
- Be patient, and be prepared to never receive a reply! Some funders acknowledge receipt of every application they receive, but most only contact successful applicants or those that they are interested in

Funding Extra

October Charities Update

Financial Risks Facing Charities

The Charity Commission plans to launch a project to help charities review their financial controls and systems of risk management. The project comes as a precursor to a wider Review Programme which is being developed in collaboration with umbrella bodies.

Initially, participating projects will receive a free review of their systems of financial management and controls. The results of the reviews will be anonymised and analysed to help the Commission and the sector gain a better understanding of the risks facing charities.

Sam Younger, CEO at the Charity Commission says, "I hope this project will prove just one step towards a wider culture change in the sector - a change that sees individual boards of trustees gain renewed confidence in their own abilities and judgment and which sees the sector as a whole taking greater responsibility for maintaining standards of governance, anticipating risk, and nipping problems in the bud". www.charitycommission.gov.uk

Licensing Becomes Even More Confusing

Following a consultation, community halls and youth clubs have been exempted from a proposed new charge for playing music at parties and social events. The new charge, called a "specially featured entertainment tariff" applies when sound

recordings are played in a more prominent manner than as background music.

However, this tariff is separate from charges that will come into effect from January 2012, under which charity shops and community groups that play background music, and "venues hosting festivals, dance parties and similar events" will have to pay for licenses.

You can contribute to the consultation on this confusing issue until 14th October via Richard Stewart at Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL) by telephone him on 020 7534 1276 or emailing sfereview@ppluk.com

Ensure You Comply With the Equality Act 2010

The Charity Commission has said that even after reading their detailed guidance "many organisations, particularly those whose beneficiary class is restricted by a protected characteristic, will need to take further specialist advice to ensure that they are compliant with Equality law." Jane Hobson, head of policy at the commission has said, "Trustees must remember that the general principle of fair and equal treatment for all applies to charities. The law recognises that some charities are set up to help particular groups in society because of disadvantage or for clear social objectives and that is why it specifically allows charities in these circumstances to depart from the principle. Trustees

need to familiarise themselves to ensure that their charity is working within the law." Furthermore, she recommends that equality reviews should be built into a charity's risk register because what may be justified under the charities exception this year, may no longer apply if circumstances change.

VAT Returns to Go Fully Electronic

HM Revenue and Customs has issued a 'VAT Notes special supplement' on the move to online filing of VAT returns and electronic payments for virtually all VAT businesses from April 2012. They will write to relevant organisations in February 2012 to give details of the changes and support available, but its best to plan now if this applies to you. Please visit: www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat

NMW Rates Increase 1 October 2011

The NMW rates are reviewed each year by the Low Pay Commission and from 1 October 2011:

- the main rate for workers aged 21 and over increases to £6.08
- the 18-20 rate increases to £4.98
- the 16-17 rate for workers above school leaving age but under 18 increases to £3.68

COMMUNITY ACTION AGAINST CRIME: INNOVATION FUND

The Community action against crime: Innovation fund encourages creative new approaches to tackling crime. The fund is worth £5 million in 2011/12, with a further £5 million set aside for 2012/13. It will encourage greater community activism and enable communities to develop innovative approaches to tackling the local crime issues that matter to them.

The application process is now open, and bids for this year are invited until 1 December 2011. Please apply using the forms and guidance on the on the Community Development Foundation website www.cdf.org.uk

Please note that there are separate application forms and guidance notes for bids of small grants - £1,000-£15,000 and for large grants - £15,000 to £50,000. Please ensure that you use the correct application form.

If you require any further information or support to put a bid together, please contact Steve Baylis at SCVO on 0121 525 1127 or email: steve@scvo.info

Funding and Sustainability

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St Modwen Environmental Trust

Two grant programmes, large £10,000-£50,000 and small up to £10,000 (usually around £2,000) The trust supports projects with long-term benefits and a high level of public engagement either through public access/participation or because education/ information is a significant area of work. Organisations must be located within 10 miles of a landfill site. The trust mainly fund capital projects although will provide some revenue funding but no admin costs Contact details: 0121 222 9400. Visit: www.stmodwenenvironmentaltrust.co.uk/apply.htm

Wolves Aid

Wolves Aid is geared to helping organisations that support the positive development of the community life through encouraging social inclusion amongst the disadvantaged and disabled. They also look at promoting family life and the positive development of children. This can include physical and learning disability, physical and mental health and social challenge and deprivation. They prefer to deal with registered charities but happy to consider applications from other 'not for profit' organisations who have the community's interests in mind. Please check the website for funding exclusions. Funding is normally provided as: 'One-off' awards for capital projects (eg purchase of equipment or refurbishment of community facilities)

Multi-year awards providing annual funding over an agreed period for community projects (eg annual running costs or salary costs). Requests for funding are considered at quarterly Trustee Meetings, so please bear in mind it may be at least 4 months before a decision is made on the application. Please contact post, Wolves Aid c/o Wolves Community Trust on 01902 828366. Email: laurasaunders@wolvescommunitytrust.org.uk

Edgar E Lawley Foundation

Deadline 31 October 2011
The Edgar E Lawley Foundation current annual grants programme amounts to approximately £250,000 per annum with a typical grant being in the region of £1,200 to £2,000. The Foundation supports six broad areas including children and young people. Visit: www.edgarelawleyfoundation.org.uk/main.htm

Will Charitable Trust

Support is available for activities in the UK that fall within the following categories: care of and services for blind people; long-term care of people with learning disabilities; care of and services for people suffering from cancer; and conservation of the countryside. Visit: www.willcharitabletrust.org.uk

The Toy Trust Grant

The Toy Trust is the charity of the UK toy industry. It distributes funds to charities supporting young disadvantaged and disabled children. The Trust

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supports disadvantaged children (aged up to 13) and their families to address a range of causes, including: Alleviate suffering; Encourage achievement through adversity; Purchase vital equipment; Provide care; Satisfy basic needs. Visit: www.btha.co.uk/toytrust/index.php

The Rayne Foundation

The Rayne Foundation offers grants within four sectors: Arts, Education, Health and Medicine and Social Welfare and Development and is expected to invest around 1 million in 2011. To find out more about applying visit: www.raynefoundation.org.uk/LookingForHelp.aspx

The True Colours Trust's Small Grants Programme

Deadline 28 October 2011.
The True Colours Trust through their small grants programme, inviting applications for grants of up to £10,000 from small organisations in the UK, to help them develop and deliver programmes for disabled children, their sibling and families. The fund are particularly keen to support; Hydrotherapy pools; Multi sensory rooms; Mini buses; Young carers projects; Sibling projects; Bereavement support. There are no application deadlines. Applications can be submitted at any time. Visit: www.truecolourstrust.org.uk/small_grants.aspx

Friends Provident Foundation

The Friends Provident Foundation makes grants of up to £200,000 to not-for profit organisations for projects that address financial exclusion within disadvantaged communities. The funding is

distributed through the Financial Inclusion Programme 2009-2012. The Foundation will consider applications for work that will make a strategic contribution to the overall outcome of financial inclusion in the UK. The Foundation will consider requests for capital or revenue funding, visit: www.friendsprovidentfoundation.org

Comic Relief Local Communities Programme

Deadline 16 December 2011.
Apply via Birmingham Community Foundation £1,000-£10,000 for organisations in Birmingham and the Black Country to empower local people to create lasting change in their communities through projects run by those who are affected by issues they are dealing with. Priority will be given to small, locally based organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community. Contact details: Telephone 0121 322 5560 .Email: team@bbccf.org.uk Visit: bhamfoundation.co.uk

BBC Children in Need Grants

BBC Children in Need grants are open to organisations working with disadvantaged children and young people who are 18 years old and under. Your organisation and project must be based in the UK and you need to be a registered charity or other not-for-profit organisation. There are four general grant deadlines each year: 15 January, 15 April, 15 July and 15 October. Within the general grants programme, you can apply for:

- Small grants of £10,000 or less per year for up to three

years.

- Main grants over £10,000 per year for up to three years.

All applicants should read the detailed application guidelines on the website. It is important to read this information as there have been changes for 2011.

Architectural Heritage Fund

Deadline 26 October 2011
The Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF), which is a registered charity that promotes the conservation and regeneration of historic buildings in the UK. Funding is available to voluntary organisations building preservation trusts to regenerate historic buildings to create community and education facilities, workspace and homes. To be eligible to apply for funding through the AHF, organisations need to be a registered charity and the building(s) must be listed, scheduled as an ancient monument or in a Conservation Area (if in a Conservation Area, it must be of acknowledged historic or architectural importance). Visit: www.ahfund.org.uk/index.html

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 December/January 2011/12 issue is Friday 25 November 2011.

VCS Engagement with Safer Sandwell Partnership

Are you a Voluntary and Community Sector Organisation based in or working in Sandwell?

Do your current activities contribute to:-

- Reducing crime
- Reducing Anti Social Behaviour
- Helping people to feel safe
- Reducing the harm caused by alcohol and drugs
- Preventing and reducing offending
- Supporting community cohesion
- Supporting vulnerable members of the community

Come along to an event being held on Tuesday 8 November 2011 at the Training and Development Centre, Popes Lane, Oldbury and find out more about:-

- Safer Sandwell Partnership
- funding opportunities and

the support available to your organisation to access this funding

- activities and highlight gaps in provision and network with other organisations from the statutory and voluntary sector

To confirm your place please contact Leona Bird at SCVO on 0121 525 1172 or e-mail: leona@scvo.info by 1 November 2011.



Training Places Available

Places are still available on SCVO's training courses.

Upcoming courses include health and safety, writing a

successful funding application, data protection and information management, strategic planning and business planning.

Many courses are free, with others requiring a subsidised fee.

For more information please call the Capacity Building Team on 0121 525 1127.

