

# Hubbub

The newsletter  
from the



**Volunteering Hub**

Issue 01 **Autumn 2005**

**Pick up your local newspaper and you'll see pleas for help.** A playgroup's about to lose its premises. A local charity needs a treasurer. Community and volunteer organisations struggle everywhere to find the support they need.

We have set up the **Volunteering Hub** to develop the volunteering infrastructure. The Hub's objective is to enable far more people to volunteer – many through employer-supported volunteering. We want these volunteers to be more diverse and to include many more from under-represented groups such as rural communities, refugees and asylum seekers. We want more volunteers to be more active where they are needed most, with organisations working in the most deprived communities. We want all volunteers to be well managed and supported, so that they remain committed and motivated and continue to volunteer.



Our voluntary and community sector is strong and dynamic,

and ever more important. To continue to expand and thrive, we need to build capacity, to develop our sector's infrastructure and to improve its performance.

ChangeUp is a ten year programme, sponsored by the Home Office, to do just this.

ChangeUp will strengthen our sector by giving us a really high quality local, regional and national infrastructure. This will enable us to develop robust governance throughout the sector, to develop our workforce's skills, and to improve organisations' performance.

ChangeUp will be delivered by a partnership of government, the local public sector, and the voluntary and community sectors. Its work has been divided into six main areas, for each of which the government has established a Hub – a centre of excellence which will co-ordinate activities. The hubs are: **Volunteering, Governance, Workforce development, Performance improvement, ICT and Finance.**

**'Hubs of expertise ... will bring key players together to provide strategic leadership and act as gateways and beacons of good practice on key areas, reaching directly to frontline organisations to develop advanced thinking and good practice.'**

ChangeUp Executive Summary, Home Office June 2004

# What will the Hub do?

The Volunteering Hub's work is organised under three themes:

**1** **strategy and management of the Hub**

**2** **dissemination of information, good practice and management development**

**3** **modernising infrastructure**

An additional project explores risk management and volunteering.

## Themes

### Strategy and management

The volunteering infrastructure must reach every community in the country. To do this, organisations from all parts of the volunteering and community sector must be fully involved in the Hub from the start. Our priority is to reach out beyond the existing membership of the organisations at the core of the Hub, and especially to include under-represented communities.

### Information dissemination, good practice and management development

Our role at the Hub is to see our sector's already excellent work in this area carried out in a more strategic, cohesive and consistent manner. There are many strands to the work planned, with a focus on researching and developing information resources and training strategies.

### Modernising infrastructure

Organisations in the voluntary and community sector have already done a great deal of work towards modernising the volunteering infrastructure. Our task is to create an infrastructure which is lean, robust and securely funded, locally, regionally and nationally.

**Under the three themes we will undertake many pieces of work, large and small – far too many to list here. These few examples give an idea of their scope and impact:**

We will improve the quality of volunteer management by developing a national training strategy for volunteer managers, linked to national occupational standards We will make external accreditation easier and more cost-effective for organisations by promoting the Investing in Volunteers standard We will roll out a quality accreditation process – ensuring effectiveness and consistency everywhere We will run a marketing campaign to encourage people to volunteer from every community We will give access to a huge range of volunteering-related materials on good practice, funding, research and infrastructure by providing more information online We will increase employer-supported volunteering in all sectors by developing a nationwide infrastructure and promoting national and regional networks and events.

Help!  
I need  
somebody

School's  
out

Look  
before  
you leap

**Good news for everyone who manages or works with volunteers** – Volunteering England's free information helpline is extending its opening hours.

Volunteering England's skilled team of information officers answers queries on all types of volunteering problems and questions – everything from guidance on benefits rules and criminal record checks to advice on delicate management problems such as helping volunteers move on and managing difficult volunteers. Until now, the line has only been able to open for four hours a day. Thanks to the Hub, from autumn 2005 the helpline will be open from 9.30am-5.30pm each weekday. **You can call the information helpline on 0800 028 3304 (freephone/textphone).**

**Innovation, flexibility and quality are the keys to our new national training strategy**, designed to drive up the skills and qualities of all those who manage and lead volunteers. We will develop toolkits and disseminate information on training, and we will also develop an educational website. In addition we will give Volunteer Centres a major role in delivering training and management development programmes.

The size of our sector makes it impossible for one organisation or network to train everyone so we will establish 'learning loops' to bring together volunteer managers from all sectors to learn how to learn, building the capacity of large numbers of managers to take responsibility for their own learning.

**People really worry about risk and insurance in the volunteering sector** – fearing increases in insurance premiums for their organisations and negligence claims against volunteers. We will research the extent of the problem and provide reliable, up-to-date information, and we will produce and disseminate good practice guidance, both to volunteer-involving organisations and to the insurance industry.



# What is the Volunteering Hub?

We are a partnership of volunteer and community sector organisations which are pooling their expertise and working together.

Each Hub has an accountable body which co-ordinates, manages and governs the work of the partners. For the Volunteering Hub this is Volunteering England. Volunteering England will also be delivering some of the Hub's work.

The Hub's work will be overseen and monitored by the Volunteering Hub Scrutiny Committee. The Hub's Advisory Group is the England Volunteering Development Council.

# Other Hubs

All the Hubs are working to improve our voluntary and community sectors, and some of our work naturally overlaps. Alongside its key role at the centre of the Volunteering Hub, Volunteering England will also be involved in the work of the Governance Hub and the Workforce Development Hub.

The Governance Hub's work will improve the governance of voluntary and community organisations, locally, regionally and nationally. There is more information about the Governance Hub on its interim website at [www.governancehub.org.uk](http://www.governancehub.org.uk)

The Workforce Development Hub's role is to support the recruitment, retention and development of staff, volunteers and trustees in voluntary and community organisations. It will do this by promoting skills development and good employment practice. We are working with the Workforce Development Hub on the National Training Strategy. There is more information about this Hub at [www.voluntarysectorskills.org.uk](http://www.voluntarysectorskills.org.uk)

# Find out more

You can email us at [volunteeringhub@volunteeringengland.org](mailto:volunteeringhub@volunteeringengland.org)

Information about the work of the Volunteering Hub will regularly be posted on the web at [www.volunteering.org.uk/changeup](http://www.volunteering.org.uk/changeup)

On this site you can sign up for e-bulletins about the Hub, and will find links to all Hub and ChangeUp activities. You can also read a copy of the full business plan for the Hub here, as well as monitoring and evaluation reports as they come through.

The Volunteering Hub Advisory Group will publish its reports and papers on [www.volunteering.org.uk/evdc](http://www.volunteering.org.uk/evdc)