

North West Network



NEWS UPDATE



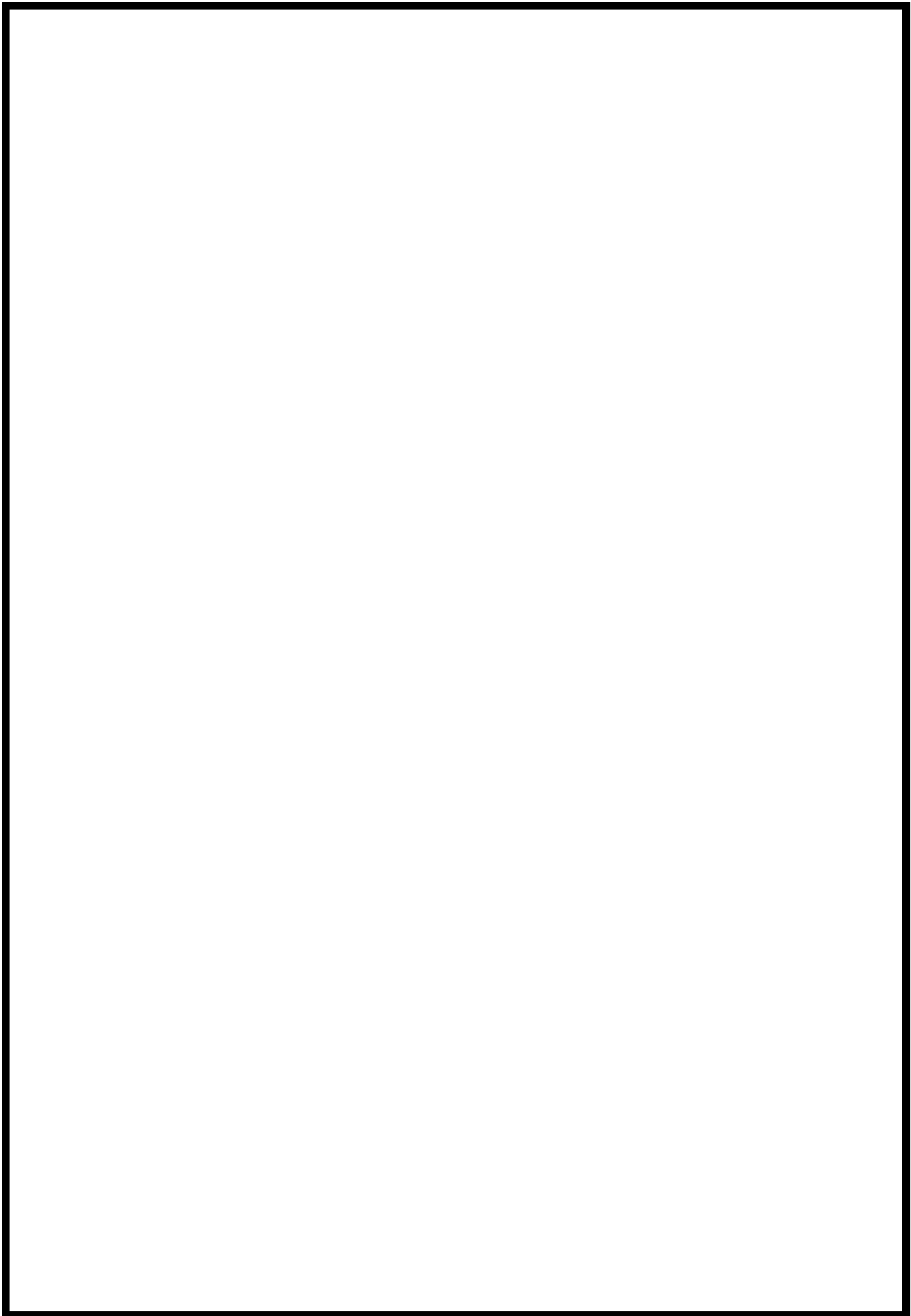
December 2005

Welcome	
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Welcome	Welcome to North West Network's News Update for December 2005. All the staff at North West Network would like to wish all our members and readership a Merry Christmas and a successful 2006.
Objective 2 Update	
Objective 3 Update	Within this update you will find the latest information relating to the Objective 2 (ERDF) Programme. Also included is a round up of the Objective 3 Programme detailing all the LSC's recent and current bidding rounds.
ESF at Work Conference	Other articles include, ESF at Work Conference, TSEN Manchester Communiqué, National Strategic Reference Framework and Reform of the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds. Also included is Top Tips for Bid Writers.
TSEN Manchester Communiqué	
National Strategic Reference Framework	The Volunteer Management Team has produced an update article on the SAM Volunteer Management. Other articles within their section include an article on the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation and an article from the Minister for the Voluntary and Community Sector – Paul Goggins.
Reform of the EU Structural And Cohesion Funds	Just a gentle reminder. Enclosed with this mailing, you will find a North West Network membership renewal form for the period of 1 January to 31 December 2006. The cost of membership remains the same as last year and we ask that these forms be completed and returned to us as soon as possible.
ESF Applications Top Tips	
Coldwell – A Social Enterprise with a History	As the year draws to an end, both the North West Network Team and Board of Trustees wish to thank Members for their continued support throughout 2005 and we look forward to working with you during the year ahead.
Scarman Trust Sam Update	Please do contact us at North West Network with your views, and if you have any information that you would like to submit to the Newsletter please e-mail: info@nwnetwork.org.uk
Mentoring and Befriending Foundation	
Minister for the Voluntary and Community Sector	
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Objective 2 Update

ERDF Programme Performance

The Objective 2 Advisory Group at its meeting in Manchester on 1 December 2005 heard encouraging news about the performance of the Objective 2 part of the Structural Fund Programmes 2000 – 2006.

The voluntary and community sector was represented at the meeting by John Hacking Senior European Officer from North West Network and Mark Dawson from Voluntary Sector North West (VSNW).

Total spend for the Programme so far is at £333m which is over the n+2 2005 target of £314m. For those of you who like this sort of thing n+2 is the principle by which the spend required of a programme under the Berlin Profile is calculated. n is the commitment year and +2 is the year by the end of which funds committed in n have to be spent or returned. It sounds very complicated but what this means is that the Programme is spending on time and to budget. The n+2 target for 2006 is £394m.

The Objective 2 Advisory Group meets quarterly and is responsible for the management of the Objective 2 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) section of the Structural Funds Programme in the North West.

If any members or readers wish to know more about the O2 Advisory Group and what it does, then please contact John Hacking, Senior European Officer at North West Network on 0161 236 6493 or e-mail him john@nwnetwork.org.uk

Post 2006 Programme

At the time of writing the EU have still not agreed a budget for the period 2007-13. Until that budget is agreed it is not possible for the regulations regarding Structural Funds to be finalised.

The Community Strategic Guidelines which form the basic framework for the EU Structural Funds were recently out for consultation. Thank you to people who responded to our call for your views. We passed them on to the Commission through the relevant channels.

Objective 3 Update

LSC Lancashire

LSC Lancashire will launch their fourth Prospectus for their tendering round for ESF monies early in the New Year. The closing date for comments and views was Friday 16 December 2005. The LSC envisages launching the final Prospectus on Friday 6 January 2006, with the closing date for Tenders being 12:00 noon Monday 20 February 2006.

The tender specifications that are the focus of LSC Lancashire's fourth tendering round are detailed below:

- The provision of information, advice and guidance (IAG) for unemployed and economically inactive aged 19-65, including the enhancement of advice and guidance through innovative systems and approaches; advice and guidance using new forms of IT and capacity building for voluntary/community organisations to deliver Matrix accredited IAG.
(Tender Specification Reference: 1.1B)
- Provision which helps to improve the employability of young people through individually tailored programmes of development, of less than 16 hours per week, that are designed to remove barriers to learning and labour market entry; by motivating young people and aiding progression to LSC main programme provision primarily e2e. However other acceptable outcomes would be FE foundation/entry programmes or Prince's Trust Team programmes.
(Tender Specification Reference: 1.2D)
- A flexible 10 week programme which would offer a range of vocational tasters to young people across a range of sectors including the LSC's priority sectors of: construction, health and social care, leisure and tourism, textiles and retail. The programme would provide a minimum of 16 hours per week and offer a rolling entry at any point. The outcomes of this programme will be young people progressing onto suitable vocational learning programmes in further education or work based learning.
(Tender Specification Reference: 1.2E)
- Projects are invited to ensure that offenders (19+) in Lancashire, according to need, have access to education and training in the community. Support should enable them to gain the skills and qualifications they require to provide alternatives to crime, to gain and keep appropriate employment, and to play a positive role within their local communities.
(Tender Specification Reference 2.1D)

- Provision which provides contextualised ESOL training programmes to unemployed, economically inactive and employed people across a range of sectors including the LSC's priority sectors of: construction, health and social care, leisure and tourism, textiles and retail.
(Tender Specification Reference 2.1F)
- Activities which promote wider access and participation in lifelong learning for those individuals with Skill for Life needs by equipping employed tutors currently delivering Skills for Life training with the new adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL teacher qualifications.
(Tender Specification Reference 2.1G)
- Development and delivery of innovative and effective ways of promoting and providing Skills for Life, through vocational guidance and training and employment support measures, to those groups disadvantaged, excluded or under-represented in the workplace.
(Tender Specification Reference 2.1H)
- Support to develop the capacity of community and voluntary sector providers to deliver Skills for Life in their communities thereby breaking down the barriers felt by disadvantaged individuals and encouraging progression into mainstream learning opportunities.
(Tender Specification Reference 2.1J)
- Projects which aim to improve the employability of adults of working age through the provision of integrated approaches including the provision of vocational, social and key skills (including confidence building) and improving the capacity for community development.
(Tender Specification Reference: 2.2F)
- Provision which helps to increase the proportion of e2e leavers who enter a work based learning (WBL) or full-time learning outcome following e2e.
(Tender Specification Reference: 2.2G)
- Projects which will ensure that young offenders (14-19) in Lancashire, according to need, have access to education and training in the community. This will enable them to gain the skills and qualifications that they require to provide alternatives to crime, to gain and keep appropriate employment, and to play a positive role within their communities.
(Tender Specification Reference: 2.2H)
- Projects which aim to improve the employability of adults of working age through the provision of customised vocational training packages which will enable unemployed and/or economically inactive people to access employment in the public sector.
(Tender Specification Reference: 2.2J)

Provision which supports people aged 50-65 to increase/diversify their skills particularly those at risk of redundancy, who work or wish to work in the following priority sectors: construction, health and social care, leisure and tourism, textiles and retail.

(Tender Specification Reference: 3.1Q)

- Projects which open up access to learning for those disadvantaged adults least engaged with the education system by extending access through more innovative means, including family and community learning and through helping individuals develop and manage their own learning; outreach activities and; one-to-one intensive assistance. Projects should embrace a programme of learning support.

(Tender Specification Reference: 3.1R)

- Programmes of training which support companies by equipping their workforce with vocational skills at Level 2. A particularly priority will be those projects which seek to delivery qualifications in construction, care, IT and manufacturing.

(Tender Specification Reference: 3.2C)

- Projects which provide a team of peripatetic specialist Skills for Life (SfL) tutors and assessors, delivering to FENTO quality standards, who are able to deliver flexibly in the workplace by delivering the activity outside of normal working day evenings and weekends.

(Tender Specification Reference: 4.1D)

- Projects which offer face-to-face training needs analysis (TNA) which aim to identify Skills for Life, NVQ Level 2 (or equivalent), NVQ Level 3 (or equivalent) and Leadership & Management needs within an organisation and then which provide an enhanced brokerage support which quickly and effectively signposts and brokers Lancashire employers to the skills, training and workforce development support identified in the TNA.

(Tender Specification Reference: 4.2G)

This is just a snapshot of the activities that LSC Lancashire wishes to support. For more information and if you would like to express any comments or views on the Draft Prospectus it is recommended that you visit their website:

[www.lsc.gov.uk/lancashire/Corporate/
InformationBank/European+Social+Fund+%28ESF%29
+Information+and+Documents.htm](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/lancashire/Corporate/InformationBank/European+Social+Fund+%28ESF%29+Information+and+Documents.htm)

LSC Lancashire will be holding a briefing session prior to the launch of the Prospectus, on 5 January 2006 at Clayton Park Conference and Learning Centre. The booking form is available in the 'Information Bank' section of LSC Lancashire's pages of the national website www.lsc.gov.uk/lancashire

North West Network will hold a training event on the application process at Preston CVS on 18 January 2006. A booking form is enclosed in this newsletter. Alternatively you can download a booking form from North West Network's website www.nwnetwork.org.uk. Click on European funding/ Objective 3/ Co-Financing/ Lancashire LSC/ Training. North West Network will also offer a bid improvement service specifically for tenders being developed by voluntary and community sector organisations. To find out more or to request assistance in developing a potential project idea, please contact either Angeliki Stogia or John Hacking from the European Team at North West Network on 0161 236 6493.

LSC Greater Manchester

LSC Greater Manchester has published the results of their fourth Co-financing prospectus for their 2004-2006 ESF Co-financing programme. For this prospectus, the total amount available across all available measures was £6,667,077 ESF. A three stage appraisal and approval process was used for this prospectus, with external volunteers involved at every stage to enhance transparency of the LSC's Open and Competitive Tendering Process.

On the first stage process, 228 applications were received across all sectors requesting £54,181,045. Of these 47 failed to meet the basic submission requirements and did not progress to appraisal. 46 were graded C or D at appraisal and were not invited to progress to Stage Two of the process. The remaining 135 applications were invited to proceed to Stage 2. Of these, 33 were from the voluntary and community Sector (VCS).

130 Stage Two tender forms were submitted to the LSC with a total value of £37,934,151 (The 33 VCS applications requested £4,905,432 ESF). 126 bids were passed on to the Strategic Review Panel for consideration (31 being from the VCS, requesting £4,821,361). In total 31 bids were approved for ESF funding across all sectors with 10 coming from the VCS. In total the sector secured £ 1,033,235 ESF.

LSC Greater Manchester will soon begin their consultation and planning for their fifth Prospectus in spring 2006.

For more information on LSC Greater Manchester please visit:
www.lscgm.info/

LSC Greater Merseyside

The most recent procurement round of LSC Greater Merseyside for Objective 3 Discretionary Funds resulted in the issuing of three new contracts for Halton learners to the value of £1,025,871. Through the April 2005 prospectus, three projects were successful.

A further prospectus was launched in July 2005 to tender for the New Skills Escalator. A joint Objective 1 and 3 project was awarded to Partnership for Learning (PfL). The programme was designed to meet the re-training needs of those low skilled Greater Merseyside residents who have recently experienced or who are at risk of redundancy. Career development training will be provided for those most at risk and PfL will be

expected to work in partnership with Jobcentre Plus and also with employment initiatives such as the JET Centres.

For more information visit:
www.lsc.gov.uk/merseyside/Documents/Procurement+2005.htm

LSC Cumbria

LSC Cumbria will publish their eighth bidding round for their Funding Gateway Prospectus for Discretionary funds 2004-2006 early in the New Year.

For more information visit: www.lsc.gov.uk/cumbria/Documents/SubjectListing/FundingLearning/funding-gateway_round-6.htm

LSC Cheshire and Warrington

On 25 May 2005 LSC Cheshire and Warrington issued an invitation to tender under Priority 3 Measure 1. This invitation to tender formally requested organisations to become engaged in employer-led activity that would meet the Skills for Life needs of employees. This invitation to tender called for projects running from 1 September 2005 to 30 September 2006. The deadline for tenders to be submitted under this call was 12:00 noon 8 July 2005. The results are published at LSC Cheshire and Warrington's LSC website on www.lscdf.co.uk/ITTs.html

Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus are about to post the results of their second Co-financing Tendering Round. Jobcentre Plus received 212 bids under their Tendering Round 2 of which 108 were rejected, whilst a further 26 failed to reach the scoring threshold. Out of the 108 rejected bids, 32 were rejected for format errors and 76 were rejected for other reasons including incomplete tenders (63), arrived late (12), not eligible (1). The remaining 104 tenders were fully appraised and 78 of these proceeded to the Strategic Appraisal panel. The Ratification panel took place on 16 September 2005 and 34 tenders gained preferred supplier status. The results of Jobcentre Plus will become available at the Jobcentre Plus Tendering Round website early next year.

For more information visit: www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/cms.asp?Page=/Home/Partners/EuropeanSocialFund/672

Alternative (Direct) Bidding Round 12

The Alternative (Direct) Bidding Round 12 was launched on 12 October 2005. The deadline for applications to be submitted to the Regional Representatives was 18 November 2005 and applications that passed the first stage checks were forwarded to the Government Office on 25 November 2005. 5 applications were submitted to Government Office from the VCS. In total Government Office received 38 applications from across all sectors. The results of Alternative Bidding Round 12 will be reported early in the New Year.

Keep in Touch!

News for calls for tender are expected from Co-financing organisations in the New Year and North West Network will let all interested parties know as soon as calls for tenders are announced. Please note that, subject to demand, North West Network will be holding training events well in advance for submission for tenders for those interested organisations in the sub-regions.

Calls for tenders will be put up at North West Network's website as well as dates and information for future training events. So, for further information the link to follow is: www.nwnetwork.org.uk/index.php?page=browse&cat_id=113

In addition, North West Network sends out monthly email bulletins to its database members with all the news and calls on European funding. If you are not registered on our database and would like to receive our email bulletin and newsletter, please contact our new Communications Officer Denise Marriott on 0161 236 6493 or denise@nwnetwork.org.uk

If you require further information on any of the Invitations to Tender above, or have a project proposal in mind and would like to find out if it would be eligible for Objective 3 funding then please contact a member of the European Team at North West Network

ESF at Work Conference

The UK Presidency ESF Conference entitled "ESF at Work" was held at the Manchester International Conference Centre on 14 October 2005 with over 350 delegates (including projects, policy makers and over 60 ESF representatives from 20 Member States across Europe) attending to celebrate the achievements of the European Social Fund.

The Conference examined how ESF is being used to enhance employment and growth in line with the European Union's Lisbon Strategy. There were keynote speeches from Work and Pensions Minister James Plaskitt, and Vladimir Spidla the Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

James Plaskitt told the conference that "Since 2000, ESF has helped 2.2 million people in the UK. Vulnerable people in our most deprived communities have been given new opportunities thanks to ESF funding delivered in partnership with the public, private and voluntary sectors." In his speech Vladimir Spidla said that "Sharing experiences and exchanging best practices is key to getting the most out of ESF programmes and projects. The more we learn from each other the more progress we make."

There was also a plenary session titled "Learning lessons of the 2000-2006 ESF programmes" with presentations from the Learning and Skills Council, the Carers UK Equal Development Partnership and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour in Poland.

The aims of the event were to:

- Examine how ESF can enhance jobs and growth in line with the European Union's Lisbon Strategy
- Celebrate the achievements of ESF projects in increasing employment and skills, and improving social inclusion
- Identify best practice and lessons for the future

The event also hosted an ESF exhibition, with 50 stands, and 15 workshops which identified good practice and highlighted lessons for the future. The regional voluntary sector was well represented at the conference with North West Network, Mersey Network for Europe, Care Sector Trust and Big Life all exhibiting with stands. Moreover, Nick Mann from Furniture Matters presented a workshop on Social Enterprise, Cat Settle from Wai Yin Chinese Women's Society a workshop on Ethnic Minorities and Carol Robson & Garnett Simpson from the Shaw Project a workshop on Basic Skills.

If you would like to find out about the conclusions reached from these and other workshops then please refer to:

www.esf.gov.uk/UK%20Presidency/Workshop%20Reports.asp

TSEN Manchester Communiqué

On 13 October, prior to the UK Presidency ESF Conference "ESF at Work", representatives of the Third Sector European Network membership met at UMIST in Manchester to review the work of the voluntary and community sector under the current Programmes and to identify best practice with a view to incorporation in the new Programmes.

It is well known that the sector is most successful in working with those furthest from the labour market, the "hard to help" and the economically inactive as a result of multiple disadvantage. The Conference recognised the successes of the Government under the current Programmes in involving NGOs in the management and delivery of Structural Funds, particularly through the imaginative use of Technical Assistance. In acknowledging this good practice the Conference recommended that other Member States follow this lead.

Additionally the Conference welcomed the European Commission commitment in the new Programmes to participation and good governance involving NGOs as well as other social partners.

The Conference provided the opportunity to hear specific examples of effective Third Sector interventions using the structural funds and stimulated debate on general strategies and policies for effective Social Inclusion work using the European Structural Funds. The main aims of the conference however were threefold:

- To discuss future options for sustaining the work after 2006
- To discuss how Third Sector organisations can help ensure that our communities continue to thrive in and engage with the European project
- To issue a communiqué on the distinctive "Third Sector" approaches to Social Inclusion

The Conference determined there must be an agreement at the earliest possible opportunity on the Financial Perspective of the next programming period in order to avoid gaps in funding which would be detrimental to Programme beneficiaries as well as many organisations in all the Member States. Participants at the Conference also determined that, we should continue to build on the good practice developed under the current Programmes. At the end of the day's discussions a Communiqué was agreed by those attending the event.

The Communiqué stated that future Programmes must be committed to:

- Instruments that reflect the policy position already expressed in the Draft Regulations to make provision for the socially excluded both at a European and Member State level.

- Active involvement of the “hardest to reach” in identifying suitable actions and, by so doing, the recognition that the disadvantage of such individuals is defined not just in terms of economic inactivity but also in terms of wider disempowerment.
- The expansion of the current Global Grants Programme to embrace various levels of community intervention amongst the economically inactive to promote their active participation through voluntary action, training and employment.
- The retention of volunteer time as match funding
- The promotion of interregional co-operation between Third Sectors in Member States
- The delivery of this commitment through consultation with NGOs as well as with Social Partners in the development of the National Strategic Reference Frameworks.

Through its members, TSEN represent many thousands of voluntary organisations, community organisations and social enterprises, both large and small, in all parts of the UK.

National Strategic Reference Framework

Negotiations on EU Structural Fund programmes and priorities for the next Programming period (2007–2013) and the EU budget are well under way and earlier this year the European Commission published draft Community Strategic Guidelines (CSGs) setting out the key principles on which future programmes should be based.

The challenge now is for member states to translate these guidelines into a vision for the national, regional and local levels, through a National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF). This framework will, in turn, form the basis for the 2007–2013 programmes. Consequently the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister is currently consulting on the United Kingdom NSRF.

The NSRF is a strategic document for Member States which will set out high level priorities that operating programmes should address prior to the implementation of the new Structural Funds Programming period. It should also show how EU wide policies will be supported (as set out in the EC Community Strategic Guidelines, 2005).

There is a long way to go in concluding negotiations, but early views on the preparation of a National Strategic Reference Framework at UK level are being welcomed. Early consultation has already been carried out in September/early October and there will be a further (and wider) consultation on the draft later in the year. The final document will be submitted to the European Commission in early 2006.

Background

Commission Proposals for Reform

In February 2004, the European Commission published its Third Report on Economic and Social Cohesion: "A New Partnership for Cohesion for the 2007- 2013 Financial Perspective". As part of these reforms, the Commission proposes to establish a "strategic approach to cohesion" in order to strengthen the strategic focus of EU regional policy on the Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas.

According to the Commission's proposals, the Member States would agree a set of CSGs thereby establishing the Community objectives for EU regional policy. Each Member State would then produce a NSRF, with a separate annex covering Operational Programmes for the regions outlining:

- Key national priorities
- The contribution this will make to EU objectives
- The strategy for delivering the Structural and Cohesion Funds in its Operational Programmes

The NSRF will be a concise document comprising around 40 pages in total. It will include an introduction to UK regional policy followed by four separate national chapters which will contain socio-economic analysis and strategic regional priorities.

It will also contain an annex with a list of Operational Programmes and annual allocations (after the budget has been finalised) together with details about UK allocations from other funds, e.g. agriculture and fisheries.

The UK Position

The UK position remains the same in that the Structural Funds budget managed by the EC should focus on the poorest Member States (largely accession countries). Post-2006 regeneration activity in the richer Member States (including the UK) should be funded domestically. This would be under cover of a guarantee that if the UK approach is accepted, domestic spending on regional policy would increase so that regions do not lose out as a result of reform.

There is some way to go before negotiations on the new Programming period are concluded, not least around the overall size of the EU Budget and the detailed regulations that will underpin the operational programmes. For these reasons it is not yet clear how regions, such as the North West will be affected. The UK supports the principle of a guiding national framework such as an NSRF. Regardless of the outcome of negotiations, it can ensure that spending reinforces UK priorities for regional development and the Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas for sustainable growth.

There is also a UK wide focus on employment and skills policy that will need to be addressed. Unemployment is no longer the main challenge for the UK and, now that the Government is near its initial aspiration of 75% of working age population in employment, focus is turning to the economically inactive. To meet its long-term aspiration of 80% employment, the Government will assist target groups such as people on incapacity benefits, ethnic minorities, older workers, lone parents and people living in deprived areas.

Implications for the Region

The timing of this consultation coincides with the review of the Regional Economic Strategy, which has just been consulted upon across the region. Partners will want to ensure that the NSRF is consistent with the regional priorities that are identified.

Next steps

Views from partners from this and other regions will inform the preparation of an NSRF working draft, which will be circulated widely for comment later in the year, and provide partners with a helpful framework to guide development of future operational programmes.

Some Questions and Answers:

- Q. How does the NSRF align with regional priorities and how can local issues be fed in?
- A. *The framework will recognise contributions made from regions during the consultation phase, but it is important to recognise that it is a very high level document. The "big" strategic framework had already been set by the Third Cohesion Report. If people have views on the content of the NSRF it is important that these are fed in now.*
- Q. Is it to be understood that we can provide ideas towards the NSRF but not ask about the specifics of funding?
- A. *The focus of the consultation events is around content and not money. At this stage it is important to consider what we would be investing in rather than the amount available for this. Information for the English Chapter of the NSRF, will be informed by existing regional policy documents and initiatives such as the Northern Way, Regional Economic Strategies, etc.*
- Q. How are regional priorities going to be included within the NSRF which will be a relatively short document?
- A. *Every effort will be made to draw out common issues and common concerns from the regions in the NSRF. It is important to ensure that the NSRF recognises and aligns with regional priorities, as there needs to be strategic, implementation and investment alignment to successfully delivery future Programmes. It is also important to recognise that the NSRF would be supported by regional Operational programmes.*
- Q. As there are huge disparities within regions themselves, how can sub-regional issues be identified in order that they can be supported. Also, how can we support priorities of other Government Departments?
- A. *It is up to the regional agencies (GONW, NWDA, NWRA, etc.) to raise localised issues for the Operational Programme.*
- Q. How can we ensure convergence within the NW region as some parts are steaming ahead of others, even within cities? We need to ensure that skills, training and access to employment are given a priority.
- A. *The Operational Programme needs to recognise that disparities exist within, as well as between regions. The 'design' issues also need to be recognised, e.g. are future programmes about opportunity or need – an important question, as the answer will result in different types of Programme. There is no point in having a geographically targeted Programme based on opportunity, in an area of real need – if the funding could not then be accessed. Careful thought must be given to tackling need and deprivation. We must be confident in using our learning from current Programmes, as there will be less money available.*
- Q. It is essential that the NSRF is not too specific as it has to be relevant for the life of the Programmes.
- A. *The NSRF is not an operational document but a strategy to feed into the Programmes. There will be opportunities to revise the document, but as it would be a high level strategy document, it should not really need to be changed. The strategy for the current Programmes was set in 1999 and is still largely valid.*

Reform of the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds

The following article has been produced by the government and simplified by us at North West Network! It outlines the Government's guarantee to increase the domestic resources for Regional Policy in the UK.

As an information note, this article provides a summary explanation of the Government's guarantee to increase the domestic resources available for regional policy in the UK (if its proposals for reform of the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds are adopted). Read on and find out more.

Reform of the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds

The current cycle of Structural and Cohesion Funds programmes will come to an end in 2006 and the EU Member States are currently negotiating on the reform of the Funds for the 2007-2013 period. The UK has put forward radical reform proposals, where Member States would sign up to common objectives for regional policy, but where richer Member States would finance regional programmes from their domestic resources. The EU's limited resources would be focused on the poorer Member States where EU intervention is likely to have the greatest impact and added value.

The Government set out its detailed proposals for reform of the funds in its consultation document "A modern regional policy for the United Kingdom" in March 2003 and in two written statements to Parliament on 17 September and 11 December 2003. The Government has guaranteed, if its reform proposals are accepted in full, to increase the domestic resources for regional policy in the UK, so ensuring that the UK and its regions do not lose out as a result of reform.

The Government's Funding Guarantee

If the UK's reform proposals are accepted, the Government has undertaken to increase domestic funding for regional policy by the amount that the UK would have received if the current eligibility criteria for Structural Funds were applied to the enlarged EU for the next Financial Perspective. The Government is only able to commit to the guarantee if the UK's reform proposals are adopted in full.

The UK would then determine the amount of additional resources by re-applying the current eligibility criteria for allocating Structural Funds to an enlarged EU using the latest regional data available before the next Financial Perspective, for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

How Does the Guarantee relate to EU spending?

Existing and potential Structural and Cohesion Fund spending in the UK comes at a cost to the Exchequer. Currently the UK pays around €1.60 for every €1 received. Therefore it is more efficient for the UK to fund domestic regional policy directly, through the Guarantee, than to recycle the spending through Europe and lose more in domestic spending than it gains in EU receipts. Increasing the UK's receipts from Europe would also reduce domestic spending.

The Value of the Guarantee

The exact value of the Guarantee will depend on a wide range of factors and data, which are not yet confirmed. Similarly, the impact for UK regions of the Commission's proposals for Structural Funds reform will depend on a wide range of factors, since allocations would also be determined by reference to the latest data on regional economic performance across the EU. However, it is clear that the Commission's proposals would lead to a significant increase in the UK's contributions to the EC budget, leaving less money for domestic spending on regional policy and other areas.

Structural Funds are allocated by reference to statistics on economic performance across the EU for the most recent years for which data is available prior to the agreement. However, we do not know when a deal will be struck, and there is a rolling process for updating data, such as regional GVA data, national GDP, Purchasing Power Parities, employment data, and population.

The Duration of the Guarantee

The Government has made clear that the Guarantee would apply for the full period of the next cycle of Structural Funds programmes (seven years), plus the ability to carry forward spending into the following two years. This Guarantee is exceptional in being one of a very small number of examples where the Government has made a long-term spending commitment for more than three years. This reflects its exceptionally strong commitment to regional development.

Traditionally, public finances and spending plans have been based on the principle of annual budgeting and appropriations. The Government recognises the benefits of long-term budgeting, and has introduced 3 year Spending Review plans that have become the accepted basis of public spending. This is a significant advance on the past, and puts the UK at the forefront of EU Member States in long term budgeting. The Government has also recently consulted on proposals to establish long term funding assumptions beyond the Spending Review period not just for Regional Development Agencies, but also for regional transport and regional housing funding. The Guarantee is therefore an exceptional long-term commitment by the Government.

Delivery Arrangements for the Additional Resources

The Government has not put forward a detailed blueprint for delivery of the Guarantee to date. They are at an early stage in the negotiations on the reform of EU regional policy and final arrangements will depend on a wide range of factors yet to be confirmed.

However, as the Government made clear in its Statement to Parliament of December 2003, the UK would wish to focus on areas of high unemployment and low GDP. As for the administration of the additional money, the government have said that they wish to build upon the positive aspects of current Structural Funds programmes including devolved delivery, partnership working and multi-annual funding.

In England, a range of bodies currently takes decisions on regeneration and the delivery of social and economic development. At a region-wide level, both the Regional Development Agencies and Government Offices play a key role. A wide range of regional strategies, including the Regional Economic Strategies and Regional Spatial Strategies guide regional development in England.

At the sub-regional and local levels, important delivery agents include local authorities, local Learning and Skills Councils and Jobcentre Plus, along with other sub-regional partnerships, taking this process a stage further, involving businesses, education and training providers, the voluntary and community sectors and other stakeholders.

As explained above, exactly what the domestic institutional arrangements will be in 2007, and exactly how increased domestic funding (as a result of Structural Funds reform) would be distributed will depend on a range wide range of factors. The Government will look to build on those domestic institutions and funding arrangements in delivering against the EU Framework, taking account of the balance of existing funding, and streamlining the process of evaluation, delivery and accountability.

The Principle of Additionality

The Government committed in the 11 December Statement to Parliament that the Guarantee will meet the same additionality requirement as the Structural Funds regulations, and increased spending through the Guarantee will "not replace public or other equivalent structural expenditure". The resources under the Guarantee would be additional to public expenditure outside the Guarantee, including the domestic resources that are currently used to co-finance Structural Funds programmes in our regions.

What if the UK proposals are not adopted in full?

It must be remembered that this is a negotiation and that the government are arguing for full adoption of the UK position. The UK's position on Structural Funds is supported fully by Netherlands and Sweden. A number of other Member States share elements of our approach. The UK's budget discipline objectives are shared by 5 other signatories to the 1% letter (Sweden, Netherlands, France, Germany, Austria), and others (e.g. Denmark) who are also calling for a budget substantially of no more than 1% of EU GNI.

European Social Fund (ESF) Applications

Ten Top Tips for Bid Writers

Having spent the spring and most of the summer locked in appraisal panels for ESF bidding round or another, your intrepid reporter can bring you some insights from the sealed chambers. Actually I'm not very intrepid and I'm not really a reporter so you grab your excitement where you can in this game!

Seriously, I have spent a lot of time this year on scoring and appraisal panels across the region for various ESF bidding and tendering rounds. Whilst most of the projects (especially in the Voluntary and Community Sector) are well written and presented there are still some mistakes or oversights which even the best bid writer can be guilty of sometimes.

The following tips are not particularly rocket science but they are errors or oversights which I have seen time and again on real application forms. They may not prove fatal to a project's chances of success at scoring/appraisal stage (although some of them alone or in combination can mean the difference between achieving the desired score or not).

So read on and when you have finished cut them out and stick them on your bid writers fridge.

Whatever the application form or process you will be asked early on in the application to give a brief (usually fifty words) description of the project. At this point you should state who you are, what you will be doing, who to, why you are doing this, when the activity will take place and how it will be delivered. If you sum up your project succinctly, and more importantly make it easier for the scorer or appraiser to understand what your project is about, then this will positively aid them in scoring and appraising your application. All too often I am asked to score or appraise projects that are incomprehensible. Be succinct and make sure that others know what you want to deliver from the outset – you can expand in other areas later on in your application.

Always remember to put the right Policy Field/Measure/Number that you are bidding for in the box that says "Policy Field/Measure/Number". You'd be surprised how many people put the wrong one in and consequently the scoring is done on the basis of the criteria for the Policy Field/Measure/number that you put in the box, not the one you wrote your bid under.

Be aware that in ESF generally, and especially with co-financed projects, the application form becomes part of the final contract. So remember anything you say on the application form or tender document, you will be held to later. Motto? Don't make wild promises you can't keep.

Also don't use vague language. This drives scorers up the wall. Avoid "possibly", "hopefully" and other non distinct descriptions.

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Try to use all the space allocated to an answer. Scorers will mark on what you have written but if you leave three quarters of the answer box empty they may reasonably assume that you don't have much to say, or that you don't have much evidence to back up your claims.

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Conversely, don't go over the space allocated. If the form says you may use one page for the answer then use one page. If you go over the allocated space the scorer will draw a line at the allowed length and anything written after that line will not be scored. This happens a lot!

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Make your point early. If you have a key point in an answer to a question then get it in early. Don't build up to it. It is much better to make your point and then spend the rest of the time backing it up rather than rambling along at the beginning and building up to a crescendo just at the point when the scorer has lost the will to live.

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Remember, the scorer doesn't know you, or your organisation, or your project. Even if they do they may have declared an interest and won't be scoring your project anyway. Assume the scorer knows nothing, in some cases this may be literally true but it is the safest policy in any case. Don't use phrases like "as everyone knows we have been delivering quality training of this kind for ten years". Assume they don't know and spell it out: what kind of training you will be delivering, where, who to, how, how long, how much, how successful it is, how it is funded, how it is evaluated, how it is a success, did you pass audit and achieve outcomes. You may think this is fan fiction but the above example is real!

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When you are asked to refer to a document, make sure it is the latest version. For ESF you are almost always asked to make reference to something in the Regional Development Plan. This gets revised from time to time. Make sure you are referring to the latest version. If you are unsure, contact us here at North West Network and we will advise you. Always reference any evidence you use. Don't say things like "a recent report showed that....." Say what the report is, who wrote it, how old it is, how your project activity will contribute to or align with it.

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Try not to cut and paste too much information into the application. You need to make sure the application looks like it has been written by someone who understands what is being said, not just someone who is a whizz with the copy and paste buttons.

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None of the above will guarantee success but they might make the appraiser more disposed to view the application favourably. Remember if you want more detailed information on how to respond to any ESF bidding/tender rounds make sure you go out for the regular training sessions that North West Network holds.

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John Hacking
Senior European Officer

Coldwell – A Social Enterprise with a History

In the late 18th century, in the hilly country of the Pennines, trade depended on the packhorse. A local map dating back to 1772 details a network of packhorse tracks across and between Yorkshire and Lancashire. One such route, commonly referred to in Victorian times as 'The Kings Highway', passes Coldwell 'en route' from Colne to Halifax. These tracks were marked at intervals



by wayside stones to direct traders, carrying cloth from the handloom weavers of Lancashire to the textile markets of West Riding, to their destination. Traders seeking shelter, food and rest learned to appreciate the warm Coldwell welcome before tackling the rough moor land track ahead of them.



With the eventual demise of the pack horse as a means of transport Coldwell became a public house and soon acquired a notorious reputation as the principal venue of gamblers. Police raids were common until October 1922 when a military-style operation resulted in mass arrests and fines totalling over £1800; a considerable sum in those days.

In October 1924 a devastating fire left Coldwell derelict and it remained unused until the late 1970's when several conservation schemes were utilised to save what was left of the old building. Then, two Lancashire Probation Officers; Don Kitson and Elsie Marshall, applied their entrepreneurial vision to create a partnership with the current owners of the building (North West Water - United Utilities) and a plan for the future of Coldwell was devised. Coldwell became a residential holiday centre for those people with a disability or from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. The National Probation Service and United Utilities each made substantial financial contributions to enable refurbishment of the building.



Over the years a wide range of Funders have supported Coldwell. In 2004 and 2005 £300,000 secured from the Community Fund was combined with £220,000 from the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF). These combined contributions financed a major extension to the residential facility. Coldwell is no stranger to SRB support, only 5 years ago SRB helped build our now regularly visited tea rooms and now we look forward to receiving £40,000 from Pendle Economic Regeneration Programme (PERP) to further extend the building. Funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) has been utilised to provide 'community service client training' and to employ a Media Assistant to support our 'Film School' training activity. Our appreciation also goes to NWDA (North West Brain Project), UCLAN and Lancaster University who have supported Coldwell in various ways. United Utilities continues to consider Coldwell within the company's social responsibility strategy and this has allowed Coldwell to develop and deliver a wider range of services and facilities than ever before.

Three years ago, despite great success in accessing funds for buildings and one-off projects, Coldwell, like many other non-profit organisations, was struggling to adapt to the 'funding stream shift' that is now evident. A forward thinking Management Committee worked hard to develop a strategy that would make best use of our new facilities and simultaneously generate the income necessary for survival. Management and staff adopted an entrepreneurial approach to develop and implement an ambitious and successful strategy to move Coldwell away from grant reliance to one of income generating sustainability. There were more than a few scary moments along the way but we are now extremely proud to adopt the status of 'Social Enterprise'.

We don't intend to 'rest on our laurels' and although we no longer attract the traveling trader of bygone days Coldwell continues to offer a warm welcome to all its visitors. So, if you need a bespoke programme that truly meets your needs without breaking the bank then just pick up the phone and our friendly staff will advise you on all aspects of your programme and your stay.

Centre Facilities

- Day Visits
- Full board residential accommodation
- Conservatory Tearoom overlooking Coldwell Reservoir
- 8.5 acre adjoining woodland utilised in Orienteering Courses.
- Sensory Garden and a play area for young children
- Full disabled access
- Mini Conference and Training Rooms
- Media & 'Film School' Training



Activity Availability

Walking Orienteering Aromatherapy Art & Music Theatre & Craft Fishing (Trout) Music T Shirt Painting Karaoke Cinema Natural History Venues Steam Train Visits Canal Barge Trips Outdoor Pursuits	Climbing Walls (Indoor) Go Karting Skiing (Dry Slope) Swimming Ten Pin Bowling Sub Aqua Diving Water Sports Ice Skating Farm Visits HAPPA (Horse And Pony Protection Association Horse Riding Falconry Centre Archery Show Caves	Adventure Trail: Team Building Problem Solving Climbing, Caving Gully Scrambling Orienteering Improvised Rafting Abseiling & Kayaking The S.P.A.C.E. Centre Soft play area with controllable environment provides a place where those with learning difficulties and/or emotional difficulties can develop skills
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The Centre is approved by Lancashire Education Authority
Pre-visits are encouraged (Registered with DTI's Visiting Programme)

What can COLDWELL do for you?

Tel: Lorna Metcalfe 01282 601819

Email: marketing@coldwell.org.uk Web: www.coldwell.org.uk

Coldwell
Back Lane, Southfield
BURNLEY
Lancashire
BB10 3RD

The Scarman Trust in Manchester

The Scarman Trust Manchester provides neighbourhood based support for new and small voluntary and community groups across the City of Manchester. They are committed to working alongside local individuals and community groups by listening to their needs and supporting them to reach their goals.

The Scarman team includes a number of experienced development workers who have extensive knowledge of their communities and a wealth of experience supporting the local voluntary and community sector.

The Development workers are based in local neighbourhoods across the City of Manchester, holding regular Support Sessions at locations within the communities. Individuals and groups are able to access to local and national networks and resources, including help to find funding opportunities and support with the application process.

The Scarman Trust Manchester also offer a range of training courses for community and voluntary groups which can be tailored to meet individual or group needs.

The courses will take place in convenient community based venues, delivered by experts in their field.

The current training programmes on offer include:

- Becoming a charity, limited company or social enterprise
- Interpersonal skills and communication
- How to run an effective meeting
- Assertiveness
- Food hygiene
- Policies & procedures, child protection, equal opportunities etc.
- Roles and responsibilities of committee members
- Health & Safety, policies, risk assessments, manual handling
- Human resources, i.e. recruitment & selection, employer liability
- Business planning/development
- DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) requirements
- Recruiting and working with volunteers
- First aid
- Local fund raising
- How to write a successful funding application
- Financial monitoring and budgeting
- Team building

The Scarman Trust in Manchester



The Scarman Trust in Manchester is currently looking to recruit an additional Development Worker, plus an Administrator.

For further information about these roles, plus details of the support sessions or training opportunities, please visit: www.thescarmantrust.org
(click on REGIONS – NORTH WEST) or contact the Scarman Trust team
on 0161 998 9262. e-mail: www.support.manchester@thescarmantrust.org

SAM Volunteer Management Update



The Volunteer Management Team has been working hard applying for funding to roll out SAM Volunteer Management through coaching and investigating how its services can be developed into a package that North West Network can offer to organisations on a consultative basis.

As a result, NWN have successfully gained funding to deliver SAM Volunteer Management to Volunteer Managers in Tameside, through coaching:

Tameside Coaching Project

The Tameside Coaching Project will be run in partnership with Volunteer Centre Tameside and is funded by Greater Manchester LSC Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities Fund (NLDCF). The project will last for 8 months between December 2005 and July 2006.

The project has two main outputs:

- **Coaching for Volunteer Managers**

The project will provide coaching to volunteer managers, working in Tameside regeneration areas. NWN coaches will help individuals to develop their skills and knowledge in managing volunteers in a series of one to one sessions.

- **Cascade Training to Volunteer Centre Tameside**

NWN will provide cascade training to staff members from Volunteer Centre Tameside, on the basic skills in facilitation and coaching methods as used by NWN and to how to use SAM Volunteer Management (a tool designed specifically to help volunteer involving organisations develop or improve their own volunteer management programme).

Tameside Coaching Project will pilot a collaborative way of working with local volunteering infrastructure that NWN hopes to replicate in the future;

"The Tameside Coaching Project is an exciting example of how a regional organisation and a local organisation can work together to share their knowledge, skills and strengths to deliver effective and sustainable support services for volunteer involving organisations." Emile Pinel, Chief Executive, NWN

Is this update is of interest to you?

- Are you a Funder who would be interested in how the activities above could meet your funding priorities?
- Are you a local infrastructure organisation and would like to know if a similar project could support you in your geographic/ thematic area?
- Are you a volunteer involving organisation and would like more information about this project?

We have a number of organisations on our database who have shown an interest and we will keep them informed of further developments. If you would like to be included on our list or just want to get more information and please contact Dan or Carol. Tel: 0161 236 6493 e-mail: dan@nwnetwork.org.uk, carol@nwnetwork.org.uk.

To preview SAM Volunteer Management information please click on our website www.nwnetwork.org.uk, then volunteer development, volunteer development project and our project.

What is the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation?

The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF) is the national strategic body for organisations involved in mentoring and befriending. These are organisations working with, voluntary and community groups, schools and businesses.

Scope:

The MBF will focus on networks identified as priority groups by the Home Office and will provide support for:

- Refugees
- Offenders
- Individuals with addictions
- Young people
- Older people
- BME communities
- Rural communities

MBF is funded by the Home Office's Active Communities Unit and aims to:

- Support organisations in setting up mentoring or befriending schemes
- Signpost training and funding providers via our website: www.mandbf.org.uk
- Encourage like-minded people to network in order to share good practice
- Encourage projects to achieve the Approved Provider Standard

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a one-to-one, non-judgmental relationship in which an individual voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another. This is typically developed at a time of transition in the mentee's life and lasts for a significant and sustained period of time. (Active Community Unit)

What is befriending?

Befriending is a process where two or more people come together with the aim of establishing and developing an informal and social relationship. Ideally the relationship is non-judgmental, mutual, and purposeful and there is commitment over time. (Home Office)

Recent News

Supported by the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, Liverpool (European Capital of Culture 2008) hosted the very first European Conference for Children and Youth Mentoring Organisations. Funded by the Home Office, organisations from Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, Holland, Germany, Italy, Malta, England, Scotland, Switzerland, Lithuania, Portugal and France, were welcomed to the City in November to mark the Launch of Youth Mentoring in the New Europe.

Focusing on young people facing an array of issues, The 2005 European Mentoring Conference was an excellent opportunity for UK and European mentors to increase their working skills, knowledge and expertise, and to strengthen their organisations' capacity to involve more mentors. The conference was also a unique opportunity for voluntary and community organisations throughout Europe to reward, recognise and acknowledge the huge contribution that mentors from all walks of life make to all young people in European Countries.

For of those of you who missed the 2005 European Mentoring Conference – don't worry, a national mentoring conference is being planned in the spring. Details will be available on the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation website shortly.

To find out more about The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation please visit the website at www.mandbf.org.uk or contact the regional office for the North West at:

The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation

1st Floor
Charles House
Albert Street
Eccles
Manchester
M30 0PW

Tel: 0161 787 3843

A Vibrant Voluntary and Community Sector

A vibrant voluntary and community sector (VCS) has a key role to play in strengthening the fabric of our society. Made up of skilled and passionate people, the VCS is founded on the desire to make and build a better world.

Here, in the North West just as in the rest of the country, the VCS is committed to making a difference, in giving something back to our communities and in finding more effective ways to help those who are trapped on the fringes of our society.

As North West Network's programme of work shows, responding to the needs of our diverse communities is incredibly complex. Dealing with these issues requires specialist knowledge and considerable collaboration. Inevitably, it also involves solving difficult funding and investment issues.

The Government recognises the enormous contribution that the sector is making and understands the challenges faced by many organisations up and down the country. Just as North West Network realised back in 1993, we understand that partnership working is key to moving forward. Indeed over the last few years, we've invested a great deal in helping the sector to work towards achieving our joint vision, for example through the ChangeUp programme.

I know how hard many of you are working to ensure ChangeUp delivers a real improvement in the level and quality of support that frontline and community organisations are able to access in the North West and I believe we are seeing some significant gains through new collaborations and partnerships on all levels. For example, the investment of our five consortia in the North West is targeting the needs of our region's urban and rural communities, and nationally we have the six hubs of expertise. I hope that your volunteering projects are benefiting from this collaboration.

It is now vital that we do not just maintain the momentum but that we speed it up. Establishing Capacity Builders gives us a great opportunity to build on what we have achieved to date and to address as early as possible the challenges arising in the first year of the programme. I strongly believe that the agency will give you in the North West and in the rest of the country much greater control over where and how ChangeUp investment is spent.

Paul Goggins MP

Minister for the Voluntary and Community Sector

Noticeboard

News

The Office of The Deputy Prime Minister has launched a new ERDF website. The site contains general information about the funds available, guides on the viability of potential projects and a database of projects across the UK. The site is at www.erdff.odpm.gov.uk

Staff Update

Karina Ponsaing joined North West Network as Administrator in August 2005. Karina is responsible for the administration duties within North West Network and also gives support to the Finance Manager. Before joining North West Network, Karina worked as Head Receptionist in the Beauty industry after completing a Certificate in Make Up Artistry & Production Design.

Training & Events

Centre for Local Economic Studies Training Event

Due to popular demand the Centre for Local Economic Studies will be running another Local Area Agreements training event, in Manchester. This event will inform delegates of the purpose, principle and history of Local Area Agreements. It will provide knowledge of the tools and opportunities for local authorities, LSP's and VCS to become involved in the process. For more please refer information to: www.cles.live.poptech.coop/C2B/events/Index.asp?CatID=3

Contact Us

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Tel: 0161 236 6493
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e-mail: info@nwnetwork.org.uk
www.nwnetwork.org

PLEASE NOTE THE NORTH WEST NETWORK OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED FROM 5:00PM 23 DECEMBER 2005 AND WILL REOPEN ON 3 JANUARY 2006.