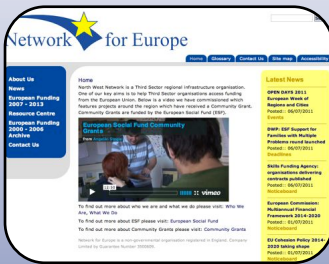


# Network for Europe



## Newsletter

June 2011

### Welcome!

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

### New Name, New Website

## Network for Europe

Since the closure of North West Network, MNE has been working towards expanding our area of coverage from Merseyside to cover the whole of the North West. At our board meeting on 22nd June it was formally agreed that to reflect this change we will be known simply as **Network for Europe**.

As part of the change we have a new website which can be found at: [www.networkforeurope.eu](http://www.networkforeurope.eu)

The site builds on North West Network's website and features latest news, information about the European Union, details on Structural Funds and an archive of relevant documentation for current and previous EU programmes and much more.

We will continue to develop and improve the site in the coming months, so please check back often.

All staff at Network for Europe now have new email addresses which following the same pattern:

[FirstName.LastName@networkforeurope.eu](mailto:FirstName.LastName@networkforeurope.eu)

The old addresses will continue to work for the foreseeable future, but we recommend updating your contact lists as soon as possible.

General enquiries can now be sent to [info@networkforeurope.eu](mailto:info@networkforeurope.eu)

If you have any feedback on the website please contact us.

### ESF Evaluation

The National ESF Evaluation sub committee met on 9th June and agreed the revised terms of reference (taking into account the removal of the regional sub-committees) and that it would now meet only once a year. There was a report on the third wave of the cohort study in order to find out what had happened to more than 10,000 ESF participants and to see how effective ESF support had been. A second report looked at ESF provision for the unemployed, how participants are referred and engaged, the provider approach and performance management. There was a report on sustainable development and green jobs, identifying lack of awareness and support but investigating developing understanding and potential for the next ESF programme.

A synthesis report drew together the results of all the studies and looked at the early impacts - it would appear that ESF has been having a much larger effect on Incapacity Benefit and Employment Support Allowance recipients, rather than Job Seekers Allowance (which reinforces the change in direction of the remaining ESF funds from DWP). Finally, there was agreement on a new cohort study, a qualitative study of ESF and NEET, and a study of the ITM projects (Innovation, Transnational and Mainstreaming). We requested a study on Community Grants but this would need additional match funding. Finally, the Skills Funding Agency evaluation paper on the 07-13 plans was deferred to the next meeting in June 2012.

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## **ERDF Changes**

David Malpas (Director) and Emma Kirkpatrick (Manager) are both leaving the North West EPE ERDF Secretariat. We wish them both well in the future. Almost all of the rest of the team (about 44 people) will be transferring to Arpley House in Birchwood, where they will be employed by DCLG from 1st July. We expect a few delays while they settle in, with new offices and new systems, but we are sure normal service will be resumed shortly. David Read is the new Director for the NW ERDF, with Nicola Lavin as Head of Projects, and Norman Williams and Paul Davies the Priority Managers.

David Malpas will still be based in the North West, but will be responsible for the ERDF Programmes across England.

## **Merseyside Brussels Office**

The MBO met on 10th June with papers on EU maritime policy, and on the future of cohesion policy (2014-20). With the changes and closures of other Brussels Offices, the MBO has moved to cheaper offices, and reduced its expenditure. At the meeting was a paper for a more tailored service, with different subscription levels. The next MBO meeting is on 7th September.



## **ERDF Plsc**

The Merseyside Phasing In sub-committee met on 7th June at St Helens Chamber. There was a presentation by the Local Authorities about their Business Support Liaison Group (formed last October) and a presentation on the Venture Capital Fund ("The NW Fund") which has now approved the first eight projects with a further 18 about to be confirmed. There was an update on the changes to ERDF and papers on Programme Performance and Outputs and Results - although it was explained that these would change soon once the May claims had been included. Finally, there was an update on progress towards the 2014-20 Programme. The next meeting will be on 10th August.

one) as recommended by the Regional Leaders Board. There was discussion about making sure the cross cutting themes (sustainability and equality & diversity) are properly represented. It is expected there will be a new Strategy sub-group. Programme performance was reported, with the output of businesses assisted increasing (from 5,043 to 7,688) and social enterprises finally increasing (from 24 to 473). As a result of Audit visits error rates are at 3.22% which is higher than the 2% acceptable to the European Commission and higher than other parts of England. The Commission representative expressed concern at this level. It was reported that JESSICA was still not ready to start but should be ready very soon - outputs had been reduced.

and the UK - any framework documents had to fit within what was written in the OP. There was also a concern that Open Bidding was not available across the programme.

The discussion about re-quantification of the programme was deferred to the next meeting which will be on 28th September.

## **PMC**

The Programme Monitoring Committee met on 15th June with Philip Cox of DCLG as the new Chair. It confirmed the recommendation from the Regional Leaders Board that Sir Howard Bernstein would be the deputy chair. The representation on the PMC has been reduced slightly, with the Voluntary Sector representation halved (from two to

It was agreed to retain the ability to fund super-fast broadband, where eligible, and there was a discussion on the Investment Framework review which has produced a simpler version. The Commission representative reminded partners that the only legal document that matters is the Operational Programme which was signed by the Commission

## **NWIP**



The North West Infrastructure Partnership met on 23rd June with a report on the Disability Infrastructure research. There was also a presentation on the Big Society from Sheila Battersby (Office for Civil Society - Cabinet Office) who is part of their Local Intelligence Team for the North West Region, based in Manchester. There were reports from around the table about issues for support organisations and some discussion about the involvement (or otherwise) of the voluntary sector in the five LEPs. The next meeting is on 14th September.

## European Finance 2014-20



The European Commission presented its proposals for the next budget period on 29th June. There will be considerable discussion before agreement is reached and handling the discussion is one of the key roles of the new Polish Presidency. One of the proposals is that rather than mainly relying on three quarters of funding from the Member States (based on Gross National Income) the Commission should move to raise more finance directly - from Europe wide charges for a financial transactions tax and modernisation of VAT. The intention is to remove the enormous complexities of rebates and counter rebates. The two main areas of expenditure, Structural Funds and Agriculture, will be broadly the same (SF increasing a little, Agriculture dropping) but there will be simpler processes and less administration. There will be a Connecting Europe Facility to support infrastructure across Europe for transport, energy and ICT, more focus on environment and climate action policies and a New Education Europe programme for Education and Training.

Structural Funds will (as previously described) be more results based, will translate the Europe 2020 plans for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive growth into actions and there will be an intermediate category for regions (so Merseyside and Cumbria could have special status). A quarter of the cohesion funds will be for ESF.

## Change of Freeze Date

The freeze of information on ACTOR scheduled for June 2011 will be consolidated into the subsequent freeze date scheduled for 15th July at 17.00. This is to ensure that all organisations receiving feedback on Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) submissions made in March, April and May will have had sufficient time to update or refresh their submissions if appropriate.

The following areas of provision will be procured through a mini competition under this round:

- Workforce Entry and Progression through Apprenticeships,
- Support for the Unemployed (including Apprenticeship Support for Employers) – European Social Fund (ESF),
- Skills Support for Redundancy (ESF),
- Apprenticeships for those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) including Age Related Grants,
- Growth and Innovation Fund Joint Investment Programme (Employer Responsive).

Mini competition means that the Agency will issue a shorter, bespoke ITT which will become available to all organisations that completed the relevant ITTs for the provision outlined above. The Agency after the 15th July freeze will also procure provision for learning and skills development for adults over 18 years of age in custody through full competition. Full competition means that a full ITT will be issued to organisations that have expressed interest in providing the service.

Please note that if you wish to be considered for funding to deliver any of the above provision you must be registered on ACTOR and have submitted the Single Adult

Skills Budget ITT indicating which types of provision you wish to deliver.

The Skills Funding Agency is encouraging organisations to review all of their registration details on BRAVO to ensure they are up to date. To access the Agency's funding portal please visit:

<https://skillsfundingagency.bravosolution.co.uk/>

Any enquiries regarding specific ITTs should be posted through the BRAVO messaging system and general procurement enquiries can be sent to:

[procurementhelp@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk](mailto:procurementhelp@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk)

You can also contact Angeliki Stogia at Network for Europe if you have any queries regarding this article.

## Minimum Contract Level online events

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service is running further online events for providers on issues encountered by those preparing new contract arrangements for 2011/12. Each session lasts an hour and will be held online. Online events scheduled include:

- 13 July 2011: MCL and Managing Risk 12.00-13.00
- 18 July 2011: MCL Quality Improvement 12.00-13.00
- 19 July 2011: MCL Milestones & Guidance 4 12.00-13.00
- 22 July 2011: MCL Shared Services 12.00-13.00

To register please visit:

<https://events.lsis.org.uk/Pages/Event>

## Transnationals

Visits to Kraków and Barcelona took place in June as part of SENW's Steps to Success Social Enterprise project, with a visit to Sweden planned for July.

## Equal Opportunities and Sustainable Development Awards



ESF providers and sub-contractors have until Friday 29th July to nominate themselves for the 2011 ESF Equal Opportunities and Sustainable Development Leader awards.

The awards give recognition to providers and sub-contractors that have made a special effort to mainstream equal opportunities or sustainable development - either by using effective mainstreaming policies and implementation plans or providing specialist support, which targets specific equality

groups or has a particular environmental focus.

In addition, this year's awards will also include a special gender equality leader award for projects that have made a special effort to promote gender equality.

The winners will be presented with their certificates and awards at the WorldSkills London 2011 event in October and winners will be invited to give a short presentation describing the work of their projects.

Winning projects will receive publicity, including through the national ESF website, European Social Fund at Work e-zine and the ESF-Works website.

The closing date for nominations is Friday 29 July 2011.

More information about the awards and how to nominate visit:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/esf/esf-in-action/events-and-awards/esf-mainstreaming-awards-for-equal/>

## DWP ESF and Workless Families



Ministers have decided that 75% of the DWP ESF 2011-2013 allocation, £200 million, should fund family oriented provision for people in workless households. This provision will be procured from the DWP Framework providers.

We have contacted most of the framework providers to see whether they will be bidding for the ESF & Workless Families Programme. For the full list of prospective framework providers and contact details for those looking for partnership or subcontracting opportunities please visit: [www.tsen.org.uk/](http://www.tsen.org.uk/)

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## Coming up...

**14th July 2011, Cheshire & Warrington ERDF Priority 4 Event** - Investment Frameworks, changing funding environment, projects funded under Priority 4 and more. To book visit: <http://erdfcw.eventbrite.com>

**27th July 2011 and 18th August 2011, ESF ACTOR Seminar**, in partnership with VOLA - Introduction to the ACTOR tendering process, recent developments on minimum contracting levels and subcontracting guidance, the ACTOR due Diligence Questionnaire and Invitations to Tender, overview of what is needed to register to ACTOR and more. To book visit... <http://actor27july.eventbrite.com> or <http://actor18august.eventbrite.com>

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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)



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