

Speaking Out Project update

Speaking Out is a collaborative partnership between NCVYS and Children England; since 2006 we have worked to raise the voice of all children and young people from 0-25. The project aims to develop closer links between a range of Government departments and the voluntary and community sector in delivering cross departmental plans. This is the last year of funding for the programme and we have pushed to do more than ever for children and young people.

Speaking Out small grants report

The Speaking Out small grants report pulled together the work of 16 small grant recipients from across England, showing the great work that can be done on a small budget of £1,000. The report focused on five key themes: health, community empowerment, youth justice, homelessness and housing, employment, education and training.

The grants were set up to fund the implementation and development of activities that would raise the voice of the children and young people's voluntary and community sector. With the recession and government cuts such work on a limited budget is even more crucial.

>> [Speaking Out small grants programme](#)

Housing roundtable and report

Housing is a key concern for both children and young people, which is often overlooked. The 21st Century Housing roundtable brought together practitioners, policymakers and representatives from the children and young people's voluntary and community sector to discuss issues around housing provision in rural and urban settings and design of housing for children and young people. The roundtable brought about 6 key recommendations which included young people receiving information on housing before they leave school or college; and there was also a call for outdoor spaces for children and young people in both urban and rural communities.

>> [21st Century Housing: Building Children's Futures](#)

Education, employment and training: support from the sector – roundtable and report

On March 18 2010 NCVYS held a joint event with the Local Government Association (LGA) to explore the involvement of voluntary and community sector agencies in the LGA's Hidden Talents programme.

Hidden Talents is the personal programme of Dame Margaret Eaton, the Chairman of the LGA, designed to challenge local authorities and their partners to come up with new and long lasting policy solutions to engage all young people in learning, earning, caring or

volunteering.

The event invited senior representatives of some of the largest voluntary sector providers of learning opportunities to offer their insights into the sector's role. Key findings included the need to get better at providing volunteering opportunities and the necessity of incentivising and engaging the private sector to invest in creating sustainable jobs and opportunities for young people.

>> [Education, employment and training: support from the sector](#)

Sector Challenge response

Francis Maude MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office and Nick Hurd MP, Minister for Civil Society, wrote an open letter to the voluntary and community youth sector asking for their views and suggestions on savings: 'We have to make significant savings across all areas of Government; however as the Chancellor has said, the deficit reduction plan cannot just be about cuts. It must also be about finding better ways of doing things. We want to hear your thoughts on how this is best done.'

In August 2010 Speaking Out published their response to this Cabinet Office Sector Challenge, saying that the sector was ideally placed to perform the role envisaged by the Government within the Big Society. The response contained a number of recommendations such as the creation of bridging loans and/or grants and emergency funding capacity to enable voluntary and community sector organisations facing immediate closure to stay afloat. They also called for local authorities to be monitored on the impact of their spending cuts on their local voluntary and community sector.

>> [Cabinet Office - Sector Challenge response](#)

Speaking Out conference

As this is the last year of the Speaking Out programme it is an opportunity to look back and take stock on what has been achieved; the annual Speaking Out conference is an ideal opportunity to do just that, and it also allows us to look to the future of the voluntary and community youth sector.

This year our focus is *Under the Spotlight – unlocking community potential* shining a light on the great frontline work of organisations within the voluntary and community youth sector. Delegates will have the opportunity to attend seminars led by 8 of the small grant recipients which will be focused on their work at ground level. Speakers include Maggie Jones - Chief Executive for Children England, Susanne Rauprich - Chief Executive for NCVYS, Fay Selvan - CEO Big Life Group, Cllr Pete Robbins – Lambeth, Jonathan Senker - CEO Stepping Up and a prominent Minister.

The conference will be taking place on 9 December 2010 at the Royal Horticultural Centre

>> [Speaking Out conference](#)

To discuss the Speaking Out project please contact Faiza Chaudary, Director of Policy and Communications at NCVYS on 020 7278 1041 or email faiza@ncvys.org.uk, or Kathy Evans, Deputy Chief Executive at Children England on 020 7833 3319 or email kathy@childrenengland.org.uk.