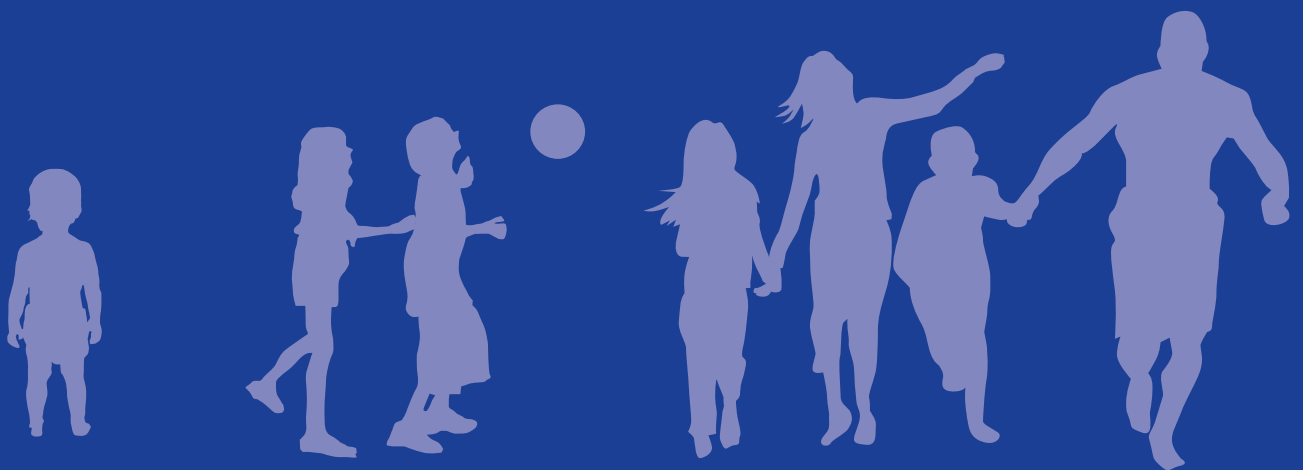


# Every Organisation Matters

Mapping the children and young people's  
voluntary and community sector



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**University of Hull**

**July 2008**

**SPEAKING OUT**  
Supporting the Sector to Influence Policy

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## **SPEAKING**OUT

Supporting the Sector to Influence Policy

Speaking Out is a partnership between the National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations (NCVCCO) and the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS), which seeks to build a voice for the children and young people's voluntary and community sector across government. The project is funded by the Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office.



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July 2008

# Executive Summary

This study, the first ever mapping of the size and scope of the children and young people's voluntary and community sector (CYPVCS), aims to help policy-makers, commissioners and those who run services to better understand the context in which they work. The research conducted by the University of Hull was commissioned as part of the Speaking Out project, a joint initiative between the National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations and the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services.

## Key findings

- The CYPVCS employs as many as one in three of the total voluntary and community sector (VCS) workforce.
- There are up to four times as many CYPVCS organisations per 1,000 children and young people as there are VCS organisations per 1,000 of the adult population.
- The profile of the CYPVCS varies significantly across the country, reflecting local policy and demographic contexts.
- In common with the VCS as a whole, the CYPVCS is increasingly affected by growing levels of public service commissioning which favour larger organisations and enhance private sector involvement: this is not uniformly welcomed.
- The CYPVCS is being adversely affected by huge policy and structural change and consequent uncertainty about its sustainability.
- Children aged 7-13 appear to be poorly provided for, with an emphasis on early years provision and a growing government agenda around services for young people leading to this transitional age group being missed out.
- Few CYPVCS organisations have thought carefully enough about how to measure the long-term impact of their work.
- Effective national mapping of the CYPVCS is currently hindered by poor quality of data.
- Local mapping might be a more useful way of providing an accurate profile of the sector and for pointing to gaps in service and policy provision.

## The national context: change in the voluntary and community sectors

The Government has introduced a wide range of policies aimed at the VCS, which has led to the sector gaining an increasingly high profile and recognition. Government itself has argued that the VCS can bring specific advantages to public services, including a strong focus on the needs of service users, knowledge and expertise to meet complex needs, flexibility and the experience and independence to innovate.

This increased profile has been accompanied by efforts to strengthen the evidence base for the contribution made by the VCS. Statistics on the VCS have been improving, in part with the introduction of Guidestar, an independent charity set up in 2003, to provide a single source of detailed information about every UK charity. This is in addition to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations's (NCVO) *UK Voluntary Sector Almanac* and the government-sponsored State of the Sector Panel.

According to the 2007 *UK Voluntary Sector Almanac*, the UK VCS has an **annual income of £29bn**, 38% of which is derived from statutory sources. It has a paid workforce of some 611,000 – 2.2% of the total workforce. Moreover, 11.6m people volunteer at least once a month. There are thought to be as many as 400,000 VCS organisations in England and Wales.

## The children and young people's voluntary and community sectors

This study was a first attempt to map the specific territory covered by the children and young people's voluntary and community sectors and drew in part on the work that has been carried out in mapping the VCS as a whole.

The study took place against a context of considerable policy change affecting the CYPVCS over the past few years. Drivers for this have included an emphasis on improving educational attainment, reducing child poverty, fostering better inter-developmental working and implementing national programmes targeted at disadvantaged or socially excluded children and young people (including Sure Start, the Children's Fund, the Local Network Fund, Connexions, the Every Child Matters initiative, Extended Schools and programmes aimed at children in care). Taken together, these suggest that children and young people are now seen as a key policy priority.

However, alongside this, the current government drive to engage the CYPVCS in public service delivery has left many perceptions, as with the sector as a whole, that there is a state of managed crisis where short-term goals seem to be dominating and there is little political space or funding for developing a strategic response to these structural changes. The pace and scope of change is substantially disadvantaging smaller organisations which do not have the capacity to engage fully in it.

## The research study

The research study comprised several elements: a literature review, a review of recent policy developments, a national email and postal questionnaire to VCS organisations working with children and young people, a quantitative analysis of data for four representative case study areas in England held on the Guidestar database (factored up to provide an approximate picture of the national profile of the CYPVCS), and qualitative fieldwork in the same four case study areas.

Academic, policy and research literature relating specifically to recent policy and service developments in the CYPVCS is relatively sparse, making it difficult to determine whether there are trends in this specific arena distinguishing it from broader VCS trends. Apart from national policy documents and local interpretations, much of the literature sourced was 'grey' literature, often produced by children and young people's organisations to inform their work, or involved some mapping at a very local level. This highlighted a more general issue for the sector as a whole, that of the inadequate evidence base.

Even at a local level, mapping exercises were found by this research generally to be incomplete, at a very early stage, or non-existent, and the key organisations which might be expected to take the initiative in undertaking this mapping had not actually done so. Substantial sources of information about children and young people's organisations deriving from the work of nationally-funded programmes, particularly the Local Network Fund, Sure Start and the Children's Fund, which had been maintained during

the life of these programmes, had not been updated since the end of the programmes. These potentially valuable sources of information thus turned out to be of no value at all.

A national email and postal survey was undertaken using national networks and databases of relevant organisations. This produced a partial response as some organisations were unwilling to collaborate with the study and several other related surveys were occurring at the same time. Some general trends were however apparent from the survey when taken in conjunction with the data drawn down for the four case study areas (the West Midlands, South-West and London Boroughs of Hackney and Richmond) from the Guidestar database.

## The findings

In addition to the key findings outlined earlier, the research found that:

- The average income per local children and young people's organisation was just under £700k; for regional organisations £2.8m; and for national organisations approximately £7.3m. The overall average for the sample was £3.4m i.e. the income of national organisations skewed the picture substantially.
- If the value of volunteering is included, drawing on one widely used multiplier for the sector as a whole, the contribution to GDP of this small fraction of the CYPVCS was of the order of £3bn or, using the more modest multiplier used by NCVO in its recent *UK Voluntary Sector Almanac*, £1.6bn.

The average number of **staff per organisation** was found to be 95; this breaks down by geographical area of benefit in the following way: local organisations 20 staff per organisation, regional organisations 62 per organisation and national organisations 187 per organisation. Overall there were twice as many female staff as male staff.

However experiences from the sector suggest that there is a wide spectrum of organisations some of which employ only one or two people while others employ hundreds, showing both the limitations of the data available and that findings are heavily skewed towards larger organisations.

Importantly there is a significant discrepancy between data provided by the Guidestar database and the survey research: there appears to be almost two-thirds as many children and young people's voluntary and community organisations in reality as there are general charities as a whole recorded in Guidestar's database. This may be due to the fact that Guidestar does not include smaller unregistered organisations whereas the present survey included a significant number of these.

- The proportion of staff employed with a disability was just under 5%. Paid staff aged over 50 years represented about 12% of the total staff employed.
- Black and minority ethnic (BME) paid staff were employed at the rate of 1.5 per local organisation, 4.5 per regional organisation and just over 15 per national organisation. As a

proportion of total staff employed, BME staff represented 7.5% of local organisations' paid staff; 7.1% of regional organisations' paid staff; and 7.9% of national organisations' paid staff. The BME population of England as a whole is now more than 10% of the total population and the corresponding figure for the 0-18 year-old BME population is somewhat higher still, although varying significantly from area to area.

- Per organisation, the number of volunteers used by this sample was 38 per local organisation; 75 per regional organisation; and 4,927 per national organisation (or 1900 volunteers per organisation on average).
- There were some **regional differences**. The average income per children and young people's voluntary and community organisation is 40% higher in the West Midlands than in the South West. However, the total regional income for the West Midlands is roughly similar to that of the South-West despite the fact that it has a population of children and young people that is 23% greater than that of the South-West region. The cost of providing services to children and young people is likely to be higher in rural areas than in urban areas but that was beyond the scope of this study.
- The CYPVCS employs roughly between a third and a quarter (about 160,000) of the numbers employed in the total VCS workforce.

All organisations interviewed had experienced **financial difficulties** at some point. Larger organisations and smaller groups agreed on one aspect of funding and commissioning:

‘the current trend with regards to how particular government funding streams and strands are being initiated will exclude a lot of the smaller organisations.’

Funding and sustainability were constant themes across all four areas.

No organisation had a systematic means of **monitoring the sustainability** of their work. They acknowledged it to be a weakness but argued that it was difficult to prove a negative - i.e. that without CYPVCS input children and families would have ‘gone off the rails.’

**Listening to the views of children and young people** was seen as very important to all the organisations interviewed: ‘it’s at the core of what we do’: but experience was patchy. Partnerships with children and young people were seen as a key activity, with some organisations doing this well across the sector. National initiatives are also influencing local relationships:

‘messages from the government are more positive than they have ever been ... unfortunately, the reality and the rhetoric don’t match.’

## Conclusions and recommendations

It is clear that the CYPVCS is a very significant player within the voluntary and community sector, employing approximately 160,000 paid workers and generating income of at least £15bn a year.

However, there are fears that if current trends continue, children and young people’s voluntary and community organisations will become parallel public service organisations and political and economic pressures will push the sector towards providing services ‘on the cheap’. This may mean that development work, the process of working with children and young people in a supportive framework over a period of time, diminishes as organisations are forced more and more to concentrate on core service delivery. This is where the issue of impact becomes critical: until the CYPVCS can demonstrate the longer-term impacts of its work, it will not be able to set the terms on which resources are allocated.

Amongst the specific **recommendations** to emerge from this work are:

- Building a clear evidence base of the size and the scope of the sector is vital to maximising the contribution of the CYPVCS. Further consideration should be given to how Guidestar data can be utilised. The Office of the Third Sector (OTS) must also commit resources to ensuring that this study is regularly updated to provide an ongoing, accurate picture of the CYPVCS. All funders, particularly at a local level, must capture and update details of all the organisations that they are funding.

- It is vital that the CYPVCS is able to play a full part in children's trust arrangements, local strategic partnerships and other appropriate forums. Local authorities should ensure that they have appropriate processes and mechanisms in place to hear from a range of stakeholders and to resource the participation of children and young people's organisations, particularly those which are smaller with few if any paid staff.
- The Children's Workforce Development Council has a key role to play in collecting data on the CYPVCS workforce. Sustained investment is needed in the training and development needs of the CYPVCS workforce.
- It is clear that the Government's desire to commission the CYPVCS to deliver public services has left many organisations operating within a context of significant uncertainty and working to short-term goals. Public service commissioners must ensure they are supporting sustainable service provision.
- **Further research** is needed into the extent to which smaller organisations may be faring less well due to a shift to commissioning and the support needed to ensure the survival of smaller organisations working with some of the most vulnerable children and young people.

# 1: Introduction

This is a report of the first attempt at mapping the children and young people's voluntary and community sectors (CYPVCS)<sup>1</sup>, undertaken by a research team based at the University of Hull, commissioned jointly by the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services and the National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations. NCVYS and NCVCCO were jointly awarded a strategic grant from the Active Communities Directorate (part of the government's Office of the Third Sector - OTS) to help develop an effective voice for the CYPVCS across a range of government departments. The present study was one key element of this work, to inform government departments of the size, range and scope of the sector as well as to inform the sector and promote the contribution it makes to communities across England. The sector has gone through substantial change in the recent past with legislation and policy emerging under the general auspices of 'Every Child Matters' and 'Youth Matters', the emergence of children's trusts, and wider structural shifts in the voluntary and community sectors (VCS) as a whole as a result of a changing relationship to government. Mapping the size and scope of the VCS is clearly timely, given the substantial changes that are occurring; however, the size and scope of these changes make it correspondingly more difficult to map at present, as we found.

First, we look at the national contexts for this study.

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<sup>1</sup> We differentiated between the voluntary and community sectors as follows. We define the voluntary sector as consisting of charitable, non-statutory bodies, employing paid staff as well as volunteers, funded from central or local government sources; and the community sector as local representative bodies, typically operating without substantial funds or paid staff. Obviously the distinction between the two sectors can be blurred on occasions. Most mapping finds it more difficult to identify community sector organisations. The voluntary and community sectors together are increasingly being referred to as the Third Sector although we have retained the earlier form in this report which remains the term favoured by most within the VCS. As terminology is often confusing we generally use the word 'sector' or acronym VCS, when referring to the voluntary and community sectors as a whole, and CYPVCS to denote the children and young people's voluntary and community sectors.

## 2: The national context: change in the voluntary and community sectors

### 2.1 The changing sector<sup>2</sup>

There is very extensive academic, policy and practice literature reflecting on recent changes within the voluntary sector as a whole. Much of this has been discussed widely and here we aim simply to summarise key developments and refer to key literature. This context is important nonetheless as a means of understanding the wider pressures on the CYPVCS, which themselves have the additional responsibilities and safeguards relating to working with children and young people, particularly of child protection and of managing the transition from childhood to adulthood.

One consequence of the growing recent emphasis on partnership working has been an increasingly high profile for the VCS. Alongside its characteristic of offering choice, flexibility and the capacity to release new resources, the sector is also critical for reaching more marginalised groups and giving them a public voice. By extending citizen involvement in both service and policy development, a healthy VCS offers the potential for a variety of provision, catering for diverse needs and bringing a wider range of resources to bear on policy change. Its contribution is through its:

- provision of services, both to complement public sector service delivery and increasingly as an alternative to both public and private sectors;
- contribution to policy-making and democratic legitimacy, through the expertise it can bring to policy-making, through its campaigning role and through its encouragement of the participation of citizens, communities and service users in public life;
- role in advocacy, informing and supporting citizens and service users in their engagement with public services and institutions;
- role in the development of social capital, community cohesion and social inclusion, as well as its ability to reach the most marginalised populations; and
- ability to identify new needs and to campaign for them to be met.

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<sup>2</sup> We acknowledge with thanks the contribution made to this analysis by long-standing colleagues who were not part of this specific research team, in particular by Professor Marilyn Taylor.

Once characterised as a 'junior partner in the welfare firm',<sup>3</sup> 1970s advocates of the VCS argued that it should play a more central role in delivering welfare.<sup>4</sup> Recession and the election of the 1980s Conservative governments offered that opportunity, with a shift towards a welfare market in which VCOs became competitors alongside the private sector. The idea of partnership re-emerged as VCOs and service users became involved, albeit as junior partners, in joint planning for community care alongside local and health authorities and partnership with communities became a central theme of regeneration policy.

These changes offered the opportunity of greater recognition, a more equal relationship and better funding conditions but came to be seen as a mixed blessing. As welfare state frontiers were 'rolled back', 'partnership' was increasingly seen as code for 'incorporation'. Government, the more powerful partner, was seen as dictating terms, putting the sector's distinctive characteristics at risk.<sup>5</sup> The most consistent theme in government attitudes towards the VCS in the mid-1990s<sup>6</sup> was the latter's usefulness in reducing costs, a concern continuing to the present day including in the CYPVCS, as we shall see.

The 1997 move from a 'contract' to a 'partnership' culture was re-emphasised by successive New Labour Governments. However, government policy discourse moved from an emphasis on poverty and deprivation to a new language of social exclusion and social integration<sup>7</sup> and to an emphasis on 'joined-up' government.<sup>8</sup> Experience of participation policies suggested that little power was shared and that participation was merely a way of managing dissent<sup>9,10</sup>, a view since confirmed by the experience of neighbourhood renewal policies where the early promise of the New Deal for Communities has evaporated with communities complaining that neighbourhood renewal became a vehicle for policies imposed from the top down.<sup>11</sup>

The implications of involving VCOs, not only in project implementation but also in policy and strategic development, were rhetorically recognised both in longer lead-in times to government funding programmes like Sure Start, the national pre-school programme, and in the provision of resources for 'capacity-building'. The inclusion of a Community Empowerment Fund in the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal was further apparent evidence of this political commitment. Meanwhile, national research<sup>12</sup> revealed the very significant effect that the VCS can have in

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3 Owen, D. (1964) *English philanthropy 1660-1960*, London: Oxford University Press.

4 Gladstone, F. (1979) *Voluntary action in a changing world*, London: Bedford Square Press; Hadley, R. and Hatch, S. (1981) *Social welfare and the failure of the state: centralised social services and participatory alternatives*, London: George Allen and Unwin.

5 Gutch, R. (1992) *Contracting: lessons from the United States*, London: National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

6 Deakin, N. (1996) 'The devil's in the detail', *Social Policy and Administration*, 30:1.

7 SEU (1998) *Bringing Britain together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal*, London: Social Exclusion Unit.

8 *Ibid.* :7.

9 Stewart, M. and Taylor, M. (1995) *Empowerment and estate regeneration*, Bristol: Policy Press.

10 Craig, G. (1989) 'Community work and the state', *Community Development Journal*, 24, 1:1-16.

11 Dinham, A. (2005) *Another deal for what community?*, Unpublished PhD thesis, Goldsmith's College, London.

12 Craig, G., Taylor, M., Monro, S., Warburton, D. and Wilkinson, M. (2003) *Willing partners?: voluntary and community associations in the democratic process*, Final Report to the Economic and Social Research Council.

widening both understandings and the extent of democratic involvement in local and regional life, contributing substantially towards participatory democratic involvement.

Recognising the important roles of the VCS, the 1997 New Labour Government introduced the 'Compact'<sup>13</sup>, establishing a framework of principles for relationships between government and the VCS.<sup>14</sup> The new emphasis on partnership and consultation with the sector in many policy areas offered further opportunities. But whilst many voluntary and community sector organisations (VCOs) welcomed the prospect that this partnership approach would bring the energies of different sectors to bear more effectively on social problems, others were concerned about the impact on the VCOs' autonomy. A cynical view saw partnership simply as a means for government to transfer responsibility for welfare away from the state in a way that still allowed it to continue to exercise control over policy and practice.

The Compact emerged from the recommendations of the Commission on the Future on the Voluntary Sector (the Deakin Report).<sup>15</sup> The English 'Compact' was launched in 1998, followed by more detailed codes of practice.<sup>16</sup> Although there was no parallel recommendation for parallel local initiatives, it was recognised that most encounters between VCOs and the state took place at the local level. As a result, pressure to develop local Compacts has steadily increased. All local authority areas are now required to have a local Compact in place and both guidance for their development and revision, and toolkits for evaluation have been produced.<sup>17</sup> Government commitment to the Compact and to the VCS as a whole was reaffirmed with the publication by HM Treasury of a cross-cutting review of the VCS in service delivery<sup>18</sup> and of a consultation document on the further development of Compacts<sup>19</sup> which saw the Compact as underpinning the expansion of the sector's role. Concern within the VCS has remained high, but such reviews might presage a move towards using the VCS to deliver a much wider range of public services but without a concomitant commitment to adequate funding and quality assurance: these concerns have been heightened by developments in the past few years.

A number of recent investigations of varying depth have been undertaken to begin to explore the size, scope and economic contribution of the VCS, including the annual NCVO State of the Sector (now Almanac) reports (see below). Rough estimates have been made of the contribution to national economic life, including within the Deakin Report and, for the purposes of this research, more interestingly at regional or sub-regional levels. These are discussed below (Sections 2.3, 2.4).

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13 G.Craig, M. Taylor *et al.* (2005) *The Paradox of Compacts*, London: Home Office: – online report 02/05, available at [www.home-office.gov.uk/rds](http://www.home-office.gov.uk/rds)

14 Home Office (1998) *Getting it right together*, London: Home Office.

15 NCVO (1996) *Facing the challenge of change* (The Deakin Commission Report), London: National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

16 Craig, G., Taylor, M., Monro, S., Wilkinson, M., Bloor, K. and Syed, A. (2001) *Trust or contract?*, Bristol: Policy Press.

17 See footnote 13.

18 HMTreasury (2002) *Cross cutting review of the voluntary and community sectors*, London: HMTreasury.

19 Home Office (2005) *Strengthening partnerships: next steps for Compacts*, London: Home Office.

The present period of change within the VCS, including the loss of significant funding streams such as the Single Regeneration Budget, aspects of the Lottery and the European Social Fund, may be of particular importance for those organisations with least ‘voice’ within the VCS, the smaller organisations and those representing marginalised communities. This loss of funding was characterised as a ‘funding cliff’, with many organisations losing substantial funding from these sources. The Treasury Review<sup>19</sup> suggested that the greatest impact might be felt amongst ‘programmes of community involvement and capacity building, early prevention projects, crime reduction and community safety programmes and initiatives designed to join-up local services.’ Home Office research<sup>20</sup> also suggested that central government funding to the VCS across England as a whole was substantially lower than it is for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

## 2.2 Recent policy shifts

Government has increasingly defined its expectations of the VCS and – to a lesser extent – provided a supportive policy framework and resources. From 1998 onwards, debate about the Compact has increasingly focused down on the kinds of relationship which VCOs could expect to have with central, regional and local government and other public sector bodies such as Health Authorities, Primary Care Trusts, Learning and Skills Councils. Concern amidst the VCS that Compacts might have little leverage in negotiating difficult relationships, particularly over funding, have been heightened by high-profile failures of government to observe the terms of the Compact. Nevertheless, recent research into Compact development<sup>21</sup> indicates that its influence is growing steadily, if unevenly and amidst confusion about the role of regional Compacts. Recent government thinking about the Compact’s significance in local partnership working has appeared in yet further policy guidance.

Government has also made two further major funding investments recently. One, the Futurebuilders programme, commenced as a £300m investment fund over three years to 2008 ‘developed jointly with the sector, supporting schemes which increase the scale and scope of sector involvement in service delivery through a mixture of grants and different kinds of loans, focussing on development and acquisition of physical and intangible assets.’<sup>22</sup> Further significant funding has since been made available. Initial responses from the VCS suggested serious concerns within the sector, including the fear that smaller, lesser established organisations might be marginalised (as appears to be the case from our study and others), that the capacity of such organisations should be targeted for expansion, that government should demonstrate that it was committed to full cost recovery, that Futurebuilders should tolerate a degree of risk, and that the cost of monitoring and evaluation

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20 Mcroft, I. and Zimmeck, M. (2004) *Central government funding of voluntary and community organisations, 1982/3 to 2001/2*, London: Home Office.

21 footnote 13

22 *Ibid.* p.22.

should be incorporated into bids (which appears not to be the case).<sup>23</sup> Despite the VCS taking a leading role in the governance of Futurebuilders England this has not assuaged these concerns. The first round of the fund was initially run by a consortium made up of NCVO, Charity Bank, Unity Trust Bank and Northern Rock Foundation that set up Futurebuilders England. The second phase (2008-11) is now being managed by Adventure Capital Fund.

The second major government funding investment was the ChangeUp programme, 'a capacity-building framework for the VCS, launched in June 2004 ... Government is making an initial £80m [with a further £70m in 2006-8] investment to support the framework, with over 60% of these funds initially earmarked for delivery at a regional or local level.'<sup>24</sup> Government's own assessment of early experience suggested that ownership by the sector of the implementation programme was unclear, there was a lack of mechanisms for coordinating activity, the programme was at times complex and confusing and there was a lack of clear benefit for marginalised communities. Some smaller and black and minority ethnic (BME) organisations have commented that they had little influence over the ChangeUp process or benefit from it and that the 'infrastructure development planning on the ground' promised by government was, to date, largely illusory; indeed, many organisations claim to have had virtually no knowledge of the process. Other organisations – including key sub-regional organisations – have observed that after long delays in getting the scheme going, and in having difficulties in spending money on particular ChangeUp priorities (such as the development of IT infrastructure), government has been driving through spending in quite unrealistic timetables. Many infrastructure organisations concerned with marginalised groups have reported that the proclaimed benefits of ChangeUp had not percolated down.

Government's stated intention in establishing ChangeUp was that the VCS and other stakeholders at national and regional levels should 'come together to agree the shape and structure of provision which best suits the needs of frontline organisations and how it should be funded.'<sup>25</sup> However, government's expectation that 'specialist infrastructure, including that working with marginalised groups [including many children and young people's groups], should be integral to the development of hubs of activity and diverse organisations should be represented in the management of generalist infrastructure' can only be met where such specialist infrastructure, underpinned by networks of diverse organisations, exists effectively, and where issues of diversity are fully represented within VCS structures. This has yet to be the case on a consistent basis. Specialist needs identified in the NCVO's review of the ChangeUp scheme included urban/rural, generic/specific, mainstream/BME, voluntary/community and volunteering support/sector support. This review did not point to the CYPVCS as specifically needing attention or enhanced funding support but much of the VCS infrastructure to support these specific needs – including children and young people's organisations - does not yet exist in a robust form in the areas we visited.

23 NCVO (2003) *Response to Treasury consultation on proposals for the Future builders fund*, London: National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

24 Home Office (2005) *Developing capacity: Next steps for ChangeUp*, London: Home Office.

25 Crook, J. (2004) 'Time to ChangeUp the black voluntary sector', *Race and Regeneration*, Winter 2004/5: 8.

The government established a national sector-led agency, Capacitybuilders, to undertake management of the further funding being made available for ChangeUp over the extended period now coming to an end. National 'hubs of excellence' were established in areas such as performance improvement, workforce development, governance, ICT and financing VCS activity in order to stimulate developments in their respective areas, although there remains considerable doubt as to the extent to which this funding reached more marginalised parts of the sector including, again, children and young people's organisations within the broader VCS. Further investment has been made in this area, replacing national hubs with national support services for various aspects of the VCS' work and the Improving Reach programme, specifically targeted at more marginalised groups including BME organisations.

The ChangeUp programme is in any case, in reality, a means to an end. Government's vision for the VCS, originally flagged in the Treasury Cross Cutting Review<sup>26</sup>, which argued for a 'coherent shared strategy to underpin capacity in the sector'<sup>27</sup> in which it is to have a very significantly enhanced role in service delivery in particular. This role was to be underpinned by the further development of the Compact at national and local levels<sup>28</sup> and by strengthening the VCS at local and regional levels through the ChangeUp programme, that is, by development of services to the sector to enable it to perform more effectively as agents of public service delivery. This is a critical shift, as our interviews with local organisations revealed.

Explanations outside government of the enthusiasm for greater VCS involvement in public service delivery have focused in particular on questions of cost (with the VCS expected to deliver services more cheaply, a concern shared by public sector trades unions). Factors shaping this enthusiasm include the Treasury's target of £21.5bn efficiency savings by 2008; the local marketisation of public services; and the government's distrust of local government as a means for effective and accountable service delivery, sceptically described as 'picking up the pieces of public service failure'.<sup>29</sup> Within the VCS, there is greater enthusiasm for becoming more involved in public service delivery amongst organisations (particularly large national organisations with nationwide networks of branches across the country) which have the capacity to engage in this work.<sup>30</sup> This is argued by some, including some of the respondents to our research, as having led to a growing separation within the sector between larger and smaller organisations, a separation – reflected in our evidence - which may become extremely problematic despite assurances that those who do not wish to engage in public service delivery should not be compelled

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26 footnote 18

27 NCVO (2003) *Voluntary sector infrastructure: a discussion paper*, London: National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

28 See footnote 1.

29 'Charities to pick up the pieces?', *Community Care*, 3 March 2005: 18.

30 See for example Stephen Bubb, Chief Executive of ACEVO: 'the third sector's immense potential in public service delivery remains largely unfulfilled', *Regeneration*, 22 April 2005: ACEVO represents precisely this part of the VCS.

to do so.<sup>31</sup> Treasury analysis suggests that the VCS already has a strong role within certain areas of public service activity (notably education - 8% of the paid workforce ; and social work/social care - 51% of the paid workforce). Within these debates, there has been no particular focus on the role or needs of the CYPVCS.

Government itself has argued that the VCS can bring specific advantages to the delivery of public services, including 'a strong focus on the needs of service users, knowledge and expertise to meet complex personal needs and tackle difficult social issues, an ability to be flexible and offer joined-up service delivery, the capacity to build users' trust and the experience and independence to innovate'<sup>32</sup>, characteristics which the VCS would endorse. VCS responses to this claim, again echoed in the experience of this study's respondents, focus not solely on fears that only larger organisations will be able to take advantage of the opportunities offered but that, (informed by experience during the 1980s and 1990s) contracts and service level agreements (SLAs) will be narrow in scope, allowing for no developmental work to be undertaken, and tightly-financed, thus indeed placing VCS organisations in the position of delivering public services 'on the cheap'. From the evidence to this study, it appears that these processes of concentration and contractualism within the CYPVCS are occurring, albeit unevenly across time and space. There is, however, little evidence of the growth of social enterprises, another sectoral development which the government is keen to accelerate.<sup>33</sup> This may be unsurprising given that social enterprises, albeit trading to support a social goal or mission, are essentially businesses.

The question of winners and losers has constantly been raised in relation to current trends in the sector, with one strong view emerging that current funding trends might lead to increasing differentiation within the VCS – larger organisations with a more diversified funding base would be likely to survive, especially if they could cross-subsidise activities at risk; and those organisations requiring little or no external funding would continue to emerge and disappear much as they did now. Organisations 'in the middle' might survive by subcontracting to bigger organisations or by the development of consortium approaches. None of these approaches however, deal with the structural problems of short-termism in funding arrangements or of the need for many organisations to devote substantial proportions of their limited resources to chasing funding. The middle third of organisations – with a less diverse funding base, a smaller staff complement, relatively little capacity to chase funding and a dependence on short-term funding – may be most at risk. This is where the ChangeUp process could be critical, if effective, since many of these organisations might be more sustainable if a range of infrastructural services could be delivered to them on a cost-effective basis. Whilst the messages for the VCS as a whole are clear, it is less clear how the CYPVCS might respond, particularly as the infrastructure to support it is generally fairly weak.

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31 See footnote 37.

32 HM Treasury (2004) *Exploring the role of the third sector in public service delivery and reform: a discussion document*, London: HM Treasury.

33 Pharoah, C., Scott, D. and Fisher, A. (2004) *Social enterprise in the balance: challenges for the voluntary sector*, West Malling: Charities Aid Foundation.

What is clear from our evidence is that the move to contractualism, underpinning government's drive to engage the sector in public service delivery, has left local areas in a state of managed crisis where short-term goals seem to be dominating and there is little political space (and indeed increasing competition for funding makes this more difficult) for developing a strategic response to these structural changes.

Further funding issues that need to be addressed, which ChangeUp may only be able partly to address include the problems of overlap between funding streams, leading to duplication in consultative and partnership structures, and overlaps in resourcing; and the converse problems of gaps where certain kinds of organisations find themselves ineligible for any funding support. These kinds of issue only serve to add to anxiety and confusion amongst VCOs, anxiety reflected in the areas we visited.

The Carnegie Trust, reflecting concerns about the wider context for the VCS, has initiated an independent inquiry into the future of civil society in the UK (see [www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk](http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk)), whilst the government (through the Treasury and Office of the Third Sector [OTS] – the generic term that government uses to refer to the VCS) has set out in a consultative document<sup>34</sup> further plans for its relationship with the third sector. This argues the case for stronger partnership between government and the third sector, supported by an investment, largely through the OTS, of up to £515m. The government's aims are to give third sector organisations a greater voice, to work with the sector to strengthen communities, transform public services, encourage social enterprise and support conditions for the sector to thrive. The evidence to date suggests that the agenda of the government has changed little from the earlier Treasury Review, although several issues are brought more to the fore, suggesting that some of the messages of earlier research on the sector have been heard. These include:

- encouragement of work across cultural and ethnic boundaries (linking to its community cohesion agenda);
- development of innovative approaches to consultations;
- endowments to Community Foundations to enable them to support community groups;
- additional resources to support youth volunteering;
- building consultation with the third sector more strongly into government mechanisms;
- further investment in both Futurebuilders and ChangeUp programmes, using the experience of the third sector to inform improvements in public service delivery;
- continued emphasis on the Compact as a means of ensuring effective partnership working at local level;
- further encouragement of social enterprises;

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<sup>34</sup> HMTreasury (2007) *The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration*, HMTreasury Cm 7189, London: TSO.

- growing emphasis on three-year funding arrangements;
- implementation of a third sector skills strategy; and
- establishment of a third sector research centre to improve the evidence base.

There is no clear focus on the role of the CYPVCS in these recent initiatives, and it is important to remember that children's and young people's organisations are subject to other policy and legislative pressures, particularly in relation to child protection. Commentators currently suggest that the agenda of the government created by Gordon Brown may be somewhat distinct from that of its predecessor: for example, the NCVO argues that the 'mass transfer of services, which was a characteristic of the Blair Government, is not going to be there anymore.'<sup>35</sup> One argument is that the values of the VCS are likely to be used to inform reform in the public sector, rather than the sector having to adopt the working procedures of the public sector. However, it remains the case as successive NCVO State of the Sector (now Almanac) reports have pointed out, that key issues remain public service reform, funding and the relationship with the state at central and local levels. The current further round of local government reform (with a substantial number of new unitary authorities being created) is likely to create further uncertainty for the sector in the areas where the structure of local government is changing (although this did not affect the four case study areas we visited). Essentially, it appears from our research that the pace and scope of change is substantially disadvantaging smaller organisations that do not have the capacity to engage fully in it; this may, when the dust settles, leave a significant number of casualties in view. We have only explored the position of the CYPVCS in this study but it seems unlikely that other sub-sectors dealing with the more marginalised groups of society (and thus often in receipt of relatively lower levels of funding) would not similarly be disadvantaged by the process of change.

### 2.3 Size and scope of the sector

The VCS itself has strengthened the evidence base for its own contribution to social, economic and environmental life, (and thus to protect its funding base), largely in two ways: through (i) attempts to quantify the size and scope of the sector, and (ii) assessments of the economic impact of the sector as a whole. These were an important context for our investigations.

Statistics on the VCS as a whole have been steadily improving, in part with the introduction of Guidestar, an independent charity set up in 2003 to provide a single, easily accessible source of detailed information about every voluntary organisation registered as a charity in the UK. The NCVO produces an overview of statistical data every year – the UK Voluntary Sector Almanac. There is also a government-sponsored State of the Sector Panel, an in-depth survey of 5,600 voluntary and community organisations selected to reflect the range of organisations in the population of VCOs in England, paying particular attention to those that provide public services. A further important resource is Third Sector Foresight, which

<sup>35</sup> Cited in *Guardian*, 'Roles fit for Heroes', July 25 2007, p.3

provides information about trends affecting the VCS.

According to the 2007 UK Voluntary Sector Almanac, the UK sector<sup>36</sup> has an annual income of £28bn, 38% derived from statutory sources. Its operating expenditure is more than £25bn. It has a paid workforce of some 611,000, which represents 2.2% of the total workforce (38% employed on a part-time basis). Fifty per cent of the population of England and Wales volunteered in the 12 months covered by the 2005 Home Office Citizenship survey – 11.6 million people volunteering at least once a month - whilst 78% gave to charity over a four-week period – both representing increases on the equivalent 2003 figures.

The number of charities has been increasing for many years, by 92% between 1991 and 2004. The VCS cover a vast array of organisations – one estimate suggests as many as 400,000 VCOs exist in England and Wales alone, including 250,000 general charities.<sup>37</sup> Its income has been increasing in parallel, although a recent NCVO assessment suggests that average incomes per organisation are static or falling. Whilst the 2006 NCVO survey suggests, the ‘greater emphasis on delivery of public services and the drive to increase active citizenship are leading to a larger, more visible sector’, it is one where ‘competition for resources remains fierce’.<sup>38</sup> Our research suggests that competition is certainly fierce within the CYPVCS. The bulk of voluntary sector income goes to the largest organisations and this process of concentration is increasing year-on-year: the 87% of organisations with incomes of less than £100,000 generate less than 7% of the sector’s income, a process of concentration again emphasised by our respondents. The profile of funding for the sector is changing as the emphasis in government funding – always a significant source of funding to the sector – changes from grants to fees, with a greater emphasis on investment. Recent NCVO analyses also confirm increasing polarisation in the sector as larger organisations benefit from the transfer of services from the public sector, but smaller and medium-sized organisations struggle with short-term funding, difficulty in attracting fee income and a decreasing pool of grant-aid rather than contract funding. This is particularly significant given the role that smaller organisations based on communities of identity and locality – in which there will be many children and young people’s organisations – are expected to play both in bringing services to the so-called ‘hard-to-reach’ groups and in giving them a greater voice in the development of public policy. Analysis of data available also suggests a geographical concentration of organisations towards the South of England. The 2007 NCVO Report suggests, however, that reports of dramatic increases in government funding to charities, leading to a loss of independence, appear to be unfounded – government funding in 2007 to the voluntary sector has only increased by 1.5% since 2001. The sector overall, however, appears to be becoming more cost-effective – every £1 spent on generating funds produced over £11 in income, up by £2 from 2006.

36 Reichardt, O. et al. (2007) *UK Voluntary Sector Almanac*, 2007, London: NCVO: these figures are based on ‘general charities’ (which exclude housing associations and independent schools).

37 NCVO (2004) *Voluntary Sector Almanac*, London: National Council for Voluntary Organisations, cited in HMTreasury (2004), *Exploring the role of the third sector in public service delivery and reform: a discussion document*, London: HMTreasury. The 2007 Treasury document suggests that there are however only 168,000 registered charities in England and Wales.

38 Wilding, K. et al. (2006) *UK Voluntary Sector Almanac*, 2006, London: NCVO.

## 2.4 The impact of the VCS

We were asked to explore as far as possible the impact of the CYPVCS. A range of studies are available on the economic impact of the VCS, many of them local or regional studies. These assessments can be made in a rather narrow or a wider manner. The first way estimates its economic contribution to activity within the country, both in direct and indirect ways but using a narrow conception of 'economic'; the second is to attempt to assess its impact, i.e. the changes which are brought about as a result of the diversity of investment in the VCS. A previous study<sup>39</sup> looked at almost 40 reports undertaken by a range of bodies across the UK which attempted to assess the economic contribution of the VCS to different regions. Although the rigour of the methodology varied between those studies, the range of figures for regional or sub-regional contribution to regional gross domestic product was, in the event, fairly narrow at around 3-4%. The most recent national government estimate, from the Treasury<sup>40</sup>, suggests that 'the sector contributes at least £7bn to the UK economy, a massive increase of over 250% since 1991.'

This analysis suggested that the sector also provides outputs that are difficult to measure, such as the value of volunteering, commenting that 'if the value of volunteering is included, the worth of clubs, groups and societies could be an additional £25bn.' Estimating the value of volunteering – particularly significant in some sub-regional contexts – is particularly difficult and the Treasury estimate may only count at the more formal end of the volunteering spectrum. The Institute of Volunteering Research estimates that for every £1 spent by the public sector supporting VCOs, it receives an economic payback of £30 – the total savings to the public sector that the paid and unpaid labour of VCOs and their services to clients produce. Research into a sample of organisations in the East Midlands, for example, suggested that there was a return of £2 and £8 for each pound invested by most organisations in their volunteers (based on national average wage levels).<sup>41</sup> A 1995 study by the National Centre for Volunteering estimated that the contribution of volunteers, both formal and informal, to the UK economy was £41bn, making it the third highest component of the British gross domestic product, a rather higher figure than suggested by the Treasury. There is no evidence to suggest this contribution may have fallen in the recent past. Given the difficulties in assembling accurate data in all these studies, the economic contribution has to be based on some rough and ready estimates but given that most of those made elsewhere converge around a relatively small range, taking the value of volunteering into account, it seems reasonable to assume that the overall contribution of the VCS to the country's economy is of the order of 4-5%, or of the order of £3-4bn p.a.

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39 See footnote 8

40 HM Treasury (2004) *Exploring the third sector in public service delivery and reform: a discussion document*, HMTreasury: London.

41 Gaskin, K. and Dobson, B. (1997) *The economic equation of volunteering*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

One wider significant impact of the activities of the VCS lies in its capacity to generate employment. National figures suggest that the level of employment in the VCS is about 2% of the total UK workforce, or just over 600,000 paid staff.<sup>42</sup> This figure – regarded by many as an underestimate – is a substantially lower proportion than estimates derived in some regions. The operating expenditure of the VCS of at least £25bn nationally will also have an important economic multiplier effect. In terms of wider impacts, a respondent to this earlier review<sup>43</sup> noted that it

**‘helps towards a prosperous economy by providing flexible, local training facilities; it raises enormous sums of money for specific projects such as hospices; it undertakes a range of service provision; it acts as champions of people unable to articulate their own concerns; it promotes self-help, volunteering and citizenship; it provides speedy responses to need; it is innovative; it acts as an advocate; it provides direct link to the grassroots; it helps to meet environmental targets; it promotes good local governance by facilitating local action planning processes; and it provides a range of leisure, arts and cultural facilities’.**

The difficulty with measuring impact is that the language of performance measurement has been dominated in the past 20 years by Treasury-driven requirements to measure outputs, in a strictly quantifiable manner, and to ‘hit targets’. This approach is now increasingly challenged from within local government and the health service as, on the one hand skewing objectives (a criticism particularly made of targets, whereby ‘hitting targets’ becomes the main rationale for an organisation’s activities) and, on the other hand, often being meaningless, telling little about the long-term performance of an organisation.<sup>44</sup> Increasing the number of people receiving a service tells you little about the quality of the service offered or received, what difference the service made to the person in receipt of it, or whether the people receiving the service were those most in need of it. This has led the language and practice of public policy evaluation to focus much more on the question of impact or outcome and, particularly for services and activities delivered to or with people, on the process of engaging with people. This language is particularly appropriate for the VCS and most of all for those parts of it – community development, capacity-building, developing involvement and participation and, perhaps most of all, in working with children and young people – where developmental objectives are key. Comments made by respondents to our study suggest that, whilst their methodology was often poorly developed or resourced, most were clear that short-term outputs were a poor measure of impact.

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42 Source: *16<sup>th</sup> Annual Voluntary Sector Salary Survey 2004*, London: National Council for Voluntary Organisations: a figure confirmed by the Voluntary Sector National Training Organisation, 2004.

43 Craig, G. *et al.* (2005) *A20CVCS4Y+H*, Leeds: Yorkshire Forward.

44 See for examples of this critique Sanderson, I., Bovaird, T., Davis, P., Martin, S. and Foreman, A. (1998) *Made to measure: evaluation in practice in local government*, London: Local Government Management Board; Martin, S. and `Davis, H. ‘What works and for whom: the competing rationalities of best practice’, *Policy and Politics*, 29 (4): 465-476; Alcock, P., Craig, G. *et al.* (2001), *What counts? What works? Evaluating anti-poverty work and social inclusion in local government*, London: Improvement and Development Agency.

The language of target, inputs and outputs, summed up in the phrase ‘performance measurement’, is about the efficiency of an organisation (how many outputs per input) and not about its effectiveness in achieving its wider goals (particularly that of social inclusion). Thus, a focus on outcome rather than on outputs is critical because it moves the debate on impact away from questions merely of cost.

Many of our respondents attempted to avoid doing so by concentrating their discussion on wider impacts. However, the measurement of impact or outcomes brings with it a number of methodological difficulties.<sup>45</sup> In terms of impact, we also need to distinguish between the direct outcomes of an organisation’s work and indirect measures (services provided such as training, community development, new skills, substitution for more expensive services which would have to be met through public expenditure). In terms of the contribution of organisations based locally but not necessarily solely engaged locally, we also need – in thinking about inputs and outputs, for example – to distinguish between local, regional and national contributions. Many organisations such as Age Concern and CABx, or within the CYPVCS, local children’s charities (such as Family Service Units or Children’s Society local projects), have, as noted earlier, national affiliations but are effectively local organisations having to generate income locally with varying levels of subsidy from national levels. There is also the question of devising appropriate measures for outcomes that local organisations can understand and sign up to.

Apart from the question of unanticipated impacts, which cannot by definition be planned for, the other major methodological problem with establishing outcomes lies in attribution: is it clear that *this* activity led to *that* outcome, or was there something else going on which was responsible for the changes observed? This is a continuing debate within the field of the evaluation of human services but it is set within a recognition that it is impossible to deliver human services within an experimental context. It is clear that there can never be absolute certainty about outcomes but that the assessment of impact or outcomes can be enhanced by the careful collection of appropriate data (i.e., by good monitoring systems).

Recent attempts to review impact assessment approaches within the VCS<sup>46</sup> point to a number of dimensions of economic impact including *financial capital* (the contribution to GDP and paid employment); *physical capital* (land, buildings and fixed assets, particularly important for those organisations which are cash poor but asset rich<sup>47</sup>); *human capital*: the skills, knowledge and personal qualities – self-esteem, confidence, etc.) which individuals gain as a result of engagement in voluntary sector activity. In the CYPVCS, an example might be a young person

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45 For further detail see for example Alcock, P., Craig, G. *et al.* (2001), *What counts? What works? Evaluating anti-poverty work and social inclusion in local government*, London: Improvement and Development Agency, especially Discussion Paper 1, *Evaluation: issues and concepts*.

46 UKVSRG (2003) *Measuring impact: case studies of impact assessment in small and medium-sized voluntary organisations*, London: UK Voluntary Sector Research Group. The classification of impacts outlined here draws heavily on this analysis.

47 Interestingly the UK Voluntary Sector Almanac for 2004 suggests that the only category of investment asset of the voluntary sector to show an increase was that of property which increased from £3.7bn to £3.9bn from 2000/2001 to 2001/2.

who exhibited anti-social behaviour who had become, through engagement with the sector, active in running organisations or speaking on behalf of local young people through some representative body, and who eventually might seek training or work opportunities in the sector; and *social capital*, a concept which has had a considerable airing in recent years; at its simplest, it refers to the development of 'social networks, norms and trust'<sup>48</sup>, one of the key goals of community development or capacity building.<sup>49</sup>

The survey undertaken by the UKVSRG<sup>46</sup> identified a wide range of impacts from the 161 organisations consulted in their work. These included:

- Quality of life.
- Confidence and esteem.
- Skills, general and personal.
- Improved health measures.
- Participation in service provision.
- Empowerment.
- Improved standards of living.
- Changes in organisation.
- Public awareness of issues.
- Reduced demand on public services.
- Enhanced cultural life.
- Improved local environment.
- Pride in the local area.

None of these would be irrelevant to the CYPVCS. However, it suggests that in thinking about impacts it is important again to differentiate between direct and indirect impacts and between:

- a. impacts on other organisations, including partners (willingness to listen to VCOs, clearer consultation mechanisms);
- b. impacts on 'users' – both those providing the service and those using it – of the organisation's activities or services (the development of skills, opportunities, confidence, etc., in young people or, negatively, reductions in kinds of behaviour which are unacceptable); and
- c. impacts on the local community or area (cleaner streets, fewer derelict houses, improved levels of young people's organisations and participation, greater pride and engagement with the local area).

None of this extensive literature, however, has attempted to disaggregate the CYPVCS from the larger VCS picture. Thus the most developed analysis, the State

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48 Putnam, R. (1993) *Making democracy work*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

49 Green, G., Grimsley, M. and Stafford, B. *et al.* (2001) *Capital accounting for neighbourhood sustainability*, Sheffield and York: Sheffield Hallam University and York Partnership.

of the Sector Annual Surveys, present a definition of civil society comprising a jigsaw of 10 pieces, many of which might have elements of work with children and young people; and its analysis of volunteering, drawing on the Home Office Citizenship survey, again provides no distinctions between adult volunteers and young volunteers. These are tasks for future work, hopefully building on this modest start.

## 3: The state of the children and young people's voluntary and community sectors (CYPVCS)

### 3.1 The changing policy context for children and young people's services

In addition to the wider factors that have affected the sector that we have highlighted above, the children and young people's voluntary and community sectors (CYPVCS) has also seen public services in this area undergo immense reform over the past decade. There have been a number of key drivers in this reform process:

- a strong accent on improving educational attainment in the school system;
- a variety of attempts to address the needs of socially excluded/disadvantaged groups of young people (e.g., reducing the numbers of young people leaving school who are not in education training or employment –NEET; and improving outcomes for children in the care system);
- reducing child poverty largely through the welfare system and with the priority of getting people into work as the prime solution (although the government's target of halving child poverty by 2010 now looks increasingly unachievable); and
- a more effective pan-government approach to the delivery of policy resulting in better outcomes for children and young people.

For the CPVCS, the past decade has seen some positive initiatives such as Sure Start, Every Child Matters and Extended Schools. All of these initiatives placed an emphasis on putting children and young people at the heart of delivery and envisaged the CYPVCS playing a significant role in line with pan-government policy on the VCS. However, the experience has been mixed.

Sure Start aimed to radically transform service delivery and outcomes in early years provision, by providing a greater emphasis on prevention and building social and individual capital through local community-based initiatives working with statutory services such as health visiting in innovative new ways. The CYPVCS played a key role in the early delivery of this but in terms of long-term sustained involvement in delivery from the CYPVCS the evidence so far has been patchy. Sure Start has been criticised in particular for its failure to engage substantially with black and minority ethnic (BME) children.<sup>50</sup>

Every Child Matters set out a cross-government vision for children and young people. The CYPVCS fully participated in the development of the framework for the five outcomes of success for children and young people and feedback was positive. However, the experience of the local delivery and implementation through the establishment of local children's trusts has been mixed, with a survey commissioned

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<sup>50</sup> Craig, G. *et al.* (2007) *Sure Start and Black and Minority Ethnic Children*, London: DfES.

by the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) of members of NCVYS and NCVCCO highlighting smaller groups losing funding and influence in the process of forming children's trusts. Indeed as highlighted in previous sections around the tensions of commissioning, the gap in perception from the CYPVCS as to how national policy is actually delivered locally has been crucial in its recent experience.

The succession of Gordon Brown to the premiership in the summer of 2007 saw a tacit acknowledgement not only of the prominence of the children and young people's policy agenda but also the attempted correction of possible fault lines in its previous application. The 2007 restructuring of Whitehall departments saw the creation of the Department for Children, Schools and Families. This was lauded as a milestone by the new Secretary of State for Children Ed Balls, who has described DCSF as the 'every child matters department'. With cross-government policy areas such as child health, youth justice and child poverty now DCSF-led in partnership with other respective departments, the onus now appears to be to focus on achieving a more coordinated approach to the delivery of policy with a greater emphasis on prevention and long-term solutions.

The formation of the DCSF was quickly followed by two major strategic plans, Aiming High for Young People: a ten year strategy for positive activities and The Children's Plan, both of which had, however, been in development before Gordon Brown took on the premiership. Both clearly focused on a shift in emphasis around government policy towards children and young people. The youth strategy seeks to support the development of positive activities for young people, viewing youth services not as merely diverting young people away from anti-social behaviour but demonstrating a clear evidence base as to how they support the learning and personal development of children. There is also a focus on accentuating the positive achievements of young people.

The Children's Plan is a sprawling strategy covering schools, early years, parenting and young people, pulling together a number of existing policy streams with new ones. It has five underlying principles:

- Parents bring up children, not government, so government needs to do more to support parents and families.
- All children have potential to succeed and should go as far as their talents can take them.
- Childhood should be enjoyed, as well as being preparation for adult life.
- Services need to be shaped by and responsive to children, young people and families, not designed around professional boundaries.
- It is always better to prevent failure than tackle a crisis later.

What is now clear from the political and policy discourse after a year of the Brown Government is that children and young people will feature prominently as a key policy priority in the next election. In comparison with 1997, where the key issue

around the debate was school standards, the debate is now broader with a greater focus on developing children and young people to grow up as valued citizens in our society.

### 3.2 Evidence from the literature

Academic, policy and research literature relating specifically to the issues discussed above is relatively sparse in relation to the CYPVCS, making it more difficult to determine whether there are trends in this specific arena distinguishing it from broader VCS trends. This is a specific problem for the CYPVCS but reflects wider problems of the evidence base for the VCS as a whole, noted by the NCVO in a recent report which observed that ‘... poor coverage in official statistics has been a major limitation to building the evidence base, and the work undertaken by infrastructure organisations, umbrella organisations [such as the commissioners of this study] and academics has been hampered by limited resources, contested methods and the difficulties of describing a rapidly changing picture.’<sup>51</sup> It is hoped that the establishment of a new third sector research centre may address some of these failings. General trends in the VCS are, however apparently being mirrored within elements of the CYPVCS; for example, one research study<sup>52</sup> argues that the role played in educational terms by special schools is being mirrored in welfare by voluntary organisations that provide separate services for disabled children.

Here we summarise the general evidence available. We note later that a growing number of studies have recently been initiated into aspects of the CYPVCS, stimulated no doubt by the kinds of trends and pressures outlined earlier. Unfortunately, the outcomes of most of these studies were not available to us when this study was completed.

Most significantly, of course, there have been a range of policy developments, which can be summarised under the headings of Every Child Matters<sup>53</sup>, Youth Matters<sup>54</sup>, the split between children’s and adult services in many local authority social services functions, and the slow emergence of children’s trusts, partnerships (operating in a virtual sense in some areas and not conforming to standard organisational structures) designed to bring oversight for all children’s services together under one umbrella structure. This major restructuring has generated a considerable level of responsive activity in many areas. To take one example, the voluntary and community sector in Manchester organised a series of events<sup>55</sup> to respond to the Every Child Matters agenda, particularly highlighting the contribution that the CYPVCS makes to the key five outcomes identified in the agenda. Many commentators have argued, however, that whilst this agenda may

51 NCVO (2007) *NCVO’s response to the OTS Consultation on a new Third Sector Research Centre*, London: National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

52 Middleton, L. (2004) ‘The social exclusion of disabled children: the role of the voluntary sector in the contract culture’, *Disability and Society*, 14(1): 129-139, online at <http://taylorandfrancis.metapress.com/content/7ght6qw7ed8dmbxw>

53 See [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk) for details of the 2005 Children’s Act and subsequent developments.

54 The title of the Youth Green Paper, published in July 2005: see [www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters/youthmatters](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters/youthmatters)

55 see *What difference do we make?*, An evaluation by Manchester Alliance for Community Care, July 2006.

bring organisational restructuring, little in the way of additional resources has been released for organisations working with children. Government's response is that the rationalisation inherent in restructuring itself releases resources. The Youth Matters agenda has also been criticised as being long on rhetoric but short on resources<sup>56</sup> but identifiable resources are being made available alongside structural change which will, for example, see the Connexions service run by local authorities by 2008 and further revamping of financial support for young people aged 16-19. Two additional funds have been introduced: the Youth Opportunity Fund and the Youth Capital Fund which together are designed to 'empower young people and give them more choice and influence over provision and facilities'. As part of Aiming High for Young People, Minister Beverley Hughes announced both that additional funds would be made available to local authorities and that £184m would be made available to develop existing networks of clubs and associations into a national network of youth centres. Levels of interest in the Youth Matters consultations – 19,000 responses – suggests that the CYPVCS, and young people themselves – are establishing an effective lobbying voice, although there remains doubt as to how coordinated the lobbying is, given the disparate interests within it.

We identified a number of reports more relevant to the present study from the (largely) grey literature. Most do not touch directly on the issue of mapping but they do give a sense of development in the VCS in particular areas and raise issues relevant to the question of mapping. They are not representative of all the reports we accessed in the course of this study but are provided as indications of ways in which national mapping might be drawn together, building on a national database and supplemented by a wider range of other, often more local, sources.

*Talking trusts: recommendations for children's trusts working with voluntary and community organisations and Community Involvement in Children's Trust: Unlock your potential (2006)*

These are both reports and briefing documents published jointly by the Community Sector Partnership for Children and Young People, to ensure that children's trusts pay attention to the VCS. Similar recommendations had been made in the final report of the national evaluation of the Local Network Fund.<sup>57</sup> These reports all reflect anxiety that, during a period of structural reorganisation amongst statutory bodies, the needs of the VCS and the groups they work with may simply be overlooked as has happened before.<sup>58</sup> This might lead to a requirement for all children's trusts to map the CYPVCS within their area. Unfortunately, the databases of Local Network Fund administrators are dating are no longer available, or were not brought together into a national database.

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56 See for example 'Warm words from Ed Miliband must be backed up by action', letters page, *Guardian* 26 July 2007.

57 See Craig, G. *et al.* (2005) *The Local Network Fund: was the money used well?*, Final Report of the national evaluation, London: DfES. For an account of the largely negative impact on the voluntary sector of another period of local reorganisation, see Craig, G. *et al.* (2000) 'Picking up the pieces', *Children and Society*, Wiley.

58 Craig, G. and Manthorpe, J. (1997) *Unfinished business?*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

*Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families (2007)*

This was jointly published by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and Treasury at the end of the government review of disabled children. It argues that government's aim is to take action in three priority areas for disabled children: access and empowerment; responsive services and timely support; and improving quality and capacity. This will be underpinned by minimum standards, individual budgets, person-centred planning for disabled children and their families, and further financial investment. The Children's Workforce Development Council will be commissioned to research skills and behaviours required by the workforce, work which could identify a database of organisations working specifically with disabled children.

*The Additional VCS Capacity Building Needs Following Implementation of Youth Matters (2007)*

This work was undertaken by Strategy Complete for NCVYS, examining Youth Matters plans in nine local authority areas of England (including unitary authorities, metropolitan districts, shire counties and London boroughs). It undertook surveys of youth organisations in those areas, carrying out a series of interviews with key policy and service actors in those regions. Key findings were that there was a lack of comprehensive detailed mapping in these nine areas of the CYPVCS, and particularly low levels of engagement by small, locally-based and/or volunteer-led organisations. A lack of understanding of how the work of children's trusts related to the activities of voluntary organisations was also identified. This confirms earlier fears that even at a local level, mapping, if it existed at all, was generally (though with some exceptions) incomplete, at a very early stage or non-existent, and that the key organisations which might be expected to take the initiative in undertaking this mapping had not actually done so. The barriers to effective engagement in this work included lack of knowledge within the sector about new arrangements, lack of time and financial resources, lack of support from infrastructural bodies and lack of commitment or focus on the needs of the CYPVCS on the part of statutory bodies. Given the requirement of the Every Child Matters – Youth Matters policy frameworks that children's trusts and local authorities should consult children and young people effectively about important initiatives and about their needs for, for example, funding and other forms of support, in order to establish the need for capacity-building support, a lack of effective mapping of the CYPVCS is a very serious barrier to these tasks being carried out at all properly. Where consultation had taken place, it typically focused on the high-profile, larger organisations and excluded, as do so many of these initiatives, smaller, community-based organisations and those representative of frequently-excluded groups. This exercise was therefore unable to share any useful databases with us. Of nine areas covered, two were in our case studies: one, Cornwall (South West Region), had undertaken no mapping at all; the other, Solihull (West Midlands Region), was at a very early stage.

*Report of A3 Consultation Events (n.d.: written by Annie Clarke)*

This reports a series of events under the VCS Engage banner, that is, exploring the extent of the engagement of the VCS in the planning and delivery of the Every

Child Matters (ECM) agenda. Key findings here were of a considerable gap in understanding within the CYPVCS about the ECM agenda, a lack of capacity, ability and awareness around measuring and evaluating outcomes (and presumably, therefore, impact), and a lack of involvement in the process of consultation from BME and faith organisations. The difficulties that might be caused by the lack of an effective database through which consultation might be promoted are implicit in the issues outlined above. For example, the exclusion of BME and faith organisations might be addressed by a specific focus on mapping their networks; and the failure of many of the better-resourced infrastructural organisations to map their 'territory' and thus be able to broker consultative events to a range of smaller and lesser-resourced organisations suggests that many remain to be convinced of the value of mapping.

The *State of the Sector* reports published by NCVO, alluded to above, point out some more general difficulties in mapping the sector. In 2006, there were about 170,000 general charities but there are many more organisations working in CYPVCS that do not have charitable status. Prominent in this grouping will be small organisations working with so-called 'hard-to-reach' groups which are unlikely to be registered with any databases. Previous attempts at mapping elements of this sector have pointed to the difficulties in reaching them. For example, a mapping of the BME Voluntary Sector<sup>59</sup> acknowledged the difficulty in reaching smaller, community-based organisations. Additionally, several attempts to map 'disaffected' young people through networks of organisations also found that smaller organisations most likely to be in touch with such young people were the most difficult to identify, despite, in some cases, long lead-in times for such mapping.<sup>60</sup>

Janet Green and Stephen Hicks (2007) *A study of the Children's Workforce in the voluntary and community sectors in Trafford*, Voluntary and Community Action Trafford, Trafford.

This detailed, small-scale report shows how much detail can be obtained from a very focused local study undertaken by an organisation grounded in a particular locality. It is based on a survey of 36 organisations 'known [from detailed local knowledge] to have paid workers within the voluntary and community sector in Trafford' of which 27 responded. Some were local, some regional and some national organisations. Half of them provided five or more services to children and young people; virtually all had 10 or fewer employees (substantially more than half had five or fewer), with roughly half full-time. About two-fifths provided work across the entire age range 0-18 but more than half provided targeted or work focused on specific groups. The 27 organisations had about 600 volunteers in total (i.e., about 23 each). Workers with children generally had NVQ Level 2 qualifications whereas of those working with young people, only 6% had degrees but one quarter had a JNC (professional qualification). Most organisations noted training needs in the areas of information about the Every Child Matters agenda, safeguarding children, and fundraising.

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59 McCleod, M. et al. (2001) *Mapping the Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary Sector*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

60 See e.g. Green, A. (2001) *Keeping Track*, Bristol: Policy Press; Britton, L. et al. (2003) *Missing Connexions*, Bristol: Policy Press;.

### **3.3 Evidence from our fieldwork**

As we noted earlier, we undertook a limited amount of fieldwork in four geographical areas specified in the Invitation to Tender and chosen, we understand, to reflect a disparate range of contexts and demographics. Taken as a whole, they could be seen to be representative of most contexts within the UK. This fieldwork consisted of interviews with key players, analysing literature, and accessing data which was only available at the local or regional level. We were particularly interested in understanding whether a more local view would reveal supplementary information about or dimensions of the CYPVCS not available from national mapping, and in exploring issues of impact with local respondents. The final substantive Chapter (5) therefore draws together the material from these four case studies in a thematic way. In the Appendix, we review some of the difficulties we faced in practice in mapping the field; we hope this will inform future such mappings. Chapter 4 turns to look at the quantitative data we collected.

## 4: Analysing the quantitative data

Given the limited resources, and bearing in mind this was the first attempt to map data for the children and young people's voluntary and community sectors (CYPVCS), we approached data collection in two ways. One was to use the Guidestar database to accumulate information regarding the four case study areas; the other was to use a postal/email questionnaire with a limited number of variables and to send it via as wide a range of networks as we were able to and snowball throughout the sector. The second method, as noted elsewhere, involved a considerable number of difficulties, not least the time it took to circulate the information through networks (largely because of the difficulties of gaining permission to access data), the fact that data provided were often incomplete, and because a number of organisations were simply not prepared, or able, to collaborate with our survey. Based on this experience, and on evidence we accumulated by other means, it seems that this approach might be most useful if used in a very limited geographical area for a detailed local mapping exercise but not for national exercises. We emphasise that several local organisations had attempted such a mapping, demonstrating the width and depth of the CYPVCS going well beyond analysing data simply on those organisations that had charitable status. The kind of information collected – for example, by organisations in Stoke-on-Trent and Manchester – and the approach they used (see Ch. 3), might be used to some effect by local organisations wishing to provide evidence to local audiences about the scope of the CYPVCS. The value of this approach was confirmed in our case study work where we were able, through local networking, to accumulate further information, often drawing in data about smaller organisations that might not have charitable status and thus were not represented in national datasets used for most analyses of the CYPVCS as a whole. Thus, included in our survey returns, are significant numbers of organisations describing themselves as community organisations, many of which do not appear in national datasets. The data below can therefore be used to demonstrate some broad trends and raise some questions that might be answered in future exercises, but it cannot necessarily be presumed that these trends are representative of the CYPVCS as a whole.

## 4.1 The Hull survey returns

Information gathered from the proforma used in the Hull-based survey included the following variables:

- Gross / annual income.
- Annual expenditure.
- Local organisations.
- Regional organisations.
- National organisations.
- Voluntary organisation.
- Community organisation.
- Infrastructure organisation.
- Member organisation.
- Beneficiaries (children, young people or both.)
- Focus of service.
- Total paid staff.
- Total paid BME staff.
- Total paid male staff.
- Total paid female staff.
- Total paid disabled staff.
- Total paid staff aged 50+.
- Total unpaid workers / volunteers.
- Total unpaid / voluntary BME.
- Total unpaid / voluntary male.
- Total unpaid / voluntary female.
- Total unpaid / voluntary disabled.
- Total unpaid / voluntary aged 50+.
- Type of funding (grant or SLA).
- Total number of beneficiaries in previous 12 month.
- Key Source of Funding.

A total of 543 proformas were sent out between May and August 2007 and 228 were returned, representing a 42% response rate. In some cases, individuals or organisations to which the proforma was sent passed it to colleagues in the CYPVCS who subsequently responded. Thus a response rate based on the number of proformas distributed directly by the team at the University cannot be calculated with accuracy.

Of these 228 returns to our own survey, some were national organisations providing data covering their activities across the country (for example, several uniformed organisations such as Girlguiding UK and the Scout Association), some were regional organisations and some local organisations. Some organisations described themselves as being in two or more categories, which complicated analysis. The total number of organisations represented here is probably of the order of several thousands. We have cleaned the data to allow for potential double counting (i.e. local organisations that were part of national organisations and might have already been included within their data). The raw cumulative data from this exercise are shown in Table H1 below.

**Table H1: Summary of data collected by University of Hull survey**

Gross / Annual Income	£838,890
Annual Expenditure	£691,319
No. of Local Organisations	124
No. of Regional Organisations	32
No. of National Organisations	90

No. of Voluntary Organisations	200
No. of Community Organisations	45
No. of Infrastructure Organisation	89
No. of Member Organisations	101
<b>Beneficiaries</b>	
Children	30
Young People	57
Both Children and Young People	138
<b>Main Focus of Service</b>	
Education/Training	85
Medical/Health/Sickness	48
Disability	32
Relief of Poverty	0
Overseas Aid/Famine Relief	1
Accommodation/Housing	0
Religious Activities	0
Arts/Culture	20
Sport/Recreation	43
Animals	0
Environment/Conservation/Heritage	11
Economic/Community Development/Employment	59
Provides Human Resource (e.g., staff/volunteers)	61
Provides Buildings/Facilities/Open Space	0
Provides Services (e.g., care/counselling)	0
Provides Advocacy/Advice/Information	58
Sponsors or Undertakes Research	0
<b>Staff Profile</b>	
Total Paid Staff	21,370
Total Paid BME Staff	1,656
Total Paid Male Staff	4,873
Total Paid Female Staff	9,410
Total Paid Disabled Staff	1,002
Total Paid Staff Aged 50+	2,604
Total Unpaid Workers / Volunteers	450,168
Total Unpaid / Voluntary BME	1,880
Total Unpaid / Voluntary Male	100,678
Total Unpaid / Voluntary Female	366,981
Total Unpaid / Voluntary Disabled	3,881
Total Unpaid / Voluntary Aged 50+	47,753
<b>Key Source of Funding</b>	
National Grant	103
Local Grant	115
Beneficiary	34

<b>Type of Funding</b>	
Grant	95
SLA	73
<b>Total Number of Beneficiaries</b>	<b>5,542,487</b>

We analysed a number of variables in relation to the geographical level of organisation and these are shown in the tables below.

**Table H2: Income (local, regional, national)**

Total Income Local organisations	£84,057,291
Total Income Regional organisations	£89,384,831
Total Income National organisations	£665,449,302

**Total Income, all organisations £838,890k**

The average income per local organisation is thus just under £700k; for regional organisations £2.8m; and for national organisations approximately £7.3m. The overall sample is £3.4m, thus the income of national organisations skews the picture substantially. If the value of volunteering is included, drawing on the same multiplier used for the CYPVCS as a whole<sup>61</sup>, the contribution to GDP of this small fraction of the children and young people's VCS is of the order of £3bn or, using the more modest multiplier used by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) in its 2007 State of the Sector (Almanac) report, £1.6bn.

**Table H3: Paid staff (local, regional, national)**

Total Staff Local organisations	2,551
Total Staff Regional organisations	1,977
Total Staff National organisations	16,842

**Total staff, all organisations 21,370**

<sup>61</sup> A range of research including by government has identified the relationship between the number and value of volunteers in the sector and the number of fte posts. See Craig, G. *et al.* (2006) *A21CVCS4Y+H*, Leeds: Yorkshire Forward, esp. Ch.3

The average number of staff per organisation is thus 95 but this again breaks down by geographical area of benefit in the following way: local organisations 20 staff per organisation, regional organisations 62 per organisation and national organisations 187 per organisation. Overall, there were twice as many female staff as male staff and the proportion of staff employed with a disability was just under 5%. Paid staff aged 50+ years represented about 12% of the total staff employed. Comparing these and other data in this section with the data gleaned from Guidestar demonstrates the extent to which the survey returns were again heavily skewed towards larger organisations.

**Table H4: Paid BME staff (local, regional, national)**

Total BME Staff Local Organisations	192
Total BME Staff Regional Organisations	140
Total BME Staff National Organisations	1,324

**Total paid BME staff, all organisations 1,656**

BME paid staff were employed at the rate of 1.5 per local organisation, 4.5 per regional organisation and just over 15 per national organisation. As a proportion of total staff employed, BME staff represented 7.5% of local organisations’ paid staff; 7.1% of regional organisations’ paid staff; and 7.9% of national organisations’ paid staff. The BME population of England as a whole is now close to 10% of the total population and the corresponding figure for 0-18-year-olds is rather higher still.

**Table H5: Volunteers (local, regional, national)**

Total Volunteers Local Organisations	4,733
Total Volunteers Regional Organisations	2,402
Total Volunteers National Organisations	443,433

**Total volunteers, all organisations 450,168**

The number of volunteers used in this sample of organisations was 38 per local organisation; 75 per regional organisation; and 4,927 per national organisation (or 1,900 volunteers per organisation on average). This reflects the heavily volunteer-dominated activities of the uniformed organisations that contributed to this survey.

In terms of the major focus of these organisations, the greatest proportion undertook one or more of education and training; providing human resources including volunteers; economic or community development; advocacy, advice and information; medical, health or sickness issues; sport and recreation; or working on issues of disability. A relative few worked on arts, culture or environmental issues and, perhaps surprisingly, only one reported working on overseas aid/famine relief issues.

Funding for these organisations came roughly equally in terms of source (but not volume) of income as between local and national sources. Of those who indicated the type of funding arrangement that predominated, about 43% now had a service level agreement whilst the remaining 57% had funding patterns more reliant on grants. We would expect this balance to continue to shift towards the former type of funding arrangement over the next years, judging by the analysis presented earlier.

## **4.2 Guidestar data**

Within resources available, we had to choose an approach whereby we could use the data collected by Guidestar to present a relatively representative national picture of the CYPVCS as a whole. Guidestar collects information for all charities in England and we concurred with Guidestar's proposal that we analyse the data they had collected for the four case study areas chosen by our commissioners, on the basis that these were broadly representative of England as whole, covering two very disparate government regions (out of the total of nine regions as a whole) – which included both very deprived areas and relatively wealthy ones, deeply urban areas and rural and remote areas; and two very different London Boroughs, one noted for its high levels of deprivation and significant BME populations and the other noted for its relatively higher levels of average income and smaller BME population. We then merged data gleaned from our own survey and from case study work into this database, ensuring there was no double counting, checking for accuracy and removing any non-relevant variables. National trends could then be deduced by factoring up from these areas. We used as our population base the numbers of resident children and young people aged 18 and under present during the 2001 census (the most recent comprehensive population dataset).<sup>62</sup> The populations of the four case study areas are given below in Table G1.

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<sup>62</sup> There are more recent population estimates but these do not give as accurate details of age groups.

**Table G1: Populations of four case study areas ('000)**

Case Study Area	Total Population	Total Adult Population	Total Child/Young People Population	Child/Young People Population as % Whole
LB Hackney	203	149	54	26.6
LB Richmond	172	135	37	21.5
West Midlands	5,267	4,297	970	18.4
South West	4,928	4,141	787	16.0

The total population of the four areas, 10,57m, represents approximately 22% (1/4.545) of the total England population of 48m in 2001.

Hackney, perhaps not unexpectedly because of its higher than average proportion of BME populations, has a much higher proportion of children and young people aged 18 and under than the other case study areas. The lower proportion of children and young people in the South West region undoubtedly reflects the differential depopulation of rural areas (which represent a substantial proportion of the South West region) by young people, an issue that increasingly concerns rural policy-makers.<sup>63</sup>

Information gathered from Guidestar included the following variables:

- Total number of organisations working with children and/or young people.<sup>64</sup>
- Gross income.
- Focus of service.
- Roles/functions performed.
- Total number of paid workers.

Analysis was then undertaken by examining the frequencies in relation to key variables. Unfortunately, the Guidestar database does not include the numbers of volunteers as a variable and therefore, although our own survey suggested something about the level of volunteers (a total of about 450,000 were identified), we cannot compare this with other data for the CYPVCS as a whole. The 2007 NCVO State of the Sector report suggests, based on the Citizenship Survey, that almost 18 million people volunteered annually in England for a range of activities but these volunteers will have been involved in a much wider range of organisations than the VCS.

<sup>63</sup> See for example, CRC (2007) *The state of the country side 2006*, Cheltenham: Commission for Rural Communities.

<sup>64</sup> Unfortunately, the Guidestar data base could not differentiate between organisations working only with children (however defined), those working with young people, and those working with both.

**Table G2: Organisations working with children and young people**

Case Study Area	Number of Organisations Working with Children/ Young People	Number of Organisations per 1,000 Population of 18 and Under
Hackney	576	10.7
Richmond	352	9.5
South West	10,294	13.1
West Midlands	7,125	7.3

This shows a considerable variation in the numbers of organisations per 1,000 children and young people working in each of these areas (and regional figures may hide considerable discrepancies *within* these regions at sub-regional or local/ neighbourhood levels). Similarly, when the government office region and the number of children and young people’s services are compared, analysis of data provided by Guidestar also points to a statistical significance ( $p=0.00$ ) in favour of there being more services in the South West. On the face of it, the South West region appears to do relatively well (although this may be a reflection of its dispersed population and not necessarily a measure of better overall provision) whereas the West Midlands region appears to do very poorly. However, if we look at the average income per organisation (see Table G3 below), a different picture is presented with average income per organisation in the West Midlands region almost 40% higher than for the South West region. Nevertheless, although total income on children and young people’s organisations in the West Midlands region is roughly similar to that of the South West, the West Midlands still appears to do badly because it has a population of children and young people that is 23% greater than that of the South West region. A more detailed look at this kind of data might suggest, for example, that the cost of providing services to children and young people is higher in rural areas than in urban areas but that is beyond the scope of this study. The NCVO data for the VCS in the UK as a whole suggest that South West VCOs as a whole have a substantially higher proportion of income (probably half as much again) as do VCOs in the West Midlands. The income per organisation in the two London Boroughs is substantially higher than the average for children and young people’s voluntary and community organisations (CYPVCOs) in the regional case study areas.

We can look both at a summary of the data collected for the four case study areas (and factored up into assumed national figures by a multiplier of 4.545), as well as data for each individual case study area. This is shown in the following tables.

**Table G3: Key variables by case study area, summary table**

	National	Hackney	Richmond	South West	West Midlands
<b>No. of Organisations</b>					
Children/Young People	<b>83,387</b>	576	352	10,294	7,125

<b>Gross Income (£m)</b>	<b>£14,466m</b>	£345m	£120m	£1,390m	£1,328m
Average Income per Organisation ('000)	<b>£173</b>	£599	£341	£135	£186
<b>Focus of Service</b>					
Education/Training		443	266	6,972	4,803
Medical/Health/Sickness		146	75	1,348	1,050
Disability		102	69	1,320	993
Relief of Poverty		281	66	1,382	1,181
Overseas Aid/Famine Relief		75	37	623	513
Accommodation/Housing		53	22	388	326
Religious Activities		197	28	1,097	986
Arts/Culture		152	67	1,724	1,279
Sport/Recreation		212	70	2,630	1,779
Animals		3	4	198	137
Environment/Conservation/Heritage		41	32	903	639
Economic/Community Development/Employment		130	44	1,256	1,081
<b>Roles/Functions Performed</b>					
Makes Grants to Individuals (Includes Loans)		174	76	2,022	1,412
Makes Grants to Organisations (Incl. Schools, Charities etc)		219	149	3,214	2,310
Provides Other Finance (e.g., Pensions) /Investment fund		6	1	68	56
Provides Human Resource (e.g., Staff/Volunteers)		165	126	3,039	2,134
Provides Buildings/Facilities/Open Space		126	88	3,181	2,157
Provides Services (e.g., Care/Counselling)		255	123	2,789	2,043
Provides Advocacy/Advice/Information		197	76	1,462	1,368
Sponsors or Undertakes Research		63	33	430	350
Total Number of Paid Workers	159,925	2,264	530	15,988	16,185

We can compare these figures with the VCS as whole<sup>65</sup>. The total number of general charities in England as a whole in 2005 was 126,506, or 3.1 per 1,000 adult population. On this basis alone, the CYPVCS appears to do remarkably well with up to four times as many organisations per 1,000 children and young people as there are VCS organisations per 1,000 of the adult population. However, this does not allow for the different size, scope or effectiveness of these organisations. There appear to be almost two-thirds as many CYPVCOs as there are general charities as a whole recorded in Guidestar's database; but the Guidestar database does not include smaller unregistered organisations whereas our survey and fieldwork will have picked up a significant number of these. This picture therefore presents a rather more positive quantitative picture of the CYPVCS than is likely to be the case.

The total income of the charitable VCS in England in 2004/5 was approximately £20.2bn (£160,000 per organisation): this is close to the implied average income per CYPVCS organisation of £173,000. The workforce of the CYPVCS is estimated to be about 160,000 paid staff, or about two per organisation. In the VCS as a whole in England, there are estimated to be between 518,000 and 600,000 people employed. Thus, allowing for some of the smaller organisations not incorporated in the NCVO data, based on these data, the CYPVCS employs roughly one quarter to one third of the numbers employed in the total VCS workforce. Within the latter, organisations employing 10 or fewer staff account for 52% of the total workforce; 20 or less for 68%; and 100 or more for 9% of the total workforce.

The table above and the following four tables below show the very different profile of the four case study areas. The final table, G8, compares the profile for selected variables as between Hackney, the single most deprived area within the case study areas; Richmond, the single least deprived; and the South West which, whilst including areas of substantial deprivation, has balancing areas of higher income. The proportion of activities in each area to some degree reflects the demographic, political and economic profiles of those areas with, for example, Hackney having a much stronger focus on relief of poverty and on faith-based organisations but Richmond having a stronger outward focus on international development issues.

**Table G4: Hackney, key data**

<b>Gross Income (£'000)</b>	345,294
<b>Focus of Service</b>	
Education/Training	443
Medical/Health/Sickness	146
Disability	102
Relief of Poverty	281
Overseas Aid/Famine Relief	75
Accommodation/Housing	53
Religious Activities	197
Arts/Culture	152

<sup>65</sup> Data derived from Reichardt, O. *et al.* (2007) *The state of the Sector*, London: NCVO.

Sport/Recreation	212
Animals	3
Environment/Conservation/Heritage	41
Economic/Community Development/Employment	130
<b>Roles/Functions Performed</b>	
Makes Grants to Individuals (Includes Loans)	174
Makes Grants to Organisations (Incl. Schools, Charities, etc.)	219
Provides Other Finance (eg Pensions)/Investment fund	6
Provides Human Resource (eg Staff/Volunteers)	165
Provides Buildings/Facilities/Open Space	126
Provides Services(eg Care/Counselling)	255
Provides Advocacy/Advice/Information	197
Sponsors/Undertakes Research	63
<b>Total Number of Paid Workers</b>	2264

**Table G5: Richmond, key data**

<b>Gross Income (£'000)</b>	120,135
<b>Focus of Service</b>	
Education/Training	266
Medical/Health/Sickness	75
Disability	69
Relief of Poverty	66
Overseas Aid/Famine Relief	37
Accommodation/Housing	22
Religious Activities	28
Arts/Culture	67
Sport/Recreation	70
Animals	4
Environment/Conservation/Heritage	32
Economic/Community Development/Employment	44
<b>Roles/Functions Performed</b>	
Makes Grants to individuals (Includes Loans)	76
Makes Grants to Organisations(incl. Schools, Charities, etc.)	149
Provides Other Finance (e.g., Pensions)/Investment Fund	1
Provides Human Resource (e.g., Staff/Volunteers)	126
Provides Buildings/Facilities/Open Space	88
Provides Services (e.g., Care/Counselling)	123
Provides Advocacy/Advice/Information	76
Sponsors/Undertakes Research	33
<b>Total Number of Paid Workers</b>	530

**Table G6: South West region, key data**

<b>Gross Income (£'000)</b>	1,390,078
<b>Focus of Service</b>	
Education/Training	6,972
Medical/Health/Sickness	1,348
Disability	1,320
Relief of Poverty	1,382
Overseas Aid/Famine Relief	623
Accommodation/Housing	388
Religious Activities	1,097
Arts/Culture	1,724
Sport/Recreation	2,630
Animals	198
Environment/Conservation/Heritage	903
Economic/Community Development/Employment	1,256
<b>Roles/Functions Performed</b>	
Makes Grants to Individuals (includes loans)	2,022
Makes Grants to organisations (incl. schools, charities, etc.)	3,214
Provides Other Finance (e.g., Pensions)/Investment Fund	68
Provides Human Resource (e.g., Staff/Volunteers)	3,039
Provides Buildings/Facilities/Open Space	3,181
Provides Services (e.g., Care/Counselling)	2,789
Provides Advocacy/Advice/Information	1,462
Sponsors/Undertakes Research	430
<b>Total Number of Paid Workers</b>	15,988

**Table G7: West Midlands region, key data**

<b>Gross Income (£'000)</b>	1,328,877
<b>Focus of Service</b>	
Education/Training	4,803
Medical/Health/Sickness	1,050
Disability	993
Relief of Poverty	1,181
Overseas Aid/Famine Relief	513
Accommodation/Housing	326
Religious Activities	986
Arts/Culture	1,279
Sport/Recreation	1,779
Animals	137
Environment/Conservation/Heritage	639
Economic/Community Development/Employment	1,081
<b>Roles/Functions Performed</b>	
Makes Grants to Individuals (Includes Loans)	1,412

Makes Grants To Organisations (Incl. Schools, Charities, etc.)	2,310
Provides Other Finance (e.g., Pensions)/Investment Fund	56
Provides Human Resource (e.g., Staff/Volunteers)	2,134
Provides Buildings/Facilities/Open Space	2,157
Provides Services (e.g., Care/Counselling)	2,043
Provides Advocacy/Advice/Information	1,368
Sponsors/Undertakes Research	350
<b>Total Number of Paid Workers</b>	<b>16,185</b>

**Table G8: Comparing Hackney, Richmond and the South West region (expressed as percentages of total activities for the area concerned except where indicated)**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Hackney</b>	<b>SouthWest Region</b>	<b>Richmond</b>
Income Per Organisation	£599k	£135k	£341k
Number of Paid Staff Per Organisation	4	1.5	1.5
<b>Service Focus</b>			
Education/Training	77	68	76
Relief Of Poverty	49	13	19
Overseas Aid	1	6	11
Accommodation/Housing	9	4	6
Religious Activities	34	11	8
Environment/Conservation/Heritage	7	9	9
Economic/Community Development/Employment	23	12	12
<b>Roles/Functions Performed</b>			
Provides Services (e.g., Care/Counselling)	44	27	35
Provides Advocacy/Advice/Information	34	14	21
Sponsors/Undertakes Research	11	4	9

## 5: The view from the field

This chapter reviews the data gathered from interviews with children and young people's voluntary community sectors (CYPVCS) organisations in the four case study areas visited, the London Boroughs of Hackney and Richmond, and the Government Regions of the South West (SW) and the West Midlands. Representatives of 32 organisations were interviewed, covering networks, local branches of national organisations, district-wide groups, small community groups and children and young people's infrastructure organisations. Some networks covered hundreds of other organisations. These provide good access routes for local mapping. Apart from the discussion of key issues below, we were able to glean significant additional data regarding local organisations which was added into the cumulative database. In the two Regions, we interviewed some projects with a regional remit although we were not able, because of limitations of time, to access a wholly representative range of organisations. Nevertheless, the general trends emerging seem quite clear despite variations in emphasis across and within the case study areas. Some of the more positive opportunities being exploited by the CYPVCS and the difficulties they faced are illustrated in boxed examples.

Respondents gave a generally upbeat account of the CYPVCS at a superficial level. Thus, in Hackney, despite being one of the most deprived boroughs in the country, a respondent commented that *'the state of the sector is very vibrant; of all the special interest groups, it [children and young people] is the biggest.'* The CVS estimates that over 2000 CYPVCOs are operating in the area. However, whilst the sector is vibrant in terms of the level of activity, there is a high degree of uncertainty regarding future provision, reflecting in part the process of recent change in the CYPVCS, policy and legislative change referred to earlier, and how that will be funded.

In Richmond, there was said to be a strong sense of community cohesion within the CYPVCS and considerable goodwill in the community. However, whilst some organisations were well regarded and established, provision overall was described as *'patchy'*. Richmond is considered (by funders) a wealthy borough and this excludes it from some aspects of funding. Richmond has an established Children's Fund (CF) although it does not have a commissioning strategy as yet and *'there is a real nervousness amongst the sector about commissioning.'*

Across the SW region, the CYPVCS was active, with thousands of voluntary community organisations (VCOs) supporting tens of thousands of children and young people. In Bristol, Bath and South Gloucestershire, for example: *'the children and young people's voluntary sector is vibrant and diverse but it is not very well coordinated yet - and that might be partly as a result of the break up of the Avon Unitary Authority a while ago [in 1996] - it may be something to do with geography and it may be something to do with the very different politics ... there are lots of very small groups doing some very good things and then the large organisations create kinds of monopolies in certain areas.'* It appears that levels and numbers of

organisations correlate with levels of deprivation; there are fewer organisations pro rata in South Gloucestershire than in Bristol.

The VCS in the West Midlands is very diverse in terms of levels of activities; some of this diversity reflected the diversity in the population. Again, on the surface it seemed very active and engaged. However, beneath the surface everywhere there were clearly serious difficulties in some areas and worrying trends. Most of all, in all areas, there was again a high degree of uncertainty regarding future provision and how that will be funded: this was a theme repeated time and again in our interviews. Key issues identified across the areas could be summarised under seven themes. We have anonymised the identity of individual organisations and quotations are taken directly from interview transcripts.

## 5.1: Funding

The overall state of the CYPVCS in Hackney was described as under-resourced; all organisations interviewed were concerned with securing funding. Hackney is designated a deprived area on all major sets of indicators and is able to secure some supplementary funding on this basis. The Big Lottery Fund and Hackney Council appear to be key funders. For some larger organisations, the current issue was the formation of the children's trust, which did not yet exist. *'A lot of the established organisations are trying to influence or understand what is happening in terms of children's services'* as the creation of the Trust is discussed. There is *'huge anxiety in the grassroots groups because they need to know how they are going to fit in.'*

Organisations argued that they needed to be creative and innovative with funding applications; all organisations had experienced financial difficulties at some point. Most saw the value of having a key staff member with responsibility for securing grants although for smaller organisations this was just not feasible. Larger organisations and smaller groups agreed on one aspect of funding and commissioning: *'The current trend with regards to how particular government funding streams and strands are being initiated will exclude a lot of the smaller organisations'*, a fear echoing the general analysis outlined earlier. Organisations were keen to look at mechanisms whereby funds can come directly to the VCOs rather than through intermediaries like the local authority; *'funding mechanisms could be more transparent, more seamless, more equally distributed.'*

All Hackney organisations believed that the voluntary community sector (VCS) provided good value for money: *'It's absolutely ridiculous what we do give for such little money.'* Two main reasons were given for this situation:

- (a) Individuals and groups within the CYPVCS continue to deliver projects whether they get funding (or are paid) or not. This is especially true of smaller groups. People generally contribute more in terms of time than they are paid for: *'I'm paid for 2 hours but I'll work for 3.'* VCOs were seen as very skilled at delivering with the minimum of (paid) staff.

- (b) Full cost recovery: funding applications often did not include overheads and indirect costs. Organisations were concerned that if they included full costs, they would be uncompetitive in the commissioning process and would not be funded. Some organisations new to the area on the other hand tended to undercharge as loss leaders to get their foot in the door.

Whilst the importance of value for money was recognised by the CYPVCS, *'there is lack of appreciation that people need to put on their full costs to run a sustainable service'*, a view summarised as *'getting work on the cheap.'* For some smaller groups in particular, with no reserves to fall back on, concern about funding was a constant: *'our challenges are day-to-day really ... Where is next month's rent going to come from?' 'Priorities often change and this is critical stuff for small groups.'*

In relation to future funding, smaller groups may be at a particular disadvantage. Interviewees felt that funding was more likely to go to larger, established organisations which have infrastructure and capacity (in terms of staffing and skills) to apply for grants in the current climate. Contradictorily, *'the grassroots are dealing with the main problems and they don't get it [funding].'* Smaller groups struggled to keep abreast of new developments regarding funding and a *'lack of access to meaningful information especially grassroots community groups ... busy getting on with the work but don't know how their work fits in with new local targets.'* Funding and sustainability were constant themes across all four areas: *'You are going to hear this over and over again.'* One anxiety was that commissioners often wanted *'parts of services'* in line with local authority priorities; groups would then experience difficulties in having core activities funded. Funding for core work remained a constant problem.

Richmond is a small local authority and the economic profile is *'positive'* so the sector has difficulty accessing regeneration monies. However, there are pockets of deprivation in the borough and the CYPVCS has to work creatively to access funds. Richmond was said to have been poorly funded over the last few years as the area was not seen as a priority for many funding initiatives. The Children's Fund however, was described as a unique initiative, allowing investment into wherever expertise was found, and *'this was really refreshing.'* It provided the statutory, voluntary and community sectors with the impetus to work together. *'The Children's Fund was a kind of a "kick-start" to include broader involvement in children's services in terms of a partnership with the local authority.'* This has led to strategic and operational involvement of the VCS in most, if not all, new borough developments. The Fund was thought at the time of the fieldwork to be coming to an end soon and there were also concerns about the specificity of tendering processes. The more specific the local authority was with regard to provision, the more difficult it is for the CYPVCS to be innovative. Whilst extended schools were seen as a positive development, for example, the school environment was not seen as the best place to deliver some services for children and young people.

### **Extended Schools Provision**

The development of extended services through schools was welcomed by VCOs as it provided them with the opportunity to address the needs of children and young people. Extended schools are central to Every Child Matters (ECM) and provide a range of services and activities, in partnership with the local authority or other partners. There were concerns, however, regarding how this policy was being translated into provision and delivered at local level.

Examples included:

- Where local authorities had a narrow remit focused on attainment and league tables. VCOs worked with underlying issues such as emotional deprivation which often cut across the ability of children and young people to achieve at school. However, these were difficult measures to assess compared for example with examination results. If outcomes were seen primarily as 'educational' attainment, some children and young people might be excluded who might otherwise benefit. Impact had to be considered in much broader terms than just 'being in school'; for example, impact on significant others (family, sibling, grandparents, parent/carers).
- Appropriate and accessible after-school provision was not necessarily suitably delivered in a school setting as many young people felt disengaged from statutory provision. Equally, negative perceptions of some young people meant that some schools were reluctant to let certain groups of young people into their buildings.
- Smaller groups experienced particular difficulties as they did not have access to information regarding what schools wanted in terms of services. They also lacked the capacity to lobby schools individually and this was usually facilitated by a brokerage service (the CVS or a network group).

Richmond Council was described as keen to commission and fund local groups; however, it often wanted groups to be providing services borough-wide to avoid 'patchwork' provision. This was a key concern for smaller groups which felt that *'big charities will come in and cherry pick because they have the capacity.'* In relation to future funding in Richmond, several issues emerged:

- An urgent need for the commissioning strategy to be developed and implemented. A key challenge is getting the smaller groups to link with the statutory services as they are in relation to specific initiatives such as extended schools.
- There was a need for more joint funding of initiatives between the statutory sector and the VCS. To some extent this was evident as *'they [the statutory sector] understood the value of having the voluntary sector.'*

- Funding needed to be longer term to enable the VCS to be more pro-active rather than reactive, with five-year funding becoming the norm. This would enable the sector to build capacity and demonstrate long-term commitment from the statutory sector. (Current government thinking suggests that funding may move to three-year funding as a matter of course.)
- Some VCOs were very concerned with public money being spent on big for-profit consultancy agencies to undertake participation with children and young people. The VCS felt it was much better placed (and skilled) at participation; *'profit'* could then be redirected back into children and young people's provision.

As in Hackney, VCOs generally considered themselves more competitive in terms of value for money than the statutory sector; *'if you broke it down in terms of cost per young person, what they get out of it is truly good value for money.'* The local authority would never be able to deliver services of the same quality for the same amount of money: *'the statutory sector is too far removed to be able to do that.'* The added value that the CYPVCS provides is often difficult for services to measure in cash terms. Many respondents commented that, without sacrificing professionalism, they were able to provide services more cheaply than could be possible in the statutory sector. This was often because of the use of volunteers although wage levels were depressed in the sector, something many continued to campaign around. However, despite ongoing difficulties with funding, innovative provision had developed because *'we can take risks in the sector that the local authority can't take.'* Risk-taking is a feature identified above as enhancing the VCS' potential contribution.

Across the South West region, funding was again a key issue for all groups with all constantly seeking new income sources. Smaller organisations felt most at risk both to short-term funding (often with good reason – it was characterised as *'continual precipice funding'*) and to changes in funding regimes. Even medium to large organisations were feeling the pinch; some had to lay off staff in lean times. Groups across the region bemoaned the amount of time spent chasing funds that would be better spent serving their clients. Others complained about the need always to provide something new: *'every time you put in for money it has got to be new - you can't put in for something already running ... such a problem because you might have something running very successfully can't obtain money to carry on ... because it's not innovative.'*

This block to moves towards innovation was reflected elsewhere in the region. With the end of SRB funding and the shift towards commissioning, one respondent noted *'because of the capacity issues within the sector, small VSOs that do good work aren't always able to evidence it and produce outcomes in a way that demonstrates their effectiveness. What we are finding is that innovation will be lost and has been lost because these organisations have got nowhere else to go [for funding].'*

Consequently, infrastructure organisations try to encourage collaborative commissioning - with joint bids from small and large or several small VCOs. That has its own complications - identifying each other's strengths and weaknesses, agreeing roles and responsibilities.

Wiltshire, in line with central government drivers, was increasing the amount of services contracted externally. One national organisation, for example, has now been commissioned to manage children's centres in the south of the county with the contract extended for four years. *'They have given us a really good length of contract to get our teeth into and demonstrate the outcomes we've got to achieve.'* The county recently contracted out all residential services for 11-16-year olds. Another national children's charity was also providing children's centres and smaller agencies were providing other children's services - so there was *'a real mixed economy'*: however, our evidence suggested that larger organisations were disproportionately benefiting from this both here and in Gloucestershire, although the trend was less marked there.

Conversely, in Bristol the local authority tries to do everything in-house in a *'long-standing traditional Labour council perspective about "we do it ourselves approach."* Where that is not possible, they have a 'preferred provider' funding approach. One national children's charity appears to *'sweep up the lion's share of LA [local authority] funding - due to a "special relationship" between them and the council'*. This organisation was acknowledged by other CYPVCS groups as doing a good job but their monopolising of local authority funding causes considerable antipathy (see below), as many organisations were living from hand-to-mouth on short-term funding allocations. One valuable, locally-acclaimed counselling support service for children was within a month of closing recently. The perception here was that even the best could go under and indeed many small VSOs do go under after short lifespans: *'we have lots of after-school clubs and holiday play schemes that open and close.'*

Conversely, organisations talked of new injections of money: in youth and play services in Bristol, for example, there had been a cloud of uncertainty for years due to threats of funding cuts but currently there were huge injections of cash - £900,000 over three years to the local authority (a significant proportion of which will filter down to the VCS). Partly this was due to new government policy initiatives but the Big Lottery Playful Programme & Playful Ideas had brought in significant pots of cash. *'We have got all sorts of money pouring in so the sector is strengthening day by day really - because it can have some independence from the local authority.'* However, the majority of this tended again to go to medium to large organisations.

There had been big changes here in recent years regarding funding processes - for example a move towards commissioning with a joint commissioning unit and a focus on meeting the five outcomes rather than simply the traditional 'counting heads' output measurement. Whereas *'no-one minds having to meet the outcomes - VCS has been doing that for years - the process has been a disaster. Apart from*

*the all-pervasive uncertainty ... the immediate adverse knock-on effect is that in Youth & Play Services short-term funding has become absolutely ridiculous.*' Groups have been told to expect quarterly funding during that transitional period. The move to commissioning brought with it no extra cash - so for most it was not a welcome development. Infrastructure organisations are sure that some VSOs will fold, another consequence of the impact of centrally-driven processes on smaller VSOs. These processes have, in South West respondents' views, clearly exacerbated the big/small group funding balance. Big groups train up staff to familiarise themselves with process; the smaller groups would not know where to start and do not have the time/staff to do that. *'If there is any money to be given to the voluntary sector it is always ... without wider consultation, without fail ... given to ... [national organisation] and it's become a real sticking issue ... an even bigger issue after they were awarded Children's Workforce Development funding for a programme that infrastructure organisations felt was their territory,'* – this in a context where the VCS was already vulnerable and under pressure. Recently, neighbourhood renewal funding has been one of 'funding interventions' rather than funding individual VSOs – the streamlining that goes with that led to a reduction from about 30 VSOs previously funded down to a third of that. This funding, with Single Regeneration Budget funding, is coming to an end; in common with many areas, the CVS here has been facing a funding cliff.

As a result of contractualism, competition for funding is expending valuable energy. This is very dispiriting for organisations when a bid is unsuccessful. *'... one of the big problems, the cost that is going into tenders. We reinvest a whole person at my level [very senior], then we'll bring in a project manager usually, we'll bring in a finance person and probably two or three others who'll have experience - you'll have a team of three, four, five people working on tenders, they can take you two to three weeks to get together. I wrote one for Devon on advocacy earlier in the year and it took me almost two solid weeks of writing and researching it. And then if you don't get it ...'* Smaller VSOs still labour, however, under 'a general culture of short-termism': and remain dependent on small pots for short periods from trusts and small charities. Overall, the growing emphasis on competition inhibits any wider cooperation and information-sharing.

The positives of commissioning for larger VSOs are that there is likely to be a move from annual grants to three-year minimum contracts. That removes some insecurity, allowing for planned interventions. It also gives interventions time to bed in and should encourage cooperation between groups which put together consortium bids - saving the time and energy of competition. On the other hand, both statutory and voluntary sectors are still finding their feet - such processes are lengthy – and local authorities sometimes maintain unnecessarily tight controls throughout the commissioning process. *'Some of it is to do with that sense of losing their own power'; they 'follow the rules to the letter because they are not confident - rather than thinking how can we do this creatively? How can we look at collaborative partnership working ... [there is] too much focus on satisfying the auditors instead of ensuring that the service is fit for purpose. Our experience right across the South West is that they talk about quality being 60%, of the bid, with 40% price and ...*

*every single time our impression is that win or lose, it's dependent most of all on the price. They haven't gone on to the longer-term value that you might gain if quality is brought more into it.'* This is a debate where questions of the longer-term impact of projects ought to have a more prominent role. In Gloucestershire, too, groups felt that price was a key factor: *'if you ask the average group on the ground they would say they are just being used as cheap labour ... they would feel pretty aggrieved at the moment [due to] very poor practice in terms of notification around funding ... several groups have not yet had contracts sorted for this year's work and are paying for stuff out of their own reserves. Lots have had grants slashed quite considerably. One of the things that have really wound people up is that nobody from the children and young people's directorate was available to renegotiate outcomes.'*

The private sector was also threatening traditional areas of VCS activity: *'[it] is now bidding for stuff which traditionally they have never bid for.'* In one area, it was moving in on residential care provision - a couple of 'aggressive' private fostering agencies were active. Local VSOs felt they were unable to compete with national or even multinational organisations that could manipulate prices to win tenders. In another, respondents reported unfair competition from the private sector undercutting the VS price, knowing that they (private bidders) could not produce outputs they promised in their bids: *'it pushes the price down and down and people will take shortcuts to try and win these tenders. Or they win it and then they say to the local authority that they need more money.'* As the VCS wants to maintain standards for clients, they feel in a very difficult position.

Funding was yet again seen as a major issue in the West Midlands. Problems in securing funding, the time and resources taken in formulating and securing bids and the sustainability of funding and thus of projects were seen as major concerns. *'A lot of my time is spent filling in grant applications and things like that. It's a frustration, but it's a necessity.'* There was also a feeling (especially where bids were not successful) that the effort in securing funding distracted from carrying out the core functions of the organisation.

The precarious nature of competitive bidding for funding always entailed a degree of uncertainty for the future of VCOs, their activities and their staff. Funding continued to be seen predominantly as short term, affecting the sustainability of projects. *'It's always short-term, that's the thing ... I know that whatever funding I get will probably be over three years at the most so the thing is in this sector you can never take your eye off the funding ball ....'* There were also issues around time and resources securing bids and securing and negotiating Service Level Agreements with statutory bodies. The move to commissioning of services and the impact this would have on the voluntary sector especially for smaller organisations generated familiar concerns: *'...for the smaller groups there's the issue of whether the grants are going to continue now with the development of commissioning, for medium sized/larger groups there's uncertainty around those groups with existing SLAs within health or children's services about how those are going to be impacted on by changes that are coming through around commissioning.'*

These uncertainties affected staff morale: *'it's very unstable for staff, they're not sure if they're going to have a job in three months ... it's very difficult for us to ever to ... offer assurances and guarantees for that ... we were very fortunate that hasn't led to more people leaving.'* *'One group is hanging on waiting, well what's going to happen to us? Are we going to be commissioned or not and because of that they've lost their deputy manager ... because of uncertainties of what's going to happen ... We've all got mortgages, bills to pay, so it's perfectly understandable ... the uncertainty over funding certainly has an impact on the long-term health of the organisation ... and how far they can look into the future and obviously it's a demotivating factor.'*

## **5.2 Gaps in provision and future challenges**

Identifying gaps in local neighbourhood-based provision was seen by the CYPVCS as a significant role in all areas. The gaps identified reflected the nature of the local area although local policy and service priorities over the years also had an impact. Thus in Hackney, an area of rapid change and considerable deprivation amongst many groups, *'[we] keep looking out for what's missing, we want to help so we have to change all the time.'* Whilst provision from the CYPVCS was seen as reasonably comprehensive, three major gaps in provision were identified. First was provision for BME groups: *'Hackney is a transitional borough where you have a lot of communities who come, settle, reside and then move on.'* There are barriers regarding language, access to information and access to service provision. A number of BME communities were seen as priorities, including Eastern European communities, Turkish/Cypriot/Kurdish communities and African-Caribbean communities. Respondents here felt that they had a good track record of engaging with children and young people from BME communities. Secondly, *violent crime* was seen as an issue: there are said to be 56 gangs in the Hackney area and some work is being undertaken with specific groups. Most organisations interviewed here felt that engaging with children and young people involved in violent crime culture was dividing communities and needed to be addressed urgently. Thirdly, the *'transition from primary to secondary school (10-13 age groups)'* needed attention. Under 10's services in the borough, especially from statutory providers, were felt to be very good, because of the childcare element. However, older young people did not have many facilities or places to 'hang-out'. Needs-led youth provision is a key area to be addressed. *'I strongly and firmly believe we are getting it right up until secondary school and then something goes drastically wrong with young people ... but I don't know what it is.'*

The development of extended services through schools had provided VCOs with an opportunity to address the needs of this age group. However, organisations felt that they needed to know exactly what it is that schools wanted in their after-schools clubs. In addition, the generally negative perceptions of young people mean that some schools are reluctant to let certain groups of young people into their buildings. Equally, appropriate and accessible after-school provision was not necessarily best delivered in a school setting as many young people felt disengaged from education:

*'Young people have been alienated by the school process or are not engaging with it anymore ... or they are 16/17 and they don't want to spend their evenings going into schools.'* Smaller groups cannot lobby schools individually, therefore it was felt that a brokerage service (managed by an organisation such as the CVS) might be the most effective way of managing this.

Other issues which were identified here as needing attention included:

- (4) *Quality assurance and measuring impact:* where respondents commented on the lack of standardised quality assurance approaches in children and young people's service provision.
- (5) *DDA (Disability Discrimination Act)* compliance and general access issues.
- (6) *Mental health services for young people*, particularly in relation to needs-led neighbourhood-based provision.
- (7) *Integrated family services* with a need to provide children and young people's services within the context of the family unit as well as for individual needs.

In Richmond, there was felt to be a general lack of youth provision and affordable recreation for all age groups. Although sporting facilities are abundant, they tended to be expensive. What was provided was *'not really inclusive in terms of the young people who are using them.'* For older teenage age groups this was mainly a lack of social spaces for them to *'hang out in'*. Other gaps identified here included:

- (1) provision for the *10-13 years age range*. Provision for 5-8-year-olds was described as reasonably good and there was a strong early years partnership. Provision for young people in transition from primary to secondary school was seen as very cost-intensive but vital.
- (2) *services for young disabled people*. There was pressure on services to be inclusive, but groups that provided specifically for the needs of children and young people with disabilities were also needed; for example, leisure/ activities out of school and flexible respite delivered in ways that parents want.
- (3) provision for a more *diverse* population. Although the BME population was only 8% of the total population as at the last census (a figure which has certainly increased significantly), the young population was described as mobile and transient. As neighbouring boroughs (e.g., Hounslow and Wandsworth) use Richmond schools, the population of BME children and young people may sometimes be nearer to 30%. There are hence difficulties in provision for these young people as out-of-school clubs tend to be in their own neighbourhoods but many of these young people make use of

Richmond Youth Services. For some larger organisations, a wider concern was services for asylum-seeking children and families, not yet been given leave to remain. These families are very mobile, living with stress and poverty, generally not accessing health or education services and in poorer housing.

- (4) A need for services around *domestic violence*, in relation to specific initiatives that could support children and young people living with the consequences of domestic violence.
- (5) Services that '*support parents to support their children*' were also identified, in particular initiatives that developed the skills, abilities and confidence of parents to support their child's learning and development. There is a segmentation of services in terms of age range and it was suggested that community cohesion might better be promoted through intergeneration provision.
- (6) One respondent here ironically also referred to the *mapping of provision*. Most larger organisations had a database or list of contacts of relevant children and young people's provision; however, this was not comprehensive and no-one had brought these mappings together to give a strategic local picture of the CYPVCS and identify gaps.

In the South West region, respondents identified both strategic and specific gaps in provision. In Bristol, strategically, ... '*there is no system, certainly not through our infrastructure organisation and I don't know of any in the local authority, for doing that kind of needs analysis or gathering that information really. The children and young plan should have been the system, but it wasn't because it was written so quickly and really it was written to almost tick boxes in a way.*'

Respondents also identified gaps in the capacity of the three Bristol-based infrastructure organisations to undertake developmental work with their member agencies, because they were not paid to do that work. One CVS in the region attempts to do developmental work '*but [typically] they are under-resourced as well.*' Specific gaps were also identified in later years provision – most of this is activity-related – e.g. sports, drama, music. For over-7s, there is very little support for emotional wellbeing, by way of structured support or targeted intervention. The expertise is there in two organisations (both local projects of national organisations) '*but the ability to intervene intensively and in a structured way with older young people is still problematic because those organisations are stretched.*' Much of that available for 7/8 years upwards was said to be around diversionary activities, crime prevention, staying safe etc. - effectively following government policy agendas. In Gloucestershire, there have been recent cuts in provision for later years in general and to specific projects such as a homelessness project for 16+ year-olds. There was also no infrastructure support for BME young people despite there being a significant BME population and their needs were constantly overlooked. Most

projects were able to identify a range of gaps which they were unable to address because of budgetary limitations including an independent voice for the play sector, infrastructure support for young parents' organisations, organisations providing support for children contacting separated parents, overnight respite provision, and a range of adolescent mental health provision.

Respondents across the West Midlands identified both these and other specific gaps. Their critical list also included the need for more evening services for young people, more services for under-11s, and improved services for marginalised groups such as disabled children. Overall, services for specific 'excluded' groups featured high on all case study areas' agendas.

#### **Working with marginalised groups**

*The fact that many of the smaller voluntary groups in particular are based within local communities, with strong local links, gives them purchase with marginalised groups. Voluntary organisations are sometimes created by those very communities because statutory provision has failed to deliver. Whereas statutory providers have a duty to provide generic services, voluntary providers have both the space and the flexibility to concentrate on providing a specialist service to particular identified marginalised groups and communities: 'the local authority in terms of its youth services is doing less and less outreach. It's got lots of youth clubs [but] they are certainly not reaching hard to reach young people.' Sometimes voluntary staff have themselves experienced the same disadvantage or social dysfunction as the clientele they serve - whether homelessness, or substance abuse/addiction - and so a mutual understanding and trust based on knowledge and empathy may develop.*

### **5.3 Capability and skills in the sector**

The capability to deliver children and young people's services was seen as variable in most areas. Across Hackney, although some groups and individuals are seen as very skilled, others less so, there was a commitment to skill development and accessing training. '*... we need to ask, have we got the right skills to do the job?*' All organisations said they faced capacity issues. At a time of huge change, there was a need for continually updated information and some smaller groups were not always aware of the agenda. '*Very big organisations have the infrastructure to be able to manage both the policy side and the delivery side but it's people in the middle that I feel for.*' Infrastructural organisations such as the CVS and other network groups appeared to have a key role in ensuring that the CYPVCS as a whole has the capability and skills to deliver future services. '*Training organisations have a role ensuring that we do support the voluntary and community sector in maintaining and delivering high quality affordable services.*' Research was said to be needed on the sector's training and workforce development needs – '*what practitioners know they need*': research findings could then inform a coherent strategy to respond to the

workforce's needs. Senior staff in the CYPVCS identified three priorities for training: fundraising, marketing and PR.

Whilst many Richmond organisations felt they had the skills and ability to deliver future provision, overall the picture was again described as *'variable'* across the borough. As a consequence of long-term under-funding, some smaller groups did not have 'the manpower' to deal with the current commissioning process with the contract culture *'not really evident in smaller groups'* and effectively excluding them. Simultaneously, it was difficult for organisations that deliver training to plan for meeting the skills deficit/training needs until a commissioning strategy was in place. Networking organisations felt they did not have the capacity to reach every group. In addition, the criteria for commissioning (e.g., minimum number of contract hours) again excluded some smaller groups/organisations that do really positive work with children and young people. CYPVCOs were now seen as in a continual cycle of competitive tendering and as a consequence, resources were continually directed as getting more funding - smaller groups did not have the capability to do this.

One familiar consequence was that front-line staff worked *'with constant uncertainty'* and were permanently on short-term contracts. It was thus difficult for organisations to plan training and staff development and develop the capacity of the CYPVCS. To be successful at competitive tendering, organisations felt they had to cut costs to a bare minimum, compromising staff training and development. The employment rights and conditions of people who work in the CYPVCS was a key concern. Thus: *'discussions around sustainability become meaningless if there isn't enough funding.'*

With regard to attracting volunteers, Richmond had an advantage over more deprived areas. Many people here retire early and this was beneficial to the sector: *'a lot of people are interested in putting a bit back into their communities and that's a good thing.'* However, uniformed groups were particularly concerned about recruiting sufficient adult helpers to deliver programmes.

The skills picture was very variable within the South West region. There was reckoned generally to be a huge skills base: *'... people keep abreast of professional development - so that is pretty much up to date I believe ... there are masses of qualified people within the voluntary sector, lots of social workers, youth workers, teachers, all sorts of different qualifications around, with lots of knowledge and expertise ... people do keep ahead of the game in a way, because they are out of their comfort zone all of the time, they are always having to be innovative ... having to plan ahead, having to respond to need and demand ....'* It was recognised nonetheless that, whilst the picture was variable, overall the CYPVCS was weak on accessing vital commissioning processes. For instance, the heads of the three largest children and young people's organisations in Bristol have a very positive relationship with the Joint Commissioning Unit - undertaking extensive training around outcomes-based commissioning organised by the JCU. There is a huge gap, however, in terms of small groups' knowledge and understanding of the

commissioning process and major organisations were said not to have the capacity to train individual VCOs up.

#### **5.4: Impact upon children and young people: and more widely**

Assessing impact is a key issue for underpinning the long-term sustainability of the CYPVCS by demonstrating its value beyond mere box-ticking. Though there were some good examples of organisations thinking hard about this issue, levels of understanding of how to measure impact were at best variable and in many cases virtually non-existent. This is a key task as it is critical in combating narrow views of value which are predicated solely on cost and price.

Collecting information was seen as vital for all organisations in Hackney in terms of *'understanding how they link into the overall strategic priorities and what they bring to it.'* Some small groups indicated that they *'struggled'* with evidence gathering: However, larger organisations were more familiar with processes for monitoring and evaluating impact and were able, in principle, to provide support to smaller groups. Respondents generally understood the funders' concerns regarding the need to demonstrate tangible outcomes: *'we have created quality assurance systems. All of those are a response to try and provide outputs.'* The impact of work with children and young people was often seen as difficult to measure and/or demonstrate as many outcomes were longer term and not evident until adulthood. *'Invest monies into our communities, into our children and you will actually see the benefits and outcomes in the years to come.'* This represents a real dilemma because outputs are relatively easy to measure but are often quite meaningless.

Respondents felt, though, that the VCS was generally not skilled at demonstrating the positive impact of their work. Hackney CVS does have a national outcome champion whose expertise helps groups to develop appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems; however, resource limitations make it difficult for this training to be widely available. For some smaller groups this was seen as unrealistic as they *'are given such small pots of money that they cannot ask us to do all this unless we get longer-term funding.'* Some had used innovative techniques such as photographs as a source of evidence: *'it is a very visual thing; you can see it in front of your eyes.'*

In Richmond, the Children's Fund had identified five priority wards for action in terms of impact on children and young people, using the Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes. ECM outcomes were described as useful because most organisations in the statutory and voluntary and community sectors understood these. At a crude level measuring outcomes was dismissed as *'all about numbers'*. However, most organisations collected outcome information of some sort, often supported with qualitative data (i.e., what the children and young people experienced). However, there was often replication and a lack of a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation as organisations collected *'measurements that are required by each individual contract.'* Those groups seen as better at measuring outcomes collected

information from users and used it to influence the development of projects. Smaller groups, however, did not always have the skills or capacities to do effective and regular monitoring and evaluation and this placed them at a disadvantage compared with some of the bigger groups. *'Most aren't necessarily that aware of it and probably aren't interested either; as far as they are concerned they know they are doing a good job if young people turn up and they felt they are getting a good experience out of it.'* The average grant for the smaller groups was £15-20k so respondents argued that you could not ask groups to provide too much documentary evidence for that kind of money. This issue therefore *'doesn't really touch the smaller groups at the moment.'* In addition, non-statutory (charitable) funders in the area which were a key source of income seemed less concerned with written outcomes. They could see money was being used appropriately and were confident in the ability of specific groups to deliver. This could generate tensions for organisations receiving money from more than one source.

In relation to specific outcomes around young people's attainment, there was particular concern regarding how this was defined. If outcomes were seen primarily as 'educational' attainment, this might exclude many disadvantaged children and young people. Impact had to be considered in much broader terms than just children and young people being in school and passing exams. Several organisations felt that outcome measures should also include impact on significant others (e.g., family, sibling, grandparents, parent/carers).

In a similar way, respondents in the South West region felt that the CYPVCS was important for children and young people because they could be more holistic, innovative and flexible than statutory services which had to work to specific remits. Young people tended to trust agencies which did not have a statutory role or one requiring engagement. One example cited of this wider approach related to education: where local authorities had a narrow remit focused on attainment and league tables, voluntary agencies could work with underlying issues such as emotional deprivation which often cut across the ability of children and young people to achieve at school, working through play, therapeutic work, supplementary schools and so on more holistically. These were more difficult measures to assess compared with examination results.

### **Holistic provision for children & young people**

*Whilst social services worked to high thresholds and often inflexible criteria, intervening only when families or individuals had reached crisis point, voluntary organisations favoured early interventions. The CYPVCS provided holistic and person-centred interventions around complex case histories and proactive support mechanisms such as family group conferencing. 'We offer a therapeutic relationship and a therapeutic development.... Young people out there are hurting, damaged and in pain.... they need somewhere to go to tell that story.' The CYPVCS played a key role in increasing pupil attainment and preventing school exclusions: 'We offer an extension of the school curriculum which involves informal education ... if all the kids played football and music, dancing, artwork, were out of doors in the sun and were drinking lots of water, then their attainment would go up ... And the voluntary sector is playing a really, really labour-intensive gruelling role in raising achievement.' Schools could do much more to facilitate voluntary service engagement.*

In some areas, such as Bristol and North Somerset, aspects of provision such as play, counselling and some aspects of support for disaffected young people were said to be almost entirely dependent on voluntary provision although the VCS acknowledged that some inclusion work was done well by Connexions and some local authority staff. *'The voluntary sector is particularly good at reaching so-called 'hard-to-reach' groups, including recent BME groups, through offering specialist attention. Its impact is likely to be preventative; although it is difficult to measure the impact of this work, the mirror image is that statutory services only become engaged when young people have got into serious trouble. There is therefore not a stigma in interfacing with a voluntary sector organisation - whereas stigma does attach to interfacing with some statutory services.'* Additionally, statutory services such as child and mental health services, or support for young carers, in some areas have high thresholds and long waiting lists before young people can access them. Voluntary services also pay more attention to issues such as ethnic matching to ensure they can work with specific BME groups or to outreach work with traveller groups. In general, there was criticism of the failure of both voluntary and statutory services to pay serious attention to issues of ethnicity: one respondent described this as *'a ceiling of whiteness ... when you get to that strategic [senior director] level it is being done in the same old way, the same old thinking.'*

### **Preventative interventions**

*Young people at risk of offending were distrustful of statutory actors, but willing to interface with projects organised on the basis of voluntary drop-in as opposed to compulsion. The CYPVCS's positive contribution was recognised by the willingness of local authorities to part-finance voluntary diversionary schemes and by its inclusion in crime prevention and drug action partnerships. One initiative was successfully working with African-Caribbean dual heritage young people of ages 10-17 years who had been written off by mainstream providers: 'Because we treat young people with respect we get it back, the young people are very respectful and very well-behaved - and yet the referral may well have described a very disruptive, difficult and hard to engage young person.' Benefits were clear: 'A child in custody ... costs a phenomenal amount per week, I think what we add to prevent that - let alone the damage to the child, to the family, to the community.'*

Respondents in the South West region pointed, however, to young people coming back a few years on to thank them for their support but none had a systematic means of monitoring the sustainability of their work. They acknowledge that this was a weakness but argue it is difficult to prove a negative - i.e. that without CYPVCS input children and families would have gone off the rails. Some felt effectiveness could be monitored better: for example, '*... value for money is a long-term scenario ... how much does it cost for a child to stay in a people referral unit for a week, how much does it cost to keep a child in a youth offending institution, in a prison, to have a child looked after? If value for money is about money it is about those things - those things are much more expensive than it costs to fund a VSO for seven years ... when we talk about value for money it is about seeing the seeds that we plant ... we need a longitudinal study that looks ten years down the line to what these young people are doing... no one is doing those studies..... There could be people whose job it is to see people after we have finished working with them - six months down the line, 12 months down the line, 18 months down the line, to track those young people. Then you would have your evidence base.*'<sup>66</sup> Again, the lack of funding security inhibited long-term planning; many projects were said to fold because their funding expired, just as their success was becoming evident.

Wider societal impacts were also often hard to gauge - for example, one city-based project does sex education work and the city had seen reductions in teenage pregnancy figures - but it was difficult to prove cause and effect. Some projects were clear that there were wider impacts which needed to be profiled: '*It is empowering otherwise excluded people and working consistently to reduce inequality in access to health and social care services.*' Projects argued that they worked in ways that directly or indirectly diverted young people from criminal activities. In another field, the CYPVCS was said to train volunteers through its

<sup>66</sup> A study of the costs of social exclusion of young people has addressed these issues of long-term costs. See Coles, R. et al. (2002) *The costs of not being in education, employment or training*, London: DfES.

work who then go on to employment in both the children and young people's field and other areas. More broadly, the sector promoted participatory democracy by engaging a much wider range of people, including young people, with its work who then had some engagement with policy and political developments.

In relation to monitoring and evaluation, the majority of respondents understood the need for it - both internally (locally and, where relevant, to their national offices) and to external funders but some felt they were being over-monitored. Every organisation now has the five Every Child Matters outcomes as one framework for evaluating their work. One strength of the voluntary sector again was its ability to consult users as to their views and be reasonably sure that young people were providing reliable feedback. There was some realisation that traditional forms of measurement - case studies, retaining clients as volunteers/workers, and postcards expressing thanks - are no longer adequate on their own. In recognition of this, one South West infrastructure organisation is designing a monitoring and evaluation framework to support outcomes-led commissioning. However, smaller groups, recognised as doing essential work, lacked the capacity to evidence work and it was felt they should not be penalised because they did not have the capacity to monitor to professional standards: *'how on earth are small parenting groups to be expected to play those games?'* Smaller groups indicated they had difficulties with evidence gathering *'To be quite honest we're pretty poor on that ... We haven't really pulled together a comprehensive overview of impact [of] what were delivering.'* Some smaller groups received support from other voluntary and statutory agencies in monitoring and evaluating their impact and it was recognised that the measuring of outcomes was a requirement of funders which increasingly had to be met.

Both here and in the West Midlands, respondents reported broad social impacts in regard to areas such as helping to tackle social exclusion, and ill-health. There remained doubt as to whether these impacts were sustainable, linked to uncertainty over funding - when a project ends the client group is also lost. There were also continuing concerns that not all the most deprived and excluded groups were being reached through programmes. Larger organisations were more likely to be familiar with processes for monitoring and evaluating impacts and some had relatively sophisticated systems in place to measure outcomes. Impacts can be demonstrated in other ways, however, as the following section illustrates.

## **5.5: Voice of children and young people within the sector**

'Voice' - that is mechanisms and structures to facilitate the participation of children and young people in expressing their views - is now regarded as an important element of policy work with any population group. Many recent government programmes have emphasised the importance of consultation and participation and organisations working with children and young people have taken this on board,

often in unusual policy areas.<sup>67</sup> In the Hackney area children and young people's involvement is *'taken very seriously'* and most of the larger organisations have 'Youth Steering Groups' for projects and children and young people are involved in management committees. This engagement extends beyond immediate involvement in groups to the youth parliament.<sup>68</sup> *'It's not only about having a voice; it's about being active citizens.'*

Listening to children and young people was seen as a key feature of how grass-roots groups have always worked and have positive benefits. *'If you involve people from the beginning they are more committed.'* This often occurred informally and made use of different formats. *'We send out letters asking them to fill out forms and questionnaires to give us feedback and ideas.'* On a day-to-day basis, groups speak to young people and listen to what they have to say; this is *'reactive and also proactive listening to what they need and try to respond to these needs.'* The creation of these groups or parliaments can itself be seen as an output with change – measured in terms of young people's capacity to speak for others, to argue and present cases and to change policy, as a longer-term outcome.

In relation to some smaller groups, experience and skills in participation can confer advantages when applying for funding. *'What groups don't realise in the VCS is that there is money for that kind of work, if you can show that you involve young people and take their views seriously it improves your chances of going forward.'* Some groups were doing this particularly well, but not all had the skills or capability to engage more fully: *'there needs to be more investment in that type of work ... the sector could do with more training around how you involve young people.'* Larger organisations wanted to explore how participation could be linked into accredited programmes of skills development for young people.

Listening to the views of children and young people was seen as very important to all the organisations interviewed: *'it's at the core of what we do'*: but experience was patchy. Partnerships with children and young people were seen as a key activity, with some organisations are doing this well across the sector. In Hackney, two part-time 'Participation Workers' have been appointed by the CVS, developing a joint working document called 'Pathways to Participation' which every local authority department has signed up to and which facilitates the participation of young people.

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67 Craig, G. (2000) *Community development with children*, Ilford: Barnardos.

Craig, G. and Wilkinson, M. (2001) *Involving children in anti-poverty work*, London: Children's Society.

Craig, G. et al. (2005) *The Children's Fund?*, London: The Children's Society.

68 There are now very many examples of youth fora, youth parliaments and similar bodies.

### **The voice of service users**

*The CYPVCS was actively encouraging the participation of children and young people in service design and delivery. This was a prerequisite for many funding bids but it was also considered an end in itself. It encouraged young people's involvement, enhancing their experiences and those of project staff. There were many examples of good practice. One Children's Fund project empowered a group of disengaged young people between 8 and 13 years to act as rapporteurs, evaluating Children's Fund projects in the region: 'they deliberately went in to schools and asked for children that weren't finding school easy, weren't making friends, weren't connecting with other people - and brought them together.' The results were positive on numerous levels: 'To see the fact that these children's confidence had grown so hugely. And of course, then it impacted on everything else - schoolwork, relationships, the works. So they have done a really good job there.'*

The Richmond CYPVCS was seen as skilled at listening to children and young people and their expertise has been used to inform the statutory sector. The latter has not always engaged with children and young people in the way that they wanted. In addition, there has been an element of distrust created by people's experiences with statutory services which limited their engagement. Smaller VCS groups '*are local, they understand their constituents' needs and they are more consultative*', they listen to young people and this is seen as part of what they '*do every day*'. However, they often do not realise they can access funding by demonstrating that they do this in a meaningful and productive way. A lot of work goes into applications for funding, but involving young people in funding bids is unrewarding: it is difficult to '*get young people to sit down and even fill in a boring couple of sheets ... it was quite an effort for some of them and its not really encouraging them to do it again to increase engagement.*'

Children and young people's participation was also seen as a priority by the CYPVCS in the South West region. Organisations could see the value of children and young people's voices and participation in decision-making, some arguing it was a prerequisite for some funding bids but all considering it an end in itself - both to encourage young people's involvement but also for both young people's and staff satisfaction. '*The child's voice in service design and delivery - that happens more systematically in the VS now - it is much more of an add-on to the statutory sector I would say ... we have had the Children's Fund in Bristol for several years and one of their key objectives has been to engage with children and young people and families and make sure that their voices are heard ... they have children and young people sitting on their grant application panels.*' In the Children's Fund in Gloucestershire, so-called 'difficult' young people were trained up as reporters to interview peers and staff to evaluate the Children's Fund. This was claimed to have produced 'dramatic' benefits to the young people themselves '*schoolwork, relationships, the works.*' Many other examples were given of VCOs' priority to consultation with and effective

participation of young people. However, many also recognised that although they could involve young people in difficult tasks such as interviewing, there were limits to what they might be involved with. There were very few examples of young people involved in direct policy discussion with key actors. Overall, however, the input of children and young people, parents and carers in helping to shape policy and provision was evidenced at a number of levels in all areas. This ranged from children having a voice as to what activities would be provided, to participation groups to young people sitting on a board of trustees.

## 5.6: The relationship with the statutory sector

We have already alluded to some of the difficulties in this relationship. Larger and more established organisations, particularly umbrella or network groups, appeared to have a reasonably good relationship with the statutory sector in several areas. However, this might place umbrella groups in a difficult position: *'If you are an intermediary agency or a network group you probably have a good relationship. However there is not enough interface between strategic sides and grassroots sides. We are pretty much the filling between the two sides of bread.'* This apparent closeness was probably the result of an increasing volume of partnership working with key VCOs sitting down at partnership tables with statutory counterparts.

Relationships with the statutory sector were seen in Hackney as important for the sector to develop and essential for funding and service delivery. *'One thing that the VCS are very keen to do is to showcase what they do because they feel that people [i.e., the statutory sector] doesn't know what it does.'* This might be particularly the case in relation to the children and young people's sector. Organisations from the VCS were involved in Children and Young People's Partnership Boards and there is regular dialogue about the needs and capabilities of the VCS. Nearly all organisations cited the importance of bringing groups together that would not usually interact and this appears to have a positive effect across communities. *'Everything that we all do as partners will only benefit children and young people'*, a more indirect area of impact to be explored.

Some smaller Hackney organisations, however, were not able to engage with the statutory sector, leading to a familiar lament: *'people are happy to engage but they don't know how to, there isn't an obvious process, there aren't clear, transparent processes, there is no central point.'* This was often because of capacity issues; network and brokerage organisations were required to provide an intermediary service to facilitate communication but weren't always available to do so. CYPVCOs felt they should not be *'added in at the end'* of negotiations and discussion with the statutory sector as this did not reflect a true partnership approach. However, some organisations working with children and young people didn't even see themselves as a 'sector', and were not consequently as pro-active as they might otherwise be.

There has been significant success with children's centres in Richmond. The type of area-based youth work that many of the groups deliver necessitates working with

a range of organisations, both in the statutory and the voluntary and community sectors. Richmond's CYPVCS was seen to be well placed to deliver services and the CVS and other network/umbrella organisations had a key brokerage role to play: *'I feel like a voluntary sector matchmaker.'* There were, however, some difficulties. For example, one interviewee commented on constant changes in statutory structures and policy frameworks, which made liaison difficult, exacerbated by the current process of rapid change. For some smaller groups, as noted earlier, the commissioning strategy again held little meaning: *'you go along to the meetings and they don't really understand what it is you're doing ... you are not speaking acronyms ... not seen as true partners in what's being discussed.'* Whilst the local authority was putting together its strategy for provision, it was in a constant state of reform and change and consequently even some of the larger organisations more likely to engage in the process observed that *'they were caught up in the mad world of tendering.'* VCOs were thus generally not fully connected with the process of commissioning despite having a better understanding of provision than the local authority.

However, current government initiatives to get the VCS working together with the statutory sector have opened up a range of opportunities. This was seen especially in the area of extended schools, health services, parks/leisure and the police. National initiatives are also influencing local relationships: *'messages from the government are more positive than they have ever been ... unfortunately the reality and the rhetoric don't match.'*

Across the South West region, historical mutual distrust and disdain remains between statutory and voluntary and community sectors. In Gloucestershire, there was a mixed picture – the CYPVCS was well organised into a Partnership & Participation Network of 440+ organisations (some considered it a showcase success) that is represented in various multi-agency partnerships – and it had a key input into the children and young people's plan. It acts as a contact point into CYPVCS or statutory services, encouraging the latter to engage with the CYPVCS. However, problems remain: *'A lot of the partnerships that we see are incredibly un-structured, un-focused and have very unclear terms of reference ... they are not brilliant at enabling people to participate ... there is a real will to want to listen, but there is not actually the mechanisms for doing that at the moment.'*

### **Unequal partnership**

VCS respondents welcomed the opportunity to engage in partnership with statutory agencies but they were being bombarded with invitations to engage and had neither the capacity nor any additional resources to meet the demands this placed upon them. Respondents criticised the incessant tokenism of statutory partners: unilateral decision-making remained the norm. Children's trust arrangements had been established with minimal consultation, the local authority 'cherry-picking' CYPVCS representatives. New mechanisms for engagement had dislocated previous relationships and responsibilities to the point that the VCS were no longer certain who best to work with: *'We need clearer, fairer and stronger representation... we are running around like headless chickens putting representatives on as many groups as we can but I don't see that that really benefits the members.'* This was negatively affecting on intra-VCS relationships as groups complained that infrastructure organisations were failing them and that smaller organisations were increasingly excluded from key meetings.

In Bristol, relationships appeared most problematic. There are three major VCS networks embodying children and young people's organisations, between them covering most of the VCS working with children and young people in the city. The network working with BME organisations suggests there are approximately 250 active BME groups across Bristol, Bath and South Gloucestershire, of which about half are part of that particular network. Bristol has been in special measures (Education – reflected in the most recent published league tables) so the local authority focus now is on formal attainment (i.e., five grade A\*-C GCSEs). As a result, traditionally broader VCS work has been sidelined: *'lots and lots and lots of other stuff has gone by the wayside.'* Bristol is also in financial crisis with deficit budgets and posts frozen. So *'what we get in Bristol is a lot of rhetoric about what is good, like prevention and early intervention, but we don't get budgets to back it up.'* Social Services here was said to be in *'chronic crisis, under-staffed and under-resourced.'*

One key problem for Bristol infrastructure organisations is that the period of flux due to the local authority move to commissioning, the creation of the children's trust, and reorganisation to children and young people's services and youth and play services has left them out of the loop. As a result they can not pass accurate information on to member organisations *'and there is real frustration, real anger - I think there is a sense, particularly in the play sector, this is very, very strong, that the infrastructure organisations are failing them - and I think it's because people don't feel represented, because we have had to fight to get [adequate] representatives onto certain groups.'*

Smaller organisations commented that they felt excluded from the development of the Children's Plan and it just involved 'box-ticking'. Under children's trust arrangements, the local authority set up three strategic working groups: these

*'came into being without any consultation, nobody was warned, the local authority decided who became the chairs, VCS infrastructure organisations were invited on as an afterthought ... they break the Compact all of the time, in terms of consultative processes, we are constantly having to e-mail back to them to say we cannot put this out to consultation with our members if you want this back in four days.'* Accusations of tokenism and manipulation extended to wider structures such as the Local Strategic Partnership, with forms of communication full of jargon and incomprehensible. Part of the difficulties between the statutory and voluntary and community sectors were put down to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the VCS. These factors have led to a serious breakdown in trust.

In other areas, relations and levels of trust appear better. In one authority, for example, VCOs, including some smaller organisations, felt they had direct input to major plans including the Children's Plan and *'in the big committees, they always want to hear our views and stuff goes into the plan and they are always asking to do bits of work with us ... we are respected because we are big fish in a small pond, even though we are a small organisation, we punch higher than our weight.'*

In the West Midlands region, it was suggested that the services offered by the CYPVCS either complemented statutory provision or were 'filling in the gaps' where no statutory services were provided. It was argued that there was little duplication of services within each locality. In respect of filling in gaps, a faith-based respondent illustrated the case of work with single parents: *'... [Some centre users are] low income families so they don't seem to be able to access statutory things like through leisure centres and holiday clubs ... for financial reasons, because we don't charge a great deal, we work on the goodwill of the congregation really, then we provide that ... a lot of statutory stuff, during the school holidays doesn't run nine till five and so parents during the holidays are struggling to get child-care... our provision runs nine till five to meet that need. A lot of our mums are single mums, they need the income and if they're not working full-time then they're just going onto benefits and it doesn't pay them to go to work. So, one way of helping them to remain in work and afford it, is to provide good holiday care at a reasonable price ... some parents don't know how to access city council-run groups etc, because of their reading ability so, it's all word of mouth.'* This demonstrated again that the CYPVCS was more successful at engaging with 'hard to reach groups' than the statutory sector.

Relationships with the statutory sector were again variable across the region, however. Though reasonably good in some areas, in others there was some concern that the VCS voice was not being listened to by the statutory sector and that information was not being passed back to the CYPVCS by intermediary bodies: *'It's trying as a voluntary sector organisation to get better engaged at a strategic level ... we were represented at that level by [xxx] Council of Voluntary Services ... but you're a bit worried they're not representing you perhaps in the best light of the things you've got to offer, that the kind of more strategic information isn't being passed back down.'* Another respondent commented: *'we're not kept up to date ... we often get left out of the loop on development and things so those channels*

*of communication aren't brilliant really.'* Other smaller groups just felt overlooked: *'I don't know whether it's because we were a church or because it's the voluntary sector, sometimes our voice isn't asked for or isn't heard ...'* Part of their difficulty – and that of smaller organisations elsewhere – was that, in a commissioning culture, the interests representing smaller organisations might be competing for the same funding.

### **5.7: The perception of children and young people as 'problems'**

Unsurprisingly, the issue of local disadvantage came up many times in discussions in Hackney with all respondents expressing concern regarding the *'cultural perceptions of young people on ASBO's with hoodies.'* Organisations recognised that the point at which young people often come to people's attention is when they get into 'trouble' or are excluded. The VCS was seen as being particularly good at engaging young people who are experiencing difficulties or before they got into serious trouble. However, one respondent noted more positively, *'I have a lot of concerns with regard to how people perceive young people. Let's celebrate a bit more of the achievements. It does make them feel demoralised and it doesn't give them a sense of empowerment.'* Work elsewhere in youth participation helps to promote this sense.

There was concern that a perception of young people as problematic failed to take into account the number of children and young people in the borough engaged with and contributing to their communities, another wider measure of impact. A focus on *'keeping children occupied so that they don't display anti-social behaviour'* was seen as a dangerous framework for organisations. *'It's all based on a deficit model ... unless you use a language that calls them disadvantaged or underachieving you lose funding ... you are not encouraged to work in an appreciative way.'* Organisations felt strongly about this issue, feeling it placed planning for provision in a 'negative conceptual framework'.

However, even in Richmond, not traditionally understood as a deprived area, many also spoke with concern of the common misconception that young people are 'problems': *'young people are very grounded and ready to take on new areas of life - they are confident and self-possessed.'* Although organisations here were also exploring ways to engage with excluded young people, they considered it important to provide activities that engaged positively with all children and young people.

### **5.8: Conclusion**

Despite some of the barriers and difficulties described by respondents, working in the CYPVCS was viewed positively. There were high levels of job satisfaction especially when compared with working in the statutory sector. *'In the statutory sector it is all cost-driven, whereas within the voluntary and community sector there is goodwill, empathy, a lot of passion and commitment.'*

Some national and local government-funded projects were due to end in 2008 and the key question being asked by organisations was how the statutory sector might help groups to move forward, in short about sustainability. This was a key issue across the sector, but particularly for smaller organisations dependent on short-term funding. Despite respondents' enthusiasm for their work, some serious issues were identified.

Funding insecurity continued to dog the sector, particularly where funding remained on an annual basis and the commissioning process was increasingly seen as favouring larger organisations. Even infrastructure organisations or networks advocating on behalf of smaller groups felt disadvantaged. One infrastructure organisation commented that its funding did not even cover the staff salary let alone development time to work with member organisations. Smaller organisations also felt disadvantaged by having to cope with the consequences of a huge cultural change where they did not have the resources to spare staff for training or participation in learning events, for example, or to participate in partnership working which again favoured larger well-resourced organisations. Partnership working indeed was generally seen to be a sham. *'We need the involvement of the voluntary sector in terms of needs analysis, planning and delivery of services ... ensuring that the voluntary sector is clearly around the table at that level ... you need to resource that input. A lot of the time voluntary sector groups are giving up their own project and service delivery time to sit around the table and do that planning, whereas in the public sector you have got planning officers.'* Partnership working and much of the allied consultative processes thus disadvantaged the CYPVCS as a whole and particularly smaller organisations.<sup>69</sup>

A split now appears to be developing between larger and perhaps medium-sized organisations in the CYPVCS and smaller, often community-based groups. The latter were increasingly critical that the former were beginning to exhibit some of the traits of the corporate sector, losing the characteristics of the sector altogether. At the end of this process of change, *'it might be time to stand back and reflect on the definition of the sector ... a lot of people in the sector need to be asking awkward questions about what it is.'* Some respondents felt that the government was setting the sector up for a fall: it was expecting more of it than it could deliver. *'... infrastructure isn't there despite recent funding initiatives for some things they think we can do.'*

Funding and sustainability were, then, main concerns of respondents across all case study areas. Without funding security, projects were not seen as sustainable and there were fears over how this could affect client groups. Lack of security meant higher than desirable levels of staff turnover, especially at senior levels, a consequent loss of experience and expertise, as well as a form of 'planning blight' amongst many organisations, summed up by a West Midlands organisation: *'to have security, that would be just great, because funding applications just take so long and*

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<sup>69</sup> This is a major problem for the VCS as a whole: see Craig, G. and Taylor, M. (2002), 'Dangerous liaisons', in M. Powell et al. (eds.), *Partnerships, governance and New Labour*, Bristol: Policy Press.

*so much time and that insecurity is always really difficult.*' Conversely, it was believed that the VCS not only complemented the statutory sector but played a vital role in filling gaps in provision and having more success in engaging with 'hard-to-reach' groups.

National policy agendas and priorities were widely seen as shaping the capacity of the VCS, particularly in respect of funding and how policy priorities might shape funding opportunities: *'if sexual violence becomes a police target indicator then that would have an impact on funding opportunities.'* Similarly, one respondent suggested that disabled children's services were now high on the government's policy agenda and this consequently had a notable impact on funding opportunities including, in one area, a city-wide review of the disabled children's strategy. Consequently *'that will absolutely impact on us and our projects when they finish that assessment of what is needed and where it should be provided, how it should be provided and who it should be provided through.'*

Other government initiatives such as guidance on full cost recovery, and most of all the commissioning of services, is increasingly affecting the way services may be costed, with effects also on funding partners. As one respondent observed: *'the future of this centre will partly be influenced by local, regional and national policy priorities ... That's an opportunity to access some funding, deliver services...'*: but it might equally work to their and others' disadvantage, and to that of their users.

In relation to impact, respondents criticised the continued focus on outputs as very limited in measuring the effectiveness of the work with children and young people. Larger organisations in particular were seeking to establish measures of impact or outcome which took a wider and long-term view, including wider impacts on society. In the CYPVCS as a whole, however, much more remains to be done in terms which can be owned by the sector itself.

## 6: Conclusions and recommendations

In reviewing the State of the Sector, the 2007 National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) report suggested that a number of trends were beginning to manifest themselves within the voluntary and community sectors as a whole. These have been alluded to earlier in this report but it is worth rehearsing them briefly again in conclusion. The report suggested that:

- i. the sector as a whole was still expanding, continuing a trend that has been noticed since data have been monitored and analysed;
- ii. within this growth, the number and proportion of larger charities has grown;
- iii. the overall income of the sector has also grown but this growth has been concentrated in larger charities (those with incomes of £10m or more) i.e., the overall growth has masked a concentration of resources;
- iv. this growth in the larger organisations' income has also masked a decline in the income of smaller organisations;
- v. this appears to be a direct result of transfer from statutory to voluntary sectors of a wide range of activities, which favours those larger organisations that can manage the contracting process effectively and offer what might variously be described as 'cost-effective' or, from another perspective, cheap alternatives to public sector services;
- vi. the number of paid employees continues to grow but with a continuing emphasis on part-time work; and
- vii. the sector continues to be dependent to a very large extent on volunteers who offer labour equivalent to at least the value of paid workers (and probably more).

The summary from the report concludes that '... [G]reater political uncertainty, rising interest rates, more emphasis on delivery of public services, the drive to increase and embed active citizenship and the severe competition for resources make for an uncertain future for the sector.' The analysis of data compiled in this report underpins some of these trends although it is not always possible directly to link cause and effect. For example, the assumption that rising interest rates may lead to a squeeze on charitable giving has yet firmly to be established. Unfortunately, what the analysis was not able to do was to provide parallel analyses of sub-divisions within the sector as a whole, nor to examine the position of those parts of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) – small organisations, not formally registered as charities – that are least likely to find their way into national databases.

This report was a first attempt to address this gap in relation to the children and young people's voluntary and community sector (CYPVCS). Unfortunately, but perhaps not unexpectedly, it ran into a number of difficulties, the most significant of which are described in the Appendix below. It is worth stating that because this was the first attempt to undertake a mapping, secular trends could not be deduced other than in an anecdotal form from the respondents to our qualitative fieldwork. Thus, the points i) to iv) and vi) above could not be tested with any certainty here. However some issues stand out for the CYPVCS which we emphasise here.

Although resources were inadequate to undertake a comprehensive mapping, the approach we used gives some important pointers to future mapping exercises. Thus, whilst the data collected from the Hull survey provide only a few clues as to the overall state of the sector, allied to the fieldwork which we undertook in the four case study areas, we can see that very focused local mapping – grounded in local organisations, carried out by organisations which are known and trusted at the local level – can provide far more accurate pictures of the CYPVCS at local (local authority or even smaller) level, partly because they can collect data on smaller community-based organisations but also because they can provide a more nuanced picture of the CYPVCS locally. One way forward for a future mapping might therefore be to undertake a mapping of a representative sample of localities along the lines of, or preferably more detailed equivalents of, the mapping we undertook in Hackney and Richmond boroughs. We would not recommend further national mapping exercises unless many of the difficulties we allude to can be resolved; and indeed some of them may take some years to address. Certainly, until the turbulence currently experienced by the CYPVCS settles down – and the associated process of structural and organisational change and repositioning comes to a halt – it is, as the NCVO report has also observed for the VCS as a whole, very difficult to map the CYPVCS.

The value of the data held by Guidestar was unfortunately of more limited value than it might have been. Because of resource limitations, we were obliged to use data for the four case study areas – which may or may not have been chosen as representative of the CYPVCS across England as a whole – as a proxy for such a representative sample. Thus the dimensions of the CYPVCS which we have computed in Chapter 4 can only be regarded as of a reasonable order of magnitude. The Guidestar data also did not include certain variables which are key for understanding and mapping the profile of the CYPVCS, most notably the position of volunteers within the CYPVCS, and the different size and scope of organisations working solely with children, those working solely with young people, and those working with both user groups. The data also blurred distinctions between organisations working at national, regional and local levels and any future mapping work must address the issue of how to allocate resources, income, staff and volunteers between these different levels within single organisational settings. This is a considerable task; imagine, for example, attempting to identify the variables attaching to individual Boys' Brigade groups within any particular locality and differentiating them from those attaching to regional and national centres for the organisation.

Nevertheless, despite – or perhaps in part because of – these difficulties, we feel that this exercise has provided some useful pointers for thinking about the CYPVCS. The size of the CYPVCS may be of an order of magnitude, but is an advance to know that approximately 160,000 paid workers work in it and that it generates at least £15bn in income a year. This suggests that the CYPVCS is a very significant player within the sector as a whole, employing perhaps between a quarter and a third of the total VCS workforce and generating a rather greater proportion of that in income.

The case studies provided some useful material in their own right, however, as well as giving us a base from which we could extrapolate to make some assumptions about the national picture. Perhaps the most intriguing material to emerge is the differing profiles between the case study areas, a reflection, we suggest, of the political, economic and social contexts within which these local CYPVCSs operate. Table G8, for example, demonstrates the emphasis within Hackney on addressing poverty at home whilst in Richmond the sector feels much more able to turn its attention outward to addressing poverty and international aid issues outside the UK. This demonstrates again, we think, the value of local mapping. These data also provide an indication of where the children and young people's voluntary and community organisations (CYPVCOs) are focusing their attention and it will certainly be of considerable interest to know if this picture changes over the next few years as a result of the political and economic pressures acting on the sector as a whole.

Ironically, since both the research commissioners and ourselves anticipated that the majority of this report would focus on an analysis of quantitative data, it was the qualitative material that has provided some of the most useful pointers to the issues facing the CYPVCS at present. As we note in Chapter 5, the key issues facing the CYPVCS (some of which echo the NCVO analysis for the VCS as a whole) appear to be a squeeze on funding, which particularly affects smaller organisations; sustainability and the vulnerability of many organisations in a more highly competitive context, which leads in turn to vulnerability of staff and a higher and wasteful rate of turnover than might be helpful; the increasing concentration of resources within larger organisations; and the impact of the cultural change towards a much stronger emphasis on contracting, which is driving many of these other issues. From the responses of those interviewed in the four case study areas, it appears that the rhetoric of partnership working is not enabling smaller groups effectively to exploit their positions at the partnership table (if indeed they have a seat) – children and young people's organisations are often included as an afterthought to satisfy government requirements for funding such 'partnerships'; and the government investment in infrastructure organisations appears not to be enhancing the security and long-term sustainability of smaller organisations. Indeed, many CYPVCOs were critical of their own VCS infrastructure organisations, claiming that they acted as a barrier to improved support and information flows, rather than facilitating them. Given the turbulence in policy, smaller organisations need better information but many seemed not to be getting it, despite enhanced funding through funding streams such as ChangeUp and those specifically directed at the CYPVCS.

If these trends continue, it would seem that the children and young people's organisations will tend towards becoming a parallel form of public service organisation (as in the VCS as a whole), but one where political and economic pressure will push the CYPVCS towards providing services 'on the cheap'. In the end, this will be good neither for statutory nor voluntary and community sectors, nor, because of these downward pressures on price, for the users of services. For organisations concerned with promoting the political involvement of young people in its widest sense, for protecting children, and for reaching both the most deprived

communities (such as disabled children and those from BME communities) and the most excluded young people (before they become locked into the criminal justice system), this is a deeply worrying picture. There seems little doubt, for example, that the experience of the CYPVCS reported here suggests that the combination of specialist infrastructure, networks of diverse organisations and a proper incorporation of diversity into the structures of local and regional CYPVCS has yet to be achieved in most areas. It is clear, too, that the transitional period of children from aged 7-8 to incipient young people of 12-13 is poorly provided for, except in terms of uniformed organisations, which for a range of reasons cannot and do not reach all children.

Not only is the CYPVCS faced, in the context of the contract culture, with a potential bifurcation between large local and local branches of national and regional organisations with the expertise, skills, training base, staffing and resources to manage the commissioning process more effectively, and smaller local organisations which do not, and are consequently more vulnerable, there was also considerable concern expressed to us about the role of the private sector. Large national organisations concerned with long-term market share and profitability can vary and manipulate pricing structures in the short term to achieve that market share. This also has the effect of forcing voluntary organisations to drive their own prices down, which is not a sustainable policy in the medium to long term.

All of this may mean that the values which the sector claims for itself – and government claims to acknowledge – particularly in the case of the CYPVCS, of being able to deliver sensitive, nuanced services which can get close to and are trusted by children and young people, may be undermined in a ‘scramble to the bottom’. The development work, the process of working with children and young people in a supportive framework over a period of time, will be the first casualty as organisations are forced more and more to concentrate on core service delivery. The capacity of CYPVCOs to support the political goals of the government – of active children and young people, prepared for citizenship and political participation, able to exercise choice and voice – will be diminished accordingly.

This is where the issue of impact becomes critical. Some larger organisations had begun to think about ways of measuring impact of work with children and long people which moves the debate away from the tick box input/output measures which still obsess government departments. But most had not, as indeed is the case more widely in the VCS. This is an urgent task: until the CYPVCS can demonstrate the longer-term impacts of its work, it will fight for resources on territory which is not of its making.

Some specific recommendations emerge from this work:

## 1. Strengthening the evidence base for the CYPVCS

The CYPVCS is clearly a key player in meeting the needs of children, families and young people, maintaining sustainable communities and tackling social exclusion. Building a clear understanding of the size and scope of the sector is vital to maximising this contribution, and securing better outcomes for people and communities. There is therefore a need for further enhancement of the evidence base of the sector.

While this report is only a first attempt at mapping the CYPVCS, it is clear that a number of methodological issues must be resolved if this area is to progress. Guidestar is making an important contribution to building the evidence base of the sector as a whole but it must be made more widely accessible for future mapping exercises of the CYPVCS. **Further consideration should be given to how Guidestar can be best utilised to build a detailed picture of the CYPVCS.**

The Office of the Third Sector (OTS) made a significant commitment to investing in the research base of the third sector in the final report from the *Third Sector Review*, published in July 2007. **It is clear that this workstream must consider how to strengthen the evidence base for different parts of the third sector, particularly the CYPVCS. The OTS should commit resources to ensuring that this study is regularly updated to provide an ongoing, accurate picture of the CYPVCS.** As this report is going to print, the Economic and Social Research Council is establishing a third sector research centre and we would argue that a focus on the CYPVCS should be one early priority for this centre.

Worryingly, the research has highlighted some serious gaps in the information held by statutory funding bodies. In particular, local authorities had captured little data from the operation of the Local Network Fund and the Children's Fund which have been key funding streams for the sector in recent years. **Government funders should ensure that they have full details of all the organisations that they are funding, and seek to build up their knowledge of voluntary and community organisations supporting children and young people throughout the country.** Databases from national programmes such as Sure Start, the Local Network Fund and the Children's Fund should be constructed as the programmes develop and made available to all interested parties; otherwise much of the investment in developing these databases is wasted.

There is clearly value in undertaking mapping of the CYPVCS at a local level as this is likely to be more comprehensive than at a national level and can broader a deeper insight into the circumstances of particular organisations. **Further investment is needed in local mapping of the children and young people's voluntary and community sector, and consideration should be given to how local area agreements should be used as a basis for developing future mapping exercises within each area. This will require consultation between Department of Health and Department of Children, Schools and Families officials in particular.**

## *2. Operating in a new environment*

It is clear that the pace and scale of change is significantly hampering the ability of the CYPVCS to develop strategic responses to service provision and meet the needs of children and young people. **The government must consider how it can support an environment in which innovative service provision can emerge, including facilitating bottom-up approaches to meeting needs, replicating good practice and supporting the strategic capacity of the CYPVCS.**

The research exposes some particular challenges facing smaller organisations, echoing findings from other recent studies<sup>70</sup>. **The government has made a clear commitment to supporting smaller organisations, but this must be matched by adequate resources and practices which embrace the diversity of the sector and which acknowledge the particular needs of and difficulties facing smaller organisations, many of them spelled out above.**

There have been a number of changes to decision-making structures and partnership arrangements at the local level in recent years. It is vital that the CYPVCS is able also fully to play its part in children's trust arrangements, local strategic partnerships and other appropriate forums, many of which appear to be fora for larger statutory organisations jostling for leadership positions. It is also important that a range of views are included in these processes. **Local authorities should ensure that they have appropriate processes and mechanisms in place to hear from a range of stakeholders and to resource the participation of children and young people's organisations, particularly those which are smaller with few if any paid staff.**

## *3. Supporting the sector's workforce*

The CYPVCS is a significant part of the whole (VCS), employing approximately one quarter of the total VCS workforce. **It is vital that this is fully considered in collection of data on the children's workforce and the work of the Children's Workforce Development Council.**

The current funding environment means that staff in the CYPVCS are working with continuing uncertainty, and skills and training deficits. **Recent government commitments to longer-term funding must translate into more sustainability and security for staff in the sector. Sustained investment is needed in the training and development needs of the CYPVCS workforce.**

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<sup>70</sup> In February 2008, NCVCCO published *Under the Radar*, a survey of small organisations working with children and families. The survey found that the current funding climate means one in ten organisations are facing closure and that smaller organisations are much less likely to be represented in influencing structures at the local level. Further information is available under the small organisation's section of the NCVCCO website – [www.ncvcco.org](http://www.ncvcco.org)

#### *4. Commissioning*

It is clear that the government's desire to commission the CYPVCS to deliver public services has left many organisations operating under significant uncertainty and working to short-term goals. **Public service commissioners must ensure that they are supporting sustainable service provision, which also allows organisations to develop new services alongside existing ones.**

The CYPVCS is finding it difficult to monitor and evaluate the impact of services being provided. **Further support is needed, including from infrastructure organisations, to ensure that demonstrable but meaningful impacts are captured. Funders should also build evaluation into their procurement practices and encourage CYPVCOs to include evaluation elements within funding bids.**

Smaller voluntary and community organisations working with children and young people appear to be faring less well in the current climate. **Further research is needed into the extent to which this is being driven by the shift to commissioning, and what support needs to be put in place to ensure the survival of smaller organisations, many of whom are often working with the most marginalised and vulnerable children, young people and families. Present investment in this area will save greater costs at a later date.**

## Appendix: Mapping the field: some methodological issues

The call for bids, and our response, suggested that the approach to be taken would be based on a number of elements as follows. The scope of the study was defined as *‘to provide a comprehensive overview of the children and young people’s voluntary and community sectors in England to inform the work of the two sponsoring organisations in their relationships with the Office of the Third Sector, with a view to producing a report on the children and young people’s voluntary and community sectors (VCS) parallel to the NCVO State of the Sector report on the VCS as a whole.’*

The study was originally intended to run for three months but substantial delays the team faced in assembling data (for which it was dependent on a wide range of sources) meant that this timetable proved to be quite unrealistic. The project was extended for a further four months; even at the end of that period it was clear that a more complete picture of the CYPVCS could have been obtained had further time been available, a key learning point from this pilot study. It had also been intended that this report might follow the outlines of the national mapping of the VCS published annually by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), offering a fairly robust quantitative assessment of the size and scope of the CYPVCS. For reasons discussed below, it became apparent that this was not going to be possible at this first attempt although, once the teething problems identified here are ironed out, it may be possible in the future to be able to provide such a parallel report. The quantitative data assembled in the accompanying database and reported later in this report are therefore, at this stage of the development of the database, fairly approximate.

It proved necessary to extend the project’s terms of reference to enable the team to access the database of Guidestar, agreed early on to be the best foundation (though not ideal) on which the database of the team could be built. Because this was the first attempt to construct this particular mapping, it seems to us to be useful to summarise some of the difficulties that the team faced; these have been referred to in Chapter 5. The sponsoring organisations intend, and we support this view, that annual or biannual updates should be undertaken and we hope that future such exercises can learn from the difficulties we faced.

## A.1: Mapping literature

As was indicated in the invitation to tender, despite extensive searches through databases, and through networks, we found that the ‘literature’ in this area, particularly ‘hard’ literature, was very limited, largely consisting of ‘grey literature’ – policy papers, project reports, geographically – or sectorally-focused, (usually) small-scale mapping studies, and reports produced by consortia, or by research consultancies working to specific briefs for voluntary sector children’s organisations. There was no substantive body of academic or research-based literature. Whilst seeking literature, we were able to ask organisations for their suggestions for particular emphases we should have in our mapping (for example, if respondents were aware of particular apparent gaps in the sector to which we might want to pay specific attention in the mapping). We also took the opportunity during these approaches to seek permission from national organisations to contact regional or local counterparts/branches where appropriate. Additionally, we undertook a short scoping survey of a number of organisations that had their own databases to try and identify the scope and size of data which they might be able to provide access to. These approaches threw up a number of difficulties.

## A.2: National mapping

This was essentially a desk-based task, mapping national organisations providing services to or organising with children and young people. The major sources here included:

- a. national organisations’ literature and websites;
- b. existing directories and membership lists from national umbrella organisations;
- c. existing published research studies (of which there were very few: none were accessed, for example, through web-based email list-serves);
- d. databases of 26 funders including government departments, the Lottery and a sample (identified through a web-based search) of relevant charitable foundations and trusts (i.e., those identifying themselves as focusing on work with children and young people);
- e. national networks or programmes focused on children and young people (e.g., Children’s Fund, Sure Start, Local Network Fund); and
- f. databases such as Guidestar insofar as they were able to distinguish those organisations with some focus on work with children and young people.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> We only discovered very late in the day that the Guidestar database did not differentiate between organisations working exclusively with children and those working exclusively with young people. Their database has a category of user group which brings children and young people together.

Before assembling these data, as noted earlier, we sent a brief scoping questionnaire to as wide a range of organisations as we could identify.<sup>72</sup> The purpose of this questionnaire scoping survey (based on a brief postal questionnaire) was not to obtain definitive information but to give us a clearer idea of the scope of the sector and the size of the task we faced. It certainly helped to do this but it also identified problems in this approach, noted below.

This sample was assembled from the contacts and networks provided by the two sponsoring organisations, from listings of national and regional VCS organisations known to work with children and young people and from contacts that were subsequently supplied through an ongoing snowball process. These networking activities started from the databases of the two sponsoring organisations for this study (and associated networks such as the OTS strategic partners), and The Office of the Third Sector (Cabinet Office), the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA), National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), the Community Development Exchange (CDX), the Community Development Foundation (CDF), Community Matters, the British Association of Settlements and Social Action Centres (bassac), Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) and the National Children's Bureau (NCB). The response here was uneven. We also made specific attempts to identify sources for organisations working with specific 'excluded' groups such as those from black and ethnic minorities, and children and young people with disabilities.

This process of mapping had to be managed fairly carefully as many organisations work across the whole population range: for example, the Royal National Institute for the Blind works with and provides services to adults and young people and we had to try to disentangle services specifically directed at our target group. Additionally, we wanted to identify individual organisations rather than partnerships or networks. Thus whilst attempting to be inclusive, where there was any doubt as to whether a substantial proportion of an organisation's work might involve work with children and young people, we tended to exclude them from our final database. The scope of the database is thus likely to underestimate the size of the sector for this reason alone (though, as we shall see, there are other reasons). Like the NCVO State of the Sector (now Almanac) surveys, we did not include schools, housing and religious associations as these seemed to us to require separate analysis. In the latter case, we included faith organisations where it seemed clear that the scope of their work was not fundamentally directed at religious proselytising – a difficult boundary to identify. Thus scout organisations, though often historically associated with a Church of England base, were regarded as having a secular base; an Islamic youth group would probably be regarded essentially as a religious organisation.

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<sup>72</sup> The survey, as amended, was later made generally available as an online survey via the survey monkey process at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=SWCCBm1FYnWb8LCNjUghg-3d-3d> and participants were encouraged to complete it by the offer of entry into a prize draw with a final prize of £250 to the winning entry.

### *The problems ...*

We noted that the questionnaire identified some difficulties facing us in this work and further difficulties were highlighted in the overall mapping process. Some of the more significant of these are highlighted for the guidance of those embarking on similar exercises in the future.

- i. We determined early on that the Guidestar database, rather than other options such as the Charity Commission, would be the best source for a platform of information about the CYPVCS (determined by a series of parameters which we defined and gave to Guidestar), in terms of comprehensiveness, speed and affordability within our budget. Although we started negotiations with Guidestar in early May to access this data, it was not until late August that data began to come on-stream to us and the cost of it meant that we had to renegotiate the budget for the project as a whole. This was probably the single largest reason for delays in completing the project.
- ii. We discovered, as we networked through a range of organisations, that a wide range of surveys and mapping initiatives were concurrently going on at national, regional and local levels, probably reflecting the large-scale restructuring and repositioning of the sector as a result of new legislative and policy initiatives and new funding streams. (This underlines the comment referred to earlier about the difficulties mapping a sector that is in the process of constant change.) These surveys included, for example, work by NAVCA, the VCS Engage project, by the Children's Workforce Development Council, and separate studies simultaneously commissioned by NCVCCO and by NCVYS on aspects of smaller organisations working with children and young people. Researchers at Durham University were also undertaking a national mapping of organisations providing services to children. Much of this work might feed into national mapping in the future but it made both the commissioning organisations and the subjects of their research reluctant to collaborate with yet another survey. This suggests of course that the timing of future mapping is critical in determining a good level of response.
- iii. Substantial sources of information about children and young people's organisations deriving from the work of nationally-funded programmes, particularly the Local Network Fund and the Children's Fund, which had been maintained during the life of these programmes, had not been updated since the end of the programmes. These potentially valuable sources of information thus turned out to be of no value at all. The national Sure Start programme was judged to be of little help since much of the work undertaken by the local Sure Start programmes did not involve support for autonomous voluntary or community sector organisations but activities managed by the Sure Start projects themselves (which in many cases were

quasi-statutory bodies). Some Sure Start local programmes were managed by sector bodies and we expected to pick these bodies up by other routes rather than attempt to dismantle the complicated and overlapping sets of networks represented by the Sure Start programme as a whole.

- iv. Related to this, the development of children's trusts (incorporating work stimulated by the Children's Fund and the Local Network Fund and, in due course also, Sure Start programmes), which might have been the most useful single source of information at local authority level about the range of children and young people's organisations, were at a very early stage. It proved impossible to map these, despite several attempts even to obtain a comprehensive list of children's trusts (many of which have the status of virtual organisations and all of which were not required to be in place until April 2008), let alone the range of voluntary community organisations (VCOs) for which they might have an overview. We approached the Association of Directors of Children's Services, itself again a very new organisation formed from the split of the former Association of Directors of Social Services into two organisations representing children's services and adult services respectively. Again, we were unable to obtain a comprehensive list of directors and, in any case, we were advised that the ADCS was itself the subject of a survey being managed through the Local Government Association looking at governance and resources within children's trusts arrangements, and that our survey might prove to be unhelpful. In essence, the timing of this present study cut across the development of a variety of new arrangements affecting both national, regional and local organisations. Later mapping attempts ought to be more successful in this area. ADCS members indicated that we would need to gain approval from their research approvals committee. This meant that any help we might gain from their members would not be available within the time frame of the present study and we had to withdraw our request for help. (It may be that all ADCS members will be collaborating with local children's trusts in local mapping which would then become, if aggregated, the basis for a fairly extensive national range of data.)
- v. A number of major national organisations either simply refused to cooperate with the study, without giving reasons, or required, not unreasonably, that they would need to 'clean' their databases under the terms of data protection legislation before making it available. One major national children's organisation, potentially a considerable source of useful data from its very extensive membership lists (numbering tens of thousands of entries), was one such of the latter type of organisations. In some cases, this caused such delays that no data were finally forthcoming or organisations argued that it could only be supplied at disproportionate cost to themselves. We are nevertheless grateful to those organisations that did manage to provide data to us despite these unavoidable difficulties. Some organisations, such as NAVCA, held general databases but these were not categorised in terms of

work with children and young people. In one such case, we used the email bulletin of the organisation with a link to the questionnaire online intending that these member organisations would respond separately to our enquiries.

- vi. Some organisations argued that they were conducting their own local or regional mapping and therefore did not feel able to cooperate with us either at all or at least until their own work was completed, which consequently again put it outside our timeframe.
- vii. Other potentially key organisations with a focus on sub-sectoral work did not hold databases. An example of this was Lifelong Learning UK which noted that its workforce related to 14-19 years only but did not have basic data about the sub-sector we were specifically interested in, namely the CYPVCS. Similarly, studies of the sector had been undertaken (such as that by Strategy Complete on the VCS capacity building needs following implementation of Youth Matters legislation and policy guidance) which had either not tried to compile a database or had attempted to do so and run into the same difficulties faced by ourselves, particularly of time and cost. The NCVCCO ran a survey at the same time as our work into how new approaches to children's services were affecting small voluntary and community organisations working with children, young people and families: we made the best use of these data as was possible given the overlap in our timetables.
- viii. We had hoped to supplement basic information gained from the online survey with more detailed information from websites and annual reports. This proved to be a very time-consuming process and many smaller organisations had no specific dedicated website. This reinforces our understanding that general pictures of the VCS tend substantially to understate the size of the community sector, which in turn suggests that specific kinds of groups, particularly user-led groups or groups representative of so-called 'hard-to-reach' groups (deprived young people, those with disabilities, black and minority ethnic [BME] groups, etc.) would be significantly under-represented in our final 'count'.
- ix. We also identified other surveys or mapping exercises which, whilst they might have been relevant, did not have a specific focus on children and young people. For example, the UK Workforce Hub has been undertaking research into skills gaps (within the organisation) and skills shortages (outside of the organisation) within the VCS, as well as training requirements, but this survey will not be able to identify youth organisations separately.
- x. In relation to analysing data gathered, other issues presented significant difficulties. For example, one of the lines of questioning in the initial scoping survey and approaches to national bodies was to identify those organisations that had a regional presence and to seek agreement to

approach these regional bodies. The nature of management and financial accountability varied from one organisation to another: some national bodies devolve budgets to local projects and facilitate local management within general guidelines; other organisations manage the work of local branches or projects very tightly from the centre. Our questioning, data collection and analysis attempted both to distinguish these different modes but also find a consistent and comprehensible way of allocating income and expenditure between centre and periphery. This proved to be beyond the capacities of what was a limited study.

Because of these and other difficulties (for example, we had some feedback querying the terms of the study which limited us to identifying organisations working with those up to but not beyond 17 years of age), there can be no doubt that the final outcome and the global dimensions of the CYPVCS identified in this study substantially understate its size. We hope that some of these difficulties can be avoided in future such mappings, partly through longer lead-in times but also through the collaboration of individual organisations.

*... and the possibilities*

Turning to more positive aspects of this process, we want to acknowledge with thanks the wide variety of organisations that helped with this process, often going well beyond the help we had requested. Many of these organisations recognised the potential value of the study in terms of supporting local or regional demands for increased resources to be available to their work; some had attempted – also with varied success – local, sectoral or regional mappings of various kinds and we were able to incorporate some of their work into the present study. Some positive insights from this work follow:

- a. In the absence of comprehensive listings held by children's trusts, (something which we anticipate all of them will turn their attention to in the near future in collaboration with members of the ADCS), the best local/sub-regional sources for the scope of the sector and listings of individual organisations were either regional youth work research units, councils for voluntary services or local councils or fora for voluntary youth services. Some had fairly robust databases which they had built up over time but the quality and extent of data held by these types of organisation were variable. For example, the Partnership for Young London, a relatively new network, made its database available to us but it only contained details of 16 organisations. On the other hand, the North-West Regional Youth Work Unit had carried out a regional mapping of the children and young people's VCS in 2006 on which we were able to draw.
- b. We identified other research currently under way which might feed into future mappings: for example, the North East was undertaking a survey of VCS involvement in children's trusts and other strategic bodies. The Children's Workforce Development Council, whilst having no database itself we could

access, was aware of three other relevant – though partial – studies including mapping of BME, faith and generic local children’s infrastructure organisations and networks. The Institute of Volunteering Research is currently reviewing existing research and information in the children’s workforce; and the CWDC itself is conducting a study looking at skills needs of the VCS in relation to the commissioning of children’s services.

### *Workforce Issues*

National figures suggest that the level of employment in the sector is 2.2% of the total UK workforce, or just over 600,000 paid staff<sup>73</sup>. Interviewees from our case study fieldwork (reported in detail in Chapter 5) reported a number of concerns regarding the skills and employment conditions of the workforce.

- To be successful at competitive tendering, organisations felt that costs often had to be cut to a bare minimum and this could compromise staff training and development.
  - Front-line staff work ‘with constant uncertainty’ as they were permanently on short-term contracts as a consequence of short-term funding of services in the CYPVCS. One interviewee commented that *‘discussions around sustainability become meaningless if there isn’t enough funding.’*
  - Organisations that delivered training felt that they were unable to plan for meeting the skills deficit and training needs due to long-term under-funding of the CYPVCS. This was particularly an issue for those areas that did not have a commissioning strategy in place.
  - There was a need for information gathering and/or research on the training and workforce development needs of the CYPVCS. This could then inform a coherent strategy to respond to the needs of the workforce.
  - One interviewee had asked senior staff in the VCS what their training needs were and they identified three priorities: fundraising, marketing and PR.
- c. We were also made aware of the outcomes of a number of local or regional mappings which were of immediate use in different ways and to different degrees. Fieldwork (see Chapter 5) identified organisations in the case study areas which had themselves undertaken mapping; for example, in the South West region we identified four organisations based in and around Bristol that had undertaken mapping of various kinds; two of these organisations focused on specific subgroups (care and BME organisations). In Stoke-on-Trent (West Midlands region), a project called Saltbox had undertaken a city-wide mapping exercise to quantify the faith initiatives that took place within communities

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<sup>73</sup> Reichardt, O. et al. (2007) *UK Voluntary Sector Almanac, 2007*, London: NCVO: these figures are based on ‘general charities’ (which exclude housing associations and independent schools).

working with a range of different groups including children and young people. This identified 130 organisations working with children and young people (involving a total of 5,400 users). The project is now extending its mapping to the county of Staffordshire as a whole. In Manchester, a major audit of voluntary sector children and family services<sup>74</sup> was undertaken which identified both that ‘a huge range of children and family services were provided’ and that the voluntary sector was particularly good at working with so-called ‘hard-to-reach’ or marginalised groups. This study identified a total of 273 organisations with more than a third covering either counselling and support or information and welfare rights advice. Approximately one fifth each were targeted at 0-4, 4-13 and 14+ with only about 10% targeted altogether at a range of specific groups or issues (BME groups, disabled children, sexuality, etc.). Three-quarters were city-wide groups, while the remainder focused on one segment of the city. Of 92 organisations for which detailed information was available, there were 443 full-time staff, 334 part-time staff and 664 volunteers. One important conclusion from this exercise for future mappings was that, even for a city-based organisation, the use of directories, mailings and emails was thought to be a poor substitute for personal contact in building up a picture of the range of local organisations. On the other hand, detailed work at a very local level did uncover a range of organisations not recorded in city-wide directories. For example, in Wythenshawe, a deprived area in South Manchester, 19 (many of them probably more appropriately described as community organisations) organisations were identified that provided services for children and young people with a paid workforce of 33 full-time staff and 40 part-time staff, 271 volunteers, and a total income of more than £1m, one-third of it from non-statutory sources. The authors of the study observed that it was ‘an ambitious undertaking and yet a tentative first step to building a body of evidence’, an observation that might equally be applied to the present national study.

In other areas not covered by our case studies, we identified initiatives which helped to scope different aspects of the CYPVCS. For example, Voluntary Action North Lincolnshire had recently mapped the CYPVCS in its area and made the data available to us for a small fee. In our view, using this kind of material was preferable since local organisations were more likely to get a good response to their surveys than more distant, academic organisations. We were also anxious to avoid any duplication or overload on local organisations. In fact, most councils for voluntary service provide directories of local VCS including, in many cases, a categorisation by type of organisation worked with. Collecting what are, not infrequently, still hard copies of these directories, and using them as a basis for further data collection we felt, however, would be superfluous given the existence of the Guidestar database which ought to have covered a large proportion of this material. (It may be that these directories would point towards better quality of data overall in relation to smaller local groups but this was a task beyond the scope of the present study.)

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74 <http://www.manchester.gov.uk/children/summary.htm> or from [childandfamily@macc.org.uk](mailto:childandfamily@macc.org.uk)

- d. We also identified past mapping exercises that had targeted projects working with specific groups of children and young people or around specific issues. One was a study that had mapped the scope of services responding to domestic violence.<sup>75</sup> This study networked through Women's Aid refuges, the projects associated with four major children's charities, projects which challenged perpetrators of domestic abuse and all social services departments and health trusts in England and Northern Ireland respectively. This gave a total of over 1,200 organisations contacted. This group, however, is clearly not providing services solely to children and young people but also to their female parents. A second such study was work undertaken by ECOTEC for London Councils to identify organisations working specifically around child poverty.<sup>76</sup> This, whilst it did not set out to be a comprehensive mapping, surveyed 60 organisations working on child poverty issues across London. One third were single borough organisations and a quarter worked across more than one borough. Most provided 'universal' services, but a third targeted minority ethnic groups (a considerably larger proportion than in other studies, indicating the variations one might expect to find between areas, dependent on local context); a 'handful' concentrated on young people. The study suggested that Local Area Agreements might be a basis for developing future mapping exercises within each area. Whilst this study was not comprehensive, it identified, from qualitative work, a range of groups where services were under-represented: these included services for children and young people with disabilities; female ex-offenders; teenage parents; refugees; and lone parents.

We anticipated that this mapping – some of which provided information on individual organisations from more than one source – would identify many of the characteristics needed to classify organisations (e.g., size, income, assets, paid staff, volunteers, numbers worked with, geographical focus [some so-called national organisations may actually have sub-national foci], activity funded through public service contracts). However, there were substantial gaps in the information provided or available through websites or annual reports and it was necessary to follow up a significant part of this mapping with telephone surveys of organisations to fill these gaps. A full telephone survey of the thousands of organisations identified was not viable in terms of resources available to us.

We also expected that, as with the VCS more generally, there would be a concentration of overall resources in a relatively small proportion of the organisations identified<sup>77</sup> and that, particularly for national organisations, the overall size and impact of the community sector in particular would be very small. However, we did not wish to discount the latter as it is here that we felt it would be more likely

<sup>75</sup> Humphreys, C. *et al.* (2000), *From good intentions to good practice*, Bristol: Policy Press.

<sup>76</sup> See *Mapping London Voluntary Sector Child Poverty Related Activity*, London Councils, 2006; at [www.londoncouncils.gov.uk](http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk)

<sup>77</sup> The 2006 NCVO Voluntary Sector Almanac suggests that the number of charities with incomes exceeding £1M has doubled in the past ten years, with only 14 organisations generating 10% of the voluntary sector's total income. Meanwhile, almost 90% of total voluntary sector organisations generate less than 8% of the sector's income. See also 'Bigger but better?', and 'What must smaller charities do to gain public sector contracts?', both in *Community Care*, 18 April 2007.

that we would find representative bodies including organisations run by young people themselves with an emphasis less on service delivery and more on voice and advocacy. We felt it may also have been the case that, as with the voluntary sector more generally, this was the area where there has been more significant growth in recent years. These are groups which typically do not have to file returns to regulatory bodies and will be more difficult to identify and map. It is particularly unfortunate that the national databases of the Local Network Funds and Children's Funds were not useful in this regard and this meant that regional mapping and local fieldwork would become more significant.

The categorisation of organisations was done using a variety of variables (see Chapter 4), and following the general approach used by NCVO in its wider State of the Sector survey of the VCS as a whole. Other variables which we felt needed to be incorporated would include a specific focus (if any) on particular population groups such as one or more ethnic minority, those with a disability, particular age groups, an emphasis on male or female participants, on particular dimensions of sexuality and so on; the data available in this regard were far less comprehensive.

### **A.3: Regional mapping and categorisation**

The study required a specific focus on four sub-areas within England. This was done in two ways. The first involved attempting to disaggregate the data from the national data outlined above for two government regions (South West and West Midlands) and two London boroughs (Richmond and Hackney) which are of very different sizes and natures, and then comparing these data with data gathered during the course of the fieldwork in these areas (see below). Again, we found that the level of detail and comprehensiveness of data collected varied significantly between a highly rural region such as the South West (covering Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall and Scillies, Gloucestershire and the four unitary authorities comprising the former Avon authority), and a single compact London borough such as Hackney. The fieldwork was used as an opportunity to access data at a more regional or even local level including:

- a. databases held by local authorities and other major local or regional funders (the latter in turn needed to be identified);
- b. regional or local databases/directories (organisations such as those managing the local activity of the Local Network Fund were closer to the informal community sector but these databases were not available);
- c. regional and local research studies; and
- d. other sources to which we were pointed by key local or regional umbrella organisations such as VCS regional fora, CVS and rural community councils.

#### A.4: Local mapping and fieldwork

We felt that fieldwork would be necessary and particularly important in the two regions and the two London boroughs for the following reasons. Firstly, national and regional mapping would not do justice to the level of activity in the community-oriented parts of the CYPVCS. This might be better identified through local contacts and we anticipated that local contacts might help further round out the databases – particularly in relation to smaller organisations, organisations with a strictly local base and not being part of national organisations or networks, and community organisations or those with no charitable status – that we had identified for each of the four case study areas. This would then give some idea of the extent to which national mapping understated the size and scope of the CYPVCS as a whole.

Secondly, there were key questions to be addressed, notably of trends, impact and comparability with public and independent sectors which could best be explored through face-to-face interviews with a representative sample of key respondents identified from the mapping. In the months prior to the fieldwork, we identified a list of key contacts in each of the four areas. Given the size of the two regions vis-à-vis the two London boroughs, we weighted the fieldwork somewhat in favour of the regions to attempt to get adequate representation from across the regions. A total of 32 interviews were completed and the outcomes of these interviews have been summarised in Chapter 5. We also sought, through targeted telephone interviews, to draw together evidence on outcomes. Our experience of evaluation of VCS activity has generally been that projects and programmes – often driven by government funding requirements – focus far more on short-term numerical outputs rather than longer-term outcomes<sup>78</sup> and this was confirmed by our programme of local interviews. Interviews, both face-to-face and telephone, were therefore oriented to try to ensure that we obtained good examples of outcomes to be used as illustrative case studies in a comparative context, looking at comparable models of practice in other parts of the sector. These are highlighted in boxes in Chapter 5, as well as some of the more problematic areas we highlighted. One key insight from the fieldwork is the wider view which the CYPVCS feels is necessary to take in assessing its impact.

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78 See for example G. Craig *et al.* (2005) *A20CVCS4Y+H*, Leeds: Yorkshire Forward.













