

Welcome to RAWM's bi-weekly policy e-briefing for all those interested in ***sustaining influence and change*** in the West Midlands. This briefing aims to summarise of all the main policy developments and changes affecting voluntary and community sector (VCS) groups in the West Midlands. If you have information you would like to contribute to the e-briefing, please contact Katherine Gordon, Policy Coordinator on 0121 359 9114 or email [katherineg@rawm.co.uk](mailto:katherineg@rawm.co.uk). RAWM welcomes any constructive feedback regarding this fortnightly policy e-briefing.

***Sustaining Influence and Change*** is a three year workstream within RAWM, funded by the [Big Lottery Basis programme >>](#) and will build the capacity of voluntary and community sector groups and organisations through regional policy fora. The fora will provide opportunities to work together on policy issues of regional importance. RAWM currently coordinates six policy fora and is involved in policy work with several other groups.

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**Sharon Palmer**  
Chief Executive Officer

## RAWM Policy e-Briefing

*Sustaining Influence and Change*

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# General

## ***New Ministers for the sector***

**The new Minister for the Third Sector is Angela Smith, MP for Basildon**

[Cabinet Office weblink >>](#)

[Third Sector weblink >>](#)

**The new line up at Department for Communities & Local Government**

[New Start Mag weblink >>](#)

John Denham is the newly appointed Secretary of State for Communities, but it is not clear who has specific responsibility for community cohesion or empowerment.

The Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (BERR) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) have been merged to form the **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills – BIS**. Amongst other things, BIS is remitted to -

- Invest in the development of a higher education system committed to widening participation, equipping people with the skills and knowledge to compete in a global economy and securing and enhancing Britain's existing world class research base;
- Collaborate with the RDAs in building economic growth in the English regions;
- Continue to invest in skills through the Further Education system to help people through the downturn and to prepare Britain for the future;
- Deliver on the government's ambitious objectives to expand the number of apprenticeships.

This will have a direct impact on the VCS, both as provider and consumer of learning and development opportunities.

## ***NHS Information Standard***

<b>Key issues</b>	The Information Standard is a new certification scheme for health and social care information producers. <a href="#">Weblink &gt;&gt;</a>
<b>Implications for organisations</b>	The Department of Health will be launching a new kitemark for organisations that produce information about health or social care in written, paper-based formats i.e. not web-based formats. The accreditation scheme provides standards for format and other technical issues rather than content.
<b>Action points and key dates</b>	The scheme will be rolled out in Summer 2009, and will be essential when drawing up information and communications policies.

## Balanced decision making for users of care services

<b>Key issues</b>	<p>The HSE has produced a circular which “<i>provides advice to inspectors who are involved in the regulation of social care activities. The circular explains the priorities that Local Authority Social Service Departments and social care providers have with regard to supporting adults and older people who need care and support to live with dignity and independence within the community, whilst ensuring risks are identified and managed. The general principles of risk management will also apply to the health care sector.</i>”</p> <p><a href="#">Weblink &gt;&gt;</a></p>
<b>Implications for organisations</b>	<p>The HSE circular should be useful in informing policies and procedures for health and social care service providers in the VCS as well as public sector.</p>

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## Funding & Resources

### ‘Real Help’ - Modernisation Fund

<b>Key issues</b>	<p>The £16.5m Modernisation Fund has opened for business.</p> <p><a href="#">Weblink &gt;&gt;</a></p>
<b>Implications for organisations</b>	<p>The Modernisation fund is primarily aimed at achieving collaboration and mergers between VCS organisations with annual turnover of between £150,000 and £750,000.</p> <p>£1000 bursaries are available in the first stage, which organisations can use to obtain advice on collaborating or merging.</p> <p>A second bidding stage opens in Autumn; £10k grants will be available to cover merger or collaboration costs.</p> <p>Only organisations that receive stage 1 bursaries will be able to apply for stage 2 grants. Each individual organisation applying must satisfy the turnover threshold.</p>
<b>Action Points</b>	<p>The Modernisation Fund is jointly managed by Capacitybuilders and Futurebuilders who have appointed</p>

Local Delivery Agents (LDA) to handle the contract process. The LDAs are holding workshops around the country to provide more information for organisations that are interested in the bid.

### **Criteria for Hardship Fund announced**

<p><b>Key issues</b></p>	<p>OTS has announced the criteria for the £16.7m Hardship Fund. Grants ranging between £50 - £250K will be available to organisations whose capacity to deliver services in the designated areas has been adversely affected by the recession:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Health and Social Care</li> <li>○ Housing Support</li> <li>○ Education and Training</li> <li>○ Information, Advice and Guidance</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Weblink &gt;&gt;</a></p>
<p><b>Action points and key dates</b></p>	<p>Check the OTS website for further details.</p>

### **Capacitybuilders fund to develop volunteer management**

<p><b>Key issues</b></p>	<p>Capacitybuilders has launched a £3m programme to support volunteering infrastructure.</p> <p><a href="#">Weblink &gt;&gt;</a></p>
<p><b>Implications for organisations</b></p>	<p>There are three strands to the programme:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. training bursary fund;</li> <li>2. grants for around 25 local volunteering development organisation, and;</li> <li>3. National strategic support.</li> </ol> <p>This programme is designed to enhance the sustainability of the sector and its capacity to engage in the public service agenda.</p>
<p><b>Action points and key dates</b></p>	<p>This is a closed programme in which Capacitybuilders will be inviting selected organisations to apply. We include it to enable you to keep a watching brief.</p> <p><a href="#">Weblink &gt;&gt;</a></p>

### **Big Lottery fund for youth centres in deprived areas**

<p><b>Key issues</b></p>	
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	The second round of the Big Lottery myplace funding programme has opened. Funds are available to develop places and spaces for young people. <a href="#">Weblink &gt;&gt;</a>
<b>Action points and key dates</b>	The deadline for applications is the <b>end of June</b> ; the link to the Big Lottery myplace website is broken at the time of writing this bulletin, so we cannot give the actual date or link you to the application form. We suggest that you contact the Big Lottery direct.

### **Less money from charitable trusts**

<b>Key issues</b>	The Association of Charitable Foundations anticipates a 10% drop in grants this financial year. <a href="#">Download press release (pdf) &gt;&gt;</a>
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### **Rural Sustainability**

<b>Key issues</b>	A toolkit for assessing rural sustainability has been developed: <a href="#">weblink &gt;&gt;</a> .
<b>Action points and key dates</b>	<a href="#">Download the worksheet here (pdf) &gt;&gt;</a>

### **Population trends**

<b>Key issues</b>	NCVO's latest Third Sector Foresight booklet focuses on population forecasts for the next 5 years. <a href="#">Download booklet (pdf) &gt;&gt;</a>
<b>Implications for organisations</b>	The data will be useful for developing organisational policies as well as service planning.

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## **Personal and Organisational Development**

### **Volunteers**

<b>Key issues</b>	A survey amongst 925 volunteers conducted by do-it!*
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	<p>shows that 72% of volunteers are female, and 72% are white. Alarming, 1 in ten volunteers found their placements boring, and 10% found it disorganised.</p> <p><a href="#">Weblink &gt;&gt;</a></p>
<b>Implications for organisations</b>	<p>The government is putting significant resources into volunteer development. The do-it! survey should provide valuable information to help organisations develop mutually beneficial, effective volunteer programmes.</p> <p>* <a href="http://www.do-it.org.uk/">http://www.do-it.org.uk/</a></p>

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## Consultations

### ***Personalisation Commission***

<b>Key issues</b>	<p>The Association of Chief Executives (ACEVO) has launched a commission on personalisation i.e. personal budgets in health and social care.</p> <p><a href="#">Weblink &gt;&gt;</a></p>
<b>Implications for organisations</b>	<p>The Commission is made up of ACEVO members, Cabinet Office, DoH, Demos, Policy Exchange and Dame Denise Platt, and will focus on the challenges and opportunities of the personalisation agenda for the sector.</p>
<b>Action points and key dates</b>	<p>The Commission will hold two roundtable discussion events:  7<sup>th</sup> July 2009, pm – Leeds  9<sup>th</sup> July 2009, pm – London</p> <p>Contact ACEVO for further information:  Tel: 0845 345 8481  <a href="mailto:info@acevo.org.uk">info@acevo.org.uk</a></p>

### ***Compact – recession think piece***

<b>Key issues</b>	<p>The Compact has produced a ‘think piece’ on the impact of the recession on Compact implementation: <a href="#">weblink &gt;&gt;</a>.</p>
<b>Implications for organisations</b>	<p>This is not a consultation exercise; however, the document is divided into eight topic areas which may provide a useful structure for discussions on organisational development.</p>

## Events

### ***“Third Sector Leaders Board”***

<b>Key issues</b>	<p>Responsibility for policy making and strategy implementation in the region lies with Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM), the Regional Assembly (RA) and Advantage West Midlands - the Regional Development Agency (RDA). The VCS has had a voice in the regional policy making arena via RAWM’s membership of the ‘Other Stakeholders’ Group’ (OSG), an adjunct of the RA. Following the Government’s sub-national review*, the RA will be disbanded and replaced with a Local Authority Leaders’ Board. The OSG will consequently disband, effectively cutting the VCS out of regional policy making forums. The region is in a transitional phase at the moment, with new structures scheduled to come into place in 2010.</p> <p>We can now report that RAWM has secured Capacitybuilders funding to develop a ‘third sector leaders board’ which we intend will become the route for sector voice. The board will sit alongside the Local Authorities Leaders Board and will inform the Joint Strategic Investment Board and the drafting and delivery of the Single Integrated Regional Strategy, both being jointly led by Advantage West Midlands and Local Government.</p> <p>A consultation event for Chief Executives of Councils for Voluntary Services, sub-regional VCS Assemblies, and Capacitybuilders ChangeUp consortia will be held in the summer period to determine what the Board should look like and what it should do.</p>
<b>Implications for organisations</b>	<p>The summer events are consultation sessions, and will be a key opportunity to help shape the board and its remit.</p> <p>Please note that “Third Sector Leaders Board” is a working title for a work in progress, which RAWM is using to mirror the LA Leaders Board.</p>
<b>Action points and key dates</b>	<p>The event is being delivered twice to increase the opportunity for organisations to take part, therefore people only need to attend once.</p> <p><b>Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009 - am, Burton on Trent</b> <b>Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2009 – am, Worcester</b></p> <p>Please contact RAWM’s CEO Sharon Palmer for further</p>

information about the board: 📧 [sharonp@rawm.co.uk](mailto:sharonp@rawm.co.uk); 📞 0121 359 9100

Contact Matt Bullock, Support Services Officer, to request a booking form for the event: 📧 [mattb@rawm.co.uk](mailto:mattb@rawm.co.uk); 📞 0121 359 9110

***RAWM also produces a monthly generic bulletin for its members which includes details of resources and opportunities available for VCS groups. For more information on RAWM membership, click on the link below.***

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