

# Network for Europe



## Newsletter

October 2011

### Welcome!

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

### ESF Community Learning Grants



Does your group want to help people overcome barriers and gain the skills and confidence to get back into work?

Nearly £2m is available to be given out over the next two years in the North West as ESF Community Learning Grants.

These are grants up to a maximum of £12,000 available to support some of the hardest to reach communities and individuals, to help people access further learning or training that could lead to employment.

The funding can be applied for by small community and voluntary groups, registered charities & social enterprises, with preference given to organisations with a turnover of no more than £300,000 per year in each of the last 2 years.

The grants can support a wide range of activities including:

- Initial help with basic skills
- Taster work experience including voluntary work
- Training, advice and counselling
- Job search assistance
- Confidence building and personal development
- Support to individuals to overcome barriers to learning or employment

The programme is aimed at all people out of work, or those recently made redundant, but with a particular priority given to support for:

- People with disabilities or health conditions (including those with learning difficulties, mental health issues or drug and alcohol dependency problems)
- People aged 50 or over and seeking employment
- People from ethnic minorities
- Women
- Lone parents

The programme for the North West is being managed by the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) in partnership with Community Matters and Locality and the first of several rounds has just been launched with a closing date of 5pm on Friday 6 January 2012.

Briefing events will be held in Manchester on 24 November, in Liverpool on 25 November and in Lancaster on 2 December 2011. Places are limited. Book your place now - links are on the WEA NW website:

[http://nw.wea.org.uk/esf\\_grants/events.php](http://nw.wea.org.uk/esf_grants/events.php)

The application guidance notes and application form for the first round of ESF Community Learning Grants are also downloadable from the WEA website at [http://nw.wea.org.uk/esf\\_grants/about.php](http://nw.wea.org.uk/esf_grants/about.php)

For more information, email [ESFgrants@wea.org.uk](mailto:ESFgrants@wea.org.uk) or call 0161 277 5411.

## City Employment Strategy - Child Poverty

The Liverpool City Region Cabinet have confirmed their commitment to tackling child and family poverty and improving life chances of children and young people by approving the City Region Child Poverty and Life Chance Strategy. Prepared by the Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission, the Strategy focuses on a series of practical actions that organisations can implement. The Commission, which is chaired by Frank Field MP, has spent time considering the issues involved in tackling child and family poverty and improving life chances, and will be monitoring the implementation of the Strategy on behalf of the

City Region Cabinet. The Strategy was drawn up as a response to the City Region Needs Assessment, which was completed in early 2011.

The Commission itself acts as the conscience for the City Region on matters of child poverty and life chances. It recognises that there is much good work taking place, often at a very local level, and would be keen to hear from organisations who have good practice to share.

For more information, please contact:

[lcr.child&familypoverty@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:lcr.child&familypoverty@knowsley.gov.uk)

Or to download the strategy or the needs assessment, visit:

<http://www.liverpoolcitystrategyces.org.uk/projects/overview-of-what-is-being-done-to-tackle-child-poverty/>

## Voluntary Sector Visitors from Poland



Network for Europe recently welcomed visitors from a partner organisation in Poland to the North West for a series of visits and discussions as part of a transnational project funded through the European Union.

The visitors from Centrum PISOP (Center for Promotion of Civil Initiatives Development), based in Poznań, included Ewa Gałka the Chief Executive.

As part of the 4 day visit the Polish guests visited Liverpool CVS, the Womens International Centre for Economic Development (WICED) in Liverpool and projects in Knowsley including Knowsley CVS.

As well as projects in the North West the visitors also met with Wales Council for Voluntary Action and projects in North Wales.

## European Social Fund Procurement

On 29 November, the Skills Funding Agency will invite organisations to tender for the delivery of provision from April 2012 which is financed by the European Social Fund (ESF). More specifically, the provision will encompass:

- Skills Support for the Unemployed (SSU), including the Apprenticeships Grant for Employers (AGE)
- Skills Support for Redundancy (SSR)
- Workplace Learning



Organisations that are registered on the Approved College and Training Organisation Register (ACTOR) and had completed a Single Adult Skills Budget Invitation To Tender (ITT) by 15 July 2011 will be invited to tender. The full list of these organisations is available on the Skills Funding Agency website, at <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/> Full details will be available within the tender specification when the ITTs are issued.

## European Social Business Initiative



Social enterprises seek to serve the community's interest (social, societal, environmental objectives) rather than profit maximisation. They often have an innovative nature, through the goods or services they offer, and through the organisation or production methods they resort to. They often employ society's most fragile members (socially excluded persons). They thus contribute to social cohesion, employment and the reduction of inequalities.

The European Commission wants to contribute to the creation of a favourable environment for the development of social business in Europe, and of the social economy at large.

The provisional text of the Commission's communication to the European Parliament on Social Business can be viewed here: [http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/social\\_business/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/social_business/index_en.htm)

## European Commission announces €90m fund for Social Enterprise



The European Commission has proposed a €90m (£77m) fund to support the development of social enterprise.

The commission made the proposal as part of its Social Business Initiative, its strategy to support social enterprise across Europe. The fund aims to "facilitate access to funding for start-up, development and expansion of social enterprises" and invest in other funds that invest in the social enterprise world.

EU budget planning means it is unlikely to be set up before 2014.

Although similar, the fund is separate to a €50m (£43m) investment fund provided by the European Investment Fund, which is expected to open next year.

The Social Business Initiative also announced a number of other changes that the commission plans to introduce, including a European framework to facilitate social investment, and changes and clarifications in procurement and state aid rules to make winning contracts and investment simpler for social enterprises.

The European Economic and Social Committee, a body set up to consult on and influence European Union policy, has published its own list of recommendations to develop social enterprise, which include the gathering of knowledge on social enterprises and the creation of a cohesive policy across the union.

For more information on the Social Business Initiative, visit the European Commission website, here: [http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/social\\_business/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/social_business/index_en.htm)

## ERDF Phasing In Sub Committee

Merseyside's ERDF Phasing In sub-committee met on 12 October. There was an update on Governance, papers on programme performance and the next programme and a verbal update on JESSICA issues. The next meeting has been arranged to take place on 12 December.

## Merseyside ERDF Technical Group



Merseyside's ERDF Technical Group met on 19 October. With the closing of the North West Food and Drink project, there could be an opportunity for Merseyside projects to bid for ERDF funding (a follow-up meeting was arranged for 2 November). There was an update on the Priority Four projects (for the worst-off areas) following the meeting on 14 October, on Merseytravel projects in Priority Three, and extensions to The Mersey Partnership's projects. The next meeting will be on 29 November.

## ERDF Strategy Sub Group

The first meeting of the North West European Economic Strategy Group took place on 27 October. This is a small new group, intended to drive forward progress on ERDF. This meeting looked at the re-quantification of the programme (expected spend, outputs and results) and Superfast broadband. The group will be meeting monthly for a while, with the next meeting arranged for 23 November.

For further information on ERDF, contact Andy Churchill at Network for Europe on 0151 237 3972.

## NCVO/LVSTC Conference:

### ESF Support for Families to Tackle Poverty

This conference will be held at NCVO in London on 28 November 2011. The conference will consider the wider issues around the ESF DWP Programme for "Families with Multiple Problems" scheme.

The event will help to develop an appreciation of the potential impact of the Programme as well as inform thinking about how the closing stages of the ESF 2007-2013 Programme might lay foundations for the following ESF 2014-2020 Programme being prepared, in part, to address the poverty-reduction target of the EU 2020 Strategy.



Also included will be a presentation by Dr Katherine Duffy who has just completed research for the NCVO on the evolution of recent social policy in the UK and European Union with regard to the European Structural Funds. To view the agenda please visit:

[http://www.networkforeurope.eu/files/files/2011\\_11\\_28\\_ESF-DWP\\_event\\_programme.pdf](http://www.networkforeurope.eu/files/files/2011_11_28_ESF-DWP_event_programme.pdf)

A small bursaries budget is available to support travel of small VCS organisations from outside London; this will be administered on a first come first serve basis and requests must be sent no later than 22 November 2011. To enquire about the bursary, contact Sandra Turner at NCVO via email on:

[sandra.turner@ncvo-vol.org.uk](mailto:sandra.turner@ncvo-vol.org.uk)

To book your place at the event please visit:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DWPFAM>

## Commissioner visits North West project



On Thursday 20 October 2011 Commissioner László Andor, the European Commission member with responsibility for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, visited Manchester to view the "Back on Track" project to witness how offenders on probation supervision are learning skills to get them back into work. This is the first visit of its kind by the Commission to a National Offender Management Service (NOMS) European Social Fund co-financed project. For further information about this story please visit:

<http://dwp.gov.uk/esf/news/north%2Dwest/commissioner%2Dvisits%2Dnorth%2Dwest/>

## Opening Doors: Clinks' Roadshow

This event is being held on 29 November 2011 at the GHS Centre, South Meadow Lane, Preston, PR1 8JN. Attendance is FREE for VCS groups based in the North West. The event is aimed at small to medium sized groups working with offenders.

The event features:

- Keynote speeches from Kate Aldous, Clinks' Communications and Partnerships Manager and Patrick Connelly, Commissioning Lead for NOMS NW
- Workshops for frontline groups focused on building sustainability, new income generation ideas and business development, partnership working and improving outcomes reporting. Workshops feature specialist advice from NACRO, NAVCA, Clinks, GMCVO, Sefton CVS, the Social Investment Business (TBC), Locality and other specialist consultants

- Exploring collective delivery models being piloted in Merseyside and Greater Manchester

- Workshop for local infrastructure focused on supporting local groups to become more sustainable and strategically engaged

- Free consultancy advice through one-to-one sessions with specialist experts

Attendance is FREE for VCS groups based in the North West - subsidised by VSNW. Non-attendance is subject to a £30 charge.

To download a booking form, visit:

<http://www.networkforeurope.eu/opening-doors-clinks-sustainable-funding-roadshow-north-west>

Completed forms should be returned to:

Helen Walker at Voluntary Sector North West on:

[helen.walker@vsnw.org.uk](mailto:helen.walker@vsnw.org.uk)

For further information telephone 0161 276 9300.

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## Coming up...

2011

**ESF Community Grants events:** 24th November (Manchester), 25th November (Liverpool), 2nd December (Lancaster)... **NCVO/LVSTC Conference: ESF Support for Families to Tackle Poverty:** 28th November (London)... **Opening Doors: Clinks' Roadshow:** 29th November (Preston)...

2012

**What Can Europe Do For You?** Next EU Programme Event, Date TBC, January (Manchester)

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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 0151 237 3972 or email [paul.avis@networkforeurope.eu](mailto:paul.avis@networkforeurope.eu)



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