

# Network for Europe



## Newsletter

August 2011

### Welcome!

Welcome to the August edition of Network for Europe's newsletter, reporting on European issues relating to the Voluntary Sector.

### 25 Year Anniversary Celebration

It may be difficult to believe but Network for Europe has been working for the last 25 years to support Voluntary & Community Sector organisations around European matters.

In that time we have seen the the sector taking its rightful place in the partnership to deliver effective and efficient local strategies supported by European Structural Funds through the development of the Objective One Programme and Pathways, increased ability to access ERDF and ESF, support for Social Enterprise, an increased role for social landlords and improved understanding of results and impacts.

Our role has been to support partnership working which has never been more important than it is today.

This event will be a celebration of the work done over the last 25 years and a look to the future, starting with the next Programme period (2014-2020) where we expect to see much more simplified financial procedures, an increasing role for the sector including support for social innovation, social finance, and more smart, green and inclusive jobs.

Join us as we look forward confidently to the next 25 years, working locally, nationally and across Europe. To book your place, contact Network for Europe on 0151 237 3972 or visit:

<http://25th.eventbrite.com>

### North West ERDF Update

Following the move to Birchwood at the beginning of July, it has taken longer than expected for the European Programme Executive ERDF Secretariat to settle in, with some issues around IT, including printers and email, but progress has been made. The new Local Management Committee (LMC, formerly PMC) will have its first formal meeting at the end of September and its new membership should be agreed, as well as the new Strategy sub-group. The revisions to the Investment Frameworks (in particular for Priority Four) are almost in place and it is hoped the re-quantification (changing outputs, results and impacts) will be completed before the end of the year, so that discussions with the European Commission can begin. A process of tidying up projects in the appraisal process is underway and it is expected this will lead to the opportunity for some more ERDF bids towards the end of this year once it is clear what funds are still available.

### Priority One - Action Area 1-2

Following the call for applications under Action Area 1-2 (Support and Advice to Small and Medium Sized Enterprises to Access Finance) two bids were received, of which one was deemed eligible. This bid will now go forward for appraisal.

Supported by:



## Third Sector European Network

Merseyside Network for Europe and North West Network have both been members of TSEN (Third Sector European Network), which brought together the regions in England around ESF. With the ending of the Regional Monitoring Committees, the national representation has become even more important. TSEN is now winding up (following a meeting on 11th), and transferring representation on the national ESF committee back to NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations). NCVO will apply for new national ESF Technical Assistance, and there will be an advisory group (regional representatives

and some nationals) to support this representation, with an agreement that the regional groups will now be more involved.

## Wales Visit



Following the successful visit to look at best practice in ESF and ERDF in Wales, Network for Europe recently hosted a visit from colleagues from Wales CVA to look at projects and discuss the Programmes.



## ERDF Tech Group

Merseyside's ERDF Technical Group met on 23rd August. Once again, it confirmed its support for the three strategic projects under Priority Four and requested they proceed through appraisal and approval procedures. Once these had been processed, there would be an opportunity to look at what funding remained under this Priority. The call for projects under Action Area 1-2 was discussed and there was an update on Priority 2 (Knowledge Industry), as well as a concern that some key issues were still holding up the JESSICA start. It was agreed that Management Information would once again be provided to the Technical Group as this was found to be useful. The next meeting will be on 27th September.

## Cooperation Group

Following the end of the NW-REP, Network for Europe and others have been working hard to continue the European Co-operation Group, which is chaired by Richard Caulfield of Voluntary Sector North West, and links organisations across the North West to European Opportunities. The August meeting was deferred to September.

## Transnational Links



Network for Europe was recently visited by a colleague from the Czech Republic, and we were able to continue discussions on voluntary sector issues, including support for representation on monitoring committees, development of Social Enterprise in the EU programmes, and the use of Technical Assistance for supporting the Voluntary Sector.

## Transforming Local Infrastructure

The government is keen to encourage better infrastructure services at a local level. It has encouraged support organisations to work together to prepare proposals for each local area for the Transforming Local Infrastructure fund. Network for Europe has been working closely with organisations across the North West to support strong bids, with relevant references to the use of European Funding. The next deadline is the end of October, with perhaps half of the proposals being successful (announcements are expected by the end of January).

## 2014-20

Work proceeds in preparation for the next programming period. The budget proposal is for €376bn for Cohesion, with about €40bn for the new Connect Europe Facility, so leaving €336bn, a 4% reduction on the current budget of €347bn. It also confirms the proposal of €39bn for Transition Regions (GDP between 75% and 90%). Currently, this could cover 51 areas, including Merseyside and Cumbria (as well as nine others in the UK, and the Polish region around Warsaw). Meanwhile, the publication of the proposed regulations are now not expected until October. If, as some are saying, the publication date is the 5th, then this will lead well into the Open Days to be held in Brussels in the following week.

## Superfast Broadband

There has been some uncertainty within ERDF for some time, dependent on whether or not Next Generation Access (or 'Super Fast Broadband') would be funded (this could use up to £50m of the money remaining). Following the recent announcement of UK Government funding for this kind of activity it is likely that proposals for ERDF will be received shortly.

## ERDF Phasing In Sub Committee

The Merseyside Phasing In sub-committee met on 10th August. There was an update on the changes, with the EPE ERDF Secretariat (Programme Delivery Team) beginning to settle in at their new home at Birchwood, and hoped-for progress with the revised Investment Frameworks almost in place, the new LMC (PMC) committee due at the end of September and re-quantification due shortly. The usual presentations were made on Performance (expenditure), and also on Outputs and Results (which are still low). The Technical Group report included updates on all the priorities, including the three strategic Merseyside projects under Priority Four. REECH (housing) now has the Offer Letter and is moving forward, and JESSICA still has some issues to be resolved. Alan Evans from Wirral MBC gave a further presentation on support for enterprise in Merseyside and the way partners were working together. Finally, there was some discussion on post-2013, and the potential for the coming programme. The next meeting is on 12th October.

## Progression post-16 for learners with learning difficulties



Too few young people with learning difficulties and disabilities progress from school to complete programmes that will help them live independently,

undertake further study, or gain employment.

The Ofsted report published in August 2011 titled "Progression post-16 for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities", found that learning opportunities beyond school for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities varies considerably between local areas. There was insufficient provision available for learners with the highest level of need, and the current placement system resulted in significant inequities in the provision available for learners with similar needs.

For further information please visit: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/news/progression-beyond-school-variable-for-young-people-learning-difficulties-and-disabilities-ofsted>

## ESF Cohort Study: Wave 3

The European Social Fund Cohort Study explores the longer-term outcomes of the training and advice provided through ESF. The study covered four of the ESF priorities:

Priorities 1 and 4, which have a focus on extending employment opportunities and tackling barriers to employment; and Priorities 2 and 5, which aim to develop and improve the skills of the workforce.

This report contains the findings from Wave 3 and focuses upon the longer term outcomes of ESF provision, particularly whether the outcomes observed at previous points in time have been sustained and whether any additional outcomes are evident. The report also examines the involvement of ESF and match-funded participants in training about green issues and the degree to which

they are employed by organisations providing related products and services.

To view the study please visit: <http://www.networkforeurope.eu/european-social-fund-cohort-study-wave-3>

## Social Europe Guide



The Social Europe guide is a bi-annual publication aimed at providing to an interested but not necessarily specialised audience a concise overview of specific areas of European Union policy in the field of employment, social affairs and inclusion. It illustrates the key issues and challenges, explains policy actions and instruments at EU level and provides examples of best practices from EU Member States. It also presents views on the subject from the Council Presidency and the European Parliament.

This first volume in this series focuses on the biggest challenges the EU is facing in the area of employment. In particular, it describes EU actions to fight unemployment, develop new skills and create new jobs. It also explains the role of employment policy in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy and European economic governance. The last chapter outlines main orientations for EU employment policy in the future.

For further information please visit:

<http://www.networkforeurope.eu/social-europe-guide>

## Social Enterprise Trade Fair 2011



Social Enterprise North West recently announced details of their Trade Fair for 2011.

The event is arranged for Tuesday, 18th October and will take place in the Reebok Stadium in Bolton.

This is an opportunity for Social Enterprises to join the best of the North West's Social Economy. The day will feature workshops, exhibiting social enterprises, keynote speakers, opportunities to network, a 'European Quarter' as well as the opportunity to listen to Claire Young (the

Apprentice/Girls Out Loud), Nick O'Donohue (Big Society Bank) and many more.

To view the full programme for the day, visit:

[http://senw.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/SENW\\_Prgm1.pdf](http://senw.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/SENW_Prgm1.pdf)

Or to register for the event, visit SENW's website at:

<http://senw.org.uk/trade-fair-2011/>

## ESF - Skills Support for Redundancy



The Skills Funding Agency has published a list of contacts of providers in the North West region contracted by the Agency to provide Skills Support for

Redundancy provision. To view the list please visit: <http://www.networkforeurope.eu/esf-skills-support-redundancy>

## Lifelong Learning



A new application form for the Comenius, Erasmus, Grundtvig and Leonardo da Vinci programmes will be available from 30th September 2011.

General information, programme guidance and links to forms are available from:

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/funding/2012/index\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/funding/2012/index_en.php)

If you would like support to find eligible partners or more information please contact Sharon McCarthy at Network for Europe.

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## Coming up...

### 25th Anniversary Celebration Event, 30th September, Warrington.

Join us as we look forward confidently to the next 25 years, working locally, nationally and across Europe.

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## Contact Us

If you would like further information about any of the subjects covered in this newsletter or if you have any feedback or suggestions please contact Paul Avis on 237 3972 or email [paul.avis@networkforeurope.eu](mailto:paul.avis@networkforeurope.eu)



Post: 151 Dale Street  
Liverpool  
L2 2AH

Telephone: 0151 237 3972

Fax: 0151 237 3973

e-mail: [info@networkforeurope.eu](mailto:info@networkforeurope.eu)

web: [www.networkforeurope.eu](http://www.networkforeurope.eu)