



CLG Principles of representation: A framework for effective third sector participation in Local Strategic Partnerships

A response from the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS)

February 2008

Introduction

1. The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) is the independent voice of the voluntary youth sector in England. A diverse network of over 170 national voluntary youth organisations and regional and local youth networks, NCVYS has been working since 1936 to raise the profile of youth work, share good practice and influence policy that has an impact on young people and the organisations that support them.
2. The NCVYS network reflects the diverse range of voluntary organisations working with young people at community, local, regional and national level. Most of our members offer opportunities to engage in challenging activities or develop creative talents. They also support young people to become active in their communities and offer opportunities for their voice to be heard. Some offer interventions to prevent or tackle specific issues such as homelessness or offending behaviour. Others offer counselling, advice, guidance and information. All contribute to young people's personal and social development; some also engage with spiritual development.
3. For more information on any element of this paper, please contact NCVYS's policy officer, Hannah Dobbin on 020 7278 1041.

Comments

4. As a member of the stakeholder working group that contributed to the *Principles of representation* document NCVYS welcomes the focus on and promotion of third sector participation in local strategic partnerships (LSPs). Successful implementation of the principles has the potential to benefit third sector organisations, Local Authorities (LAs) and their LSP partners and help to achieve successful engagement.
5. However there are two key issues which NCVYS members frequently highlight. The first relates to the principle of accountability. Representatives should not only be accountable but should have a voluntary and community sector (VCS) mandate. This would ensure that LSPs can not just appoint whoever they want but would result in effective and constant VCS representation. Representative bodies and networks are key resources that LAs and LSPs should use to successfully achieve meaningful, consistent VCS engagement.
6. NCVYS members also highlight problems in achieving effective representation because LSPs are not fully aligned to other local partnership structures, such as children's trusts, that also require sector representation. Central and local government need to assess the numerous boards, partnerships and strategic bodies that exist and align the different structures to make it easier for people to represent the VCS appropriately. This would be beneficial to both the VCS and LAs and result in better planning and delivery of services to young people.
7. The principles of representation could be the basis of developing effective third sector participation in LSPs. However the two potential tensions raised above are not reflected in the principles and could be a hindrance to the successful implementation of the principles.

The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services
3rd Floor
Lancaster House
33 Islington High St
London N1 9LH
T: 020 7278 1041
F: 020 7833 2491
W: www.ncvys.org.uk
Registered charity no. 1093386
Registered company no. 4385383