

ChangeUp Quarterly Newsletter



Issue 4 January 2006

Welcome to the fourth edition of the ChangeUp quarterly newsletter- your update on progress, events and good practice.

Since the November edition we know that significant work has been undertaken across the ChangeUp programme. Thank you to everyone for their continued commitment and energy as we take ChangeUp forward.

We are conscious that organisations and individuals working across the programme are keen for regular updates on the progress of Capacity Builders and whilst this will be the final quarterly newsletter produced by the Home Office regular Capacity Builders bulletins will be produced over the next few months to keep you informed.

As always we welcome your feedback, please send your comments or updates to:
ChangeUp@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

NEWS IN BRIEF

ChangeUp now has a web portal! Designed and developed by Highpeaks CVS, the aim of the portal is to give as comprehensive a picture as possible of the ChangeUp investment Programme. The Portal reflects the dynamic nature of ChangeUp so will be regularly reviewed and updated and it allows stakeholders to subscribe and receive e mail alerts of new items. Go to www.changeup.org.uk to view stories from across the programme and across the country.

Getting the hub information you need - To ensure that consortia receive information from hubs that is appropriate and relevant to them a data contact form will shortly be circulated. Consortia can confirm on the form a key contact and any specific individuals for thematic areas. The information will also be shared with Capacity Builders to build their database.

Hub Event – First ever hub event is being held on 28th March in Birmingham. The event is an opportunity for VCS organisations to find out how they can run their organisations more effectively in the areas of: funding; governance; ICT; performance; volunteering; workforce. To find out more or to register, please contact: Hub.Event@ncvo-vol.org.uk

Infrastructure Investment Plans - A big thank you to all of you working so hard on the plans, which are due in March. These will clearly be valuable documents for consortia's own ongoing strategic and planning work but please also be aware that there will be a collation and analysis exercise undertaken by an independent supplier to make sure that both the Home Office and Capacity Builders can take as much learning as possible from the plans, of course this will be published when available.

Capacity Builders Update

Capacity Builders is starting to become a reality: it will be based in Birmingham and recruitment for staff is underway.

Since the November edition, when we announced the agency's board, progress has been made on: location; recruitment and strategy development.

Capacity Builders is going to be based at Paradise Circus in Birmingham, the office is about 700 yards from New Street Station. A small number of staff will be there from mid February and we will share contact details for the office when they are available.

The agency will build a team of about 25 staff. A resources and planning director will lead a team focused on the internal operation of the agency and the programmes director will lead a team focused on supporting the ChangeUp programme which will include regional co-ordinators and grants officers.

Simon Hebditch, chief executive of Capacity Builders, started his role on 30th January. The response to the advertising campaign for the resources and planning director, programmes director and communications manager has been strong. Interviews for these posts will commence on the 31st January, and the appointments will be announced shortly.

Applications are now being received for the grant officer posts. The advertising campaign for the regional co-ordinator posts will commence on the 1st February, if you are interested in any of these posts please visit:

www.capitaras.co.uk/cbuilders

The Capacity Builders board have now met four times and begun discussions on their strategic approach. In order to commence a dialogue about ChangeUp, and inform their own thinking on how it should be taken forward, board members are coming to each region during February and March to meet a small number of stakeholders. These meetings are being arranged by Government Offices. The board are also meeting representatives from the national hubs of expertise.

Capacity Builders are planning a launch event in early April in Birmingham and details will follow shortly.

Contacts

Please continue to use your current contacts for ChangeUp: either your Government Office or the Home Office Active Communities Directorate (ACD).

If you wish to contact Simon Hebditch or Chris Pond please do so c/o Sallyann Card in the ACD at the ChangeUp e-mail address: ChangeUp@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Focus on Yorkshire and Humber

Reaching out to Community Organisations

In Yorkshire and the Humber, Change Up is enabling the partner organisations of the Community Alliance (Development Trusts Association, bassac, Community Matters and Scarman Trust) to pool their resources at regional level in order to deliver enhanced services to the community organisations and individuals who make up their networks. In addition to joint networking opportunities, the products and services offered by each partner are being opened up to organisations right across the various memberships.

Already organisations on the ground are seeing benefits from the work. ABL (Action for Business Ltd) in Bradford may be nationally acclaimed, but Gurdev S Dahele MBE (Chief Executive) was still keen to benefit from the programme by undertaking a DTA Health Check:

“In a busy environment where an organisation is fully stretched in its day to day operational work, it can easily lose its focus on the role of a development trust. The DTA Health check gave us the opportunity to assess ourselves where we were with our organisational and financial management systems”

ABL used the learning from the implementation of the Health Check to inform their recent strategic review, which has developed their long term vision for development and growth.

“It has been a useful tool for ABL to build its capacity in providing a better service to its customers.” says Gurdev.

For further details about the work of the Community Alliance in Yorkshire and the Humber, contact Neil Berry at the Development Trusts Association. (0114) 250-0613. n.berry@dta.org.uk

Funding Beyond ChangeUp

Partnership working between the Government Office in Yorkshire and the Humber and those working on the West Yorkshire infrastructure strategy has been instrumental in securing funding beyond the initial Change Up programme.

The Change Up resource turned a long-standing commitment amongst infrastructure agencies to co-operate, into a reality, and allowed the development of a more formal consortium.

The West Yorkshire Infrastructure strategy which emerged from research had relevance far beyond the immediate Change Up funding. It was therefore decided to submit the infrastructure plan to the West Yorkshire Economic Partnership (the West Yorkshire sub regional ‘investment planning’ strategy board of the Regional Development Agency – Yorkshire Forward). The Partnership was in the early stages of its preparation of a five year plan, and would be investing significant amounts of funding to promote its economic objectives. The third sector saw that economic objectives could be linked to the social economy, and that there were strong links to be made between a strategic approach to infrastructure, and a strategy approach to

investment planning.

In the autumn of 2004 the original infrastructure strategy was submitted to the West Yorkshire Economic Partnership, and its various sub-groupings. The protracted discussions did not always go well, and at a few points in the debate Change Up was more of a curse than a blessing. "Why" the question was asked "does Government Office put in all these short term resources, then expect the tab to be picked up locally?" By June 2005 the proposals had met with broad acceptance by WYEP, but there were still practical questions to be answered.

Part of the question was always going to be how to demonstrate the link between 'infrastructure' and the objectives of the Regional Development Agency. Complementary (match) funding would involve significant commitment from European funding element of Government Office. Other potentially significant funders (such as the Big Lottery and the Learning and Skills Council) needed to be aware of what was happening.

Government Office YH, recognised the partnership need, and offered to co-ordinate discussions. By late November the meeting had taken place. Nobody sitting round the table was going to commit there and then to the infrastructure proposals, but they all fed, one way or another, into the West Yorkshire Economic Partnership, and within a month, the Infrastructure Strategy was approved by the Partnership, and moved on to formal assessment.

The process is now in the hands of the Regional Development Agency. West Yorkshire Economic Partnership doesn't approve funds, it informs the economic strategy. However the desire for partnership from Government Office was instrumental in getting a result, and helping the process move on to the next step.

Chris Hollins
(Director of The Charities Information Bureau, responsible body for the West Yorkshire Infrastructure Change Up contract)

Contacts:

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Steve Nesbitt - Head of Community Policy and Diversity Team GOYH 0113 283 5439

Chris Hollins – Director, The Charities Information Bureau 01924 239063

Keeping it CRISP

As part of the ChangeUp Public Service Delivery Programme work is underway to support the sector to be better equipped and resourced to deliver high quality services to offenders.

Clinks was established in 1998 to strengthen and develop the partnerships between voluntary and community-based organisations and the Prison and Probation Services in England and Wales. This continues to be the basis of their work with an additional strand that now focuses on developments relating to the introduction of the National Offender Management Services (NOMS).

Clinks' work includes national policy development as well as regional and local partnership work. CRISP is the Clinks Regional Information and Skills Project which is based in the North-East, Yorkshire and the Humber and the East Midlands. The Project began in July 2005 and is part of ChangeUp's Public Services Priority Programme. The aims of CRISP are to develop specialist and generalist regional VCS infrastructure so that the sector is better equipped and resourced to deliver high quality services to offenders; to support frontline VCS organisations to improve both capacity and service delivery to offenders; to raise the awareness of and exploit the untapped potential that other mainstream VCS bodies may bring to working with offenders.

To achieve these aims CRISP's Project Plan for 2006 emphasises five products and activities:

- Action Learning groups to share ideas, develop action plans, enhance communication and offer support for those who work with offenders;
- Bi-monthly Regional Information and Skills Events (RISE);
- Website and E-bulletins
- Regional Who's Who Guide
- Conference and Evaluation Report

The First RISE was held in December in Newcastle and the second will be held in February in Darlington. For a full calendar of CRISP events, please go to www.clinks.org.

Diversity & Equality

ChangeUp has made a commitment to address the diversity of voluntary and community organisations and their needs. Progress is being made, particularly at local level, but it is recognised that there are opportunities to do more.

The Active Communities Directorate commissioned consultants in June 2005 to develop a focused strategy paper that identifies clear actions that ensure groups who have not historically had equal access to support and representation benefit from the implementation of ChangeUp. The work has been overseen by an advisory board of VCS stakeholders. A copy of the final report including recommendations can be found at www.changeup.org.uk

The Equalities Strategy paper gives a detailed list of activities that could be taken forward by the Active Communities Directorate (ACD) and Capacity Builders. The ACD are looking to take some of the initial suggested recommendations forward prior to the launch of Capacity Builders in April.

Capacity Builders will be responsible for mainstreaming diversity issues into the design and delivery of activities within ChangeUp.

Thank you