



Pentagon Partnership e-bulletin July 2008

Welcome to the Pentagon Partnership e-bulletin for July 2008. Pentagon Partnership is the strategic partnership for voluntary and community sector (VCS) involvement in the economic regeneration of the Tyne and Wear City Region. We do this by **informing and consulting** the sector on economic regeneration news and policy, securing VCS **representation** on decision-making partnerships and **capacity building** – helping the VCS towards a businesslike and sustainable future.

In this edition (click on the link to go directly to the story):

Pentagon News

- [The Third Sector: a growing appetite for business](#)
- [Annual Conference 2008 - *Enterprising Charities* ©](#)
- [Are You Leading the Way – a dynamic management toolkit](#)

Policy News

- [City Region News - *Multi Area Agreement submitted to Government*](#)
- [The Sub National Review of Economic Regeneration - regional VCS response submitted](#)

Other News

- [The Third Sector and Physical Regeneration in Deprived Communities - new research from Project North East](#)
- [The VCS – a multi-million pound industry – a report into the economic contribution of the sector in East Durham](#)
- [Community Asset Transfer loan account – exciting initiative from Unity Trust Bank](#)
- [North East gets Healthy Wealthy and Wise – social capital conference](#)
- [Looking to improve your skills? Visited the best VCS website in the North East?!](#)
- [Quality services – are you on board?](#)
- [Invest in the future - Train to Gain!](#)
- [Online contracting opportunities](#)

Pentagon News

The Third Sector: a growing appetite for business

Our Business Plus events go from strength to strength

Voluntary and community organisations in Tyne and Wear have been clamouring to take part in a unique VCS business network. Pentagon Partnership's *Business Plus* programme aims to raise the business skills of the sector, so that it can play a full and lasting role in the economic life of the area.

The VCS has so far shown an incredible appetite for the lunchtime networking sessions, with more than 30 organisations regularly attending.

The events take place on the first Thursday of every month, from 12noon to 2pm at venues around the Tyne & Wear City Region. *Business Plus* brings together members of the voluntary and community sector, funders and the public sector.

As well as a free lunch and innovative speed-networking sessions, the events also feature presentations on a topical business subject by an expert in the field. Past subjects have included *Partnering the Private Sector* and *Enterprising Charities* – the sector has proved that they're thirsty for business knowledge and we've received excellent feedback so far:

"Very useful... lots of potential contacts for new business"

"A great chance to network"

The next three events offer an unmissable menu for the sector to get its teeth into:

- Thursday 7 August (at Stannington Village Hall, Stannington, Northumberland)
What can BusinessLink do for the Sector?
Satisfying the sector's hunger for practical advice on business matters.
[Click here to download a booking form](#)
- Thursday 4 September (at East Durham Trust, Peterlee)
The NCVO Workforce Hub
A feast of ideas on how the sector can be a better employer.
[Click here to download a booking form](#)
- Thursday 2 October (at Segedunum, Wallsend)
Loan Finance and the VCS
Food for thought on how the voluntary sector can use loan services.
[Click here to download a booking form](#)

If you would like to attend one of the above events, prior booking is essential.

[Back to Top](#)

Pentagon Partnership Annual Conference 2008

Enterprising Charities ©

Our Annual Conference will now take place in **October**, not September, as previously advertised.

This year's theme will be *Enterprising Charities* – we'll be looking at the various ways in which organisations can maximise their charitable income.

Further details in our next e-bulletin.

[Back to Top](#)

Are You Leading The Way? 10 Steps to Your Future Success

A Dynamic New Management Toolkit from Pentagon Partnership

DO YOU WANT TO...

Sustain your organisation?

Develop your potential?

Expand your geographical boundaries?

Yes? Pentagon Partnership's new publication, *Are You Leading The Way? 10 Steps to Your Future Success* is an innovative toolkit, designed for organisations across the voluntary and community sector, irrespective of size.

This toolkit has two unique features...simplicity and diversity of use!

Simplicity – each stage of the toolkit is based around a consistent framework which can be adapted to meet the exact needs of your organisation

Diversity – the detail derived from using the toolkit can be used

- as essential management information for taking your organisation forward
- to prepare you for bidding for any contracts
- to develop partnerships in order to submit a combined bid

Using a review process, the toolkit takes you through a series of audits using a simplified method of self assessment. Worked illustrations are used throughout and are based on genuine local examples developed with the help of 58 voluntary and community sector organisations.

Welcomed by the sector, feedback has included

“Renewed ideas for assessing and reviewing our organisation”

“Very user friendly and accessible”

“A practical toolkit...will use to help in implementing the strategic plan”

The toolkit is priced at £30 including p+p and can be ordered by emailing christine.obrien@pentagonpartnership.org.uk or phoning 0191 200 1405.

[Back to top](#)

Policy News

City Region News

Multi Area Agreement submitted to Government.

The Tyne and Wear City Region Interim Executive Board has formally submitted its Multi Area Agreement (MAA) to the Government.

The MAA brings together key partners from across the City Region, including local authorities, the private sector, VCS and central government, to work across local government boundaries to create stronger economic prosperity for the City Region.

By focusing on two 'priority themes' of *Employment and Skills* and *Transport*, the MAA seeks to achieve the following two outcomes:

- A Competitive City Region
- An Economically Inclusive City Region

In order to achieve these outcomes, the MAA will identify a number of key proposals for each of the themes. As part of our remit to fully involve the VCS in City Region activity, Pentagon Partnership will be running an information event on the proposals.

[Back to Top](#)

The Sub National Review of Economic Regeneration ***Regional VCS response submitted***

You may remember from our last e-bulletin that a consultation was taking place on the Sub-National review, the 'framework that will enable central and local government and other partners to work together to help maximise prosperity in all parts of England and tackle social deprivation and inequality'.

VONNE, the regional infrastructure body for the sector, held a consultation event on the Sub-National Review, and its proposed reforms and have produced a regional VCS response document. The response calls for a more explicit reference to the Third Sector as a 'key partner' rather than a 'consultee', and a more complete integration of economic, environmental and social development.

The response document can be downloaded [here](#).

You can read the original Sub-National review consultation in full [here](#).

[Back to Top](#)

Other News

The Third Sector and Physical Regeneration in Deprived Communities

New research from Project North East

The PNE Group was recently commissioned by One NorthEast to identify the perceived and actual barriers to greater Third Sector engagement in the physical regeneration of deprived areas.

The results of this research can be downloaded at <http://www.voluntaryskills.com/regeneration>

[Back to Top](#)

The VCS – a multi-million pound industry

Report into the economic contribution of the sector in East Durham.

A new report gives a fascinating picture of the impact and contribution made by the VCS to our communities. *The contribution and economic impact of the VCS in East Durham* by [Anderson and Gollan Associates](#) was commissioned by [East Durham Trust](#) in order to identify the current scope, impact and value of the VCS in the Easington District of County Durham.

The report finds that the VCS in Easington has an income of £29m per year, and provides paid employment for up to 1,200 people. 6,500 volunteers in the district give a total of more than 1 million hours of their time each year; the report suggests that this represents a monetary value in excess of £9m per year.

Other snippets of info from the report:

- At the time of research, only 26% of organisations had secured funding for the next financial year.
- 35% of overall income is 'earned' income (contracts, membership fees, trading). The report found that "contracts are a very important source of income for some organisations, but equally unimportant for others.

For more information on the report, contact Lisa Gardiner at East Durham Trust on 0191 569 3511 or lisa.gardiner@eastdurhamtrust.org.uk

[Back to Top](#)

Community Asset Transfer loan account

Exciting initiative from Unity Trust Bank

Unity Trust Bank has announced the launch of its new Community Asset Transfer (CAT) loan account, the first of its kind in the UK.

The inspiration behind the CAT account is to provide much-needed assistance to voluntary and charitable organisations which have been transferred assets from local authorities or other public bodies. The CAT account is designed to help in the purchase or refurbishment of such assets and allow organisations the cash injection often required for them to provide well-managed and well-maintained facilities to the local community.

Community asset transfer is an initiative which allows community organisations to use their expertise in supplying services to local people to turn assets such as disused swimming baths, old hospital sites and disused community centres into successful and empowering local projects.

Unity, which has a long history of working within the social economy sector, has viewed the government-sponsored initiative as a way of supporting the development of social economy organisations, and thereby meeting their wider strategies for renewal and improved delivery of local services.

Paul Martin, Head of Social Economy, said “Community organisations bring a huge range of activities and benefits to the local areas in which they operate. An integral part of our ethos at Unity is to support these organisations in realising real gains for local people and the community asset transfer scheme gives them increased potential to do this. This is especially relevant in the current economic climate which may affect the ease of community groups to raise finance from traditional high street sources. The CAT loan account is one way in which we can help communities to help themselves.”

For more information regarding the CAT loan account, please visit www.unity.co.uk/CAT or email CAT@unity.co.uk

[Back to Top](#)

North East gets *Healthy Wealthy and Wise* Social Capital conference

The North East Social Capital Forum, of which Pentagon Partnership is a member, held its annual conference on Monday 23rd June. Featuring Hazel Blears, the Secretary of State for Communities, Robert D. Putnam (Harvard University) and more than 300 delegates, the *Healthy Wealthy and Wise* conference was a chance to hear about – and debate – the topic of Social Capital: what it is, why it's important and how we can enhance it.

Read a full report on the conference, and see presentations from the speakers, at [the Community Foundation website](#)

[Back to Top](#)

Looking to improve your skills?

Visited the best VCS website in the North East?!

www.voluntaryskills.com has recently been voted 'Best Voluntary Sector Website' in the North East Digital Awards 2007-2008.

The website, which promotes skills development and career progression in the Third Sector, is maintained by Project North East, one of our regular *Business Plus* partners. It contains the biggest online Training Database of Third Sector courses in the North East & Cumbria, so if you're looking to improve your own skills or those of your colleagues or clients visit www.voluntaryskills.com/training to see what's on offer. If you are offering training or consultancy, [voluntaryskills.com](http://www.voluntaryskills.com) is the best way for you to promote your services to the sector.

For more information call Paul Lancaster at PNE on 0191 261 6009 or email paul.lancaster@pne.org

[Back to Top](#)

Quality services – are you on board?

PQASSO mentoring service from North Tyneside VODA

Voluntary and community organisations want to provide the best services possible for their service users and for other stakeholders. As voluntary organisations work more and more with public and private sector organisations, there is also external pressure to show that they provide quality services and manage their organisations efficiently and effectively.

One way an organisation can improve the services they provide is to implement a quality system. A quality system can help organisations to identify what they are doing well, identify where they may need to make improvements and focus on the needs of users.

One of the leading quality assurance systems used in the voluntary and community sector is PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations). CES (Charities Evaluation Service), the designers of PQASSO have recently launched the third edition, which is significantly updated from the second edition in 2000.

If you would like some more information on PQASSO, or would like some advice on how to implement PQASSO in your organisation, please contact Katie Knowles at VODA on 0191 200 8563 or katie.knowles@voda.org.uk . Katie also offers a quality mentoring service to groups to give more in depth support and advice to those who may need it.

For more information about PQASSO, contact: www.ces-vol.org.uk or enquiries@ces-vol.org.uk

[Back to Top](#)

Invest in the future - Train to Gain!

Support to help develop VCS staff and volunteers

By ensuring your employees have the right skills to do the best job, Train to Gain can help boost productivity and keep you ahead of the competition.

Working closely with a highly experienced Train to Gain skills broker, you can provide quality, affordable training for your employees and volunteers. Together you can:

1. Identify the skills your organisation needs
2. Pinpoint the right training
3. Agree a tailored training package
4. Find available funding

There are many free training interventions available and groups with less than 50 employees can access wage compensation for staff being away from work during training. Support is also available for volunteers.

Contact 0800 015 5545 or see the web site www.traintogain.gov.uk

[Back to Top](#)

Online contracting opportunities

A number of organisations have asked us to provide a sign-posting service to potential sources of contracts that VCS organisations can bid for. The following websites may be of use:

- North East Purchasing Organisation – www.nepo.org
- J4B - www.j4b.co.uk
- Supply2 Gov - www.supply2.gov.uk
- Learning and Skills Council (North East) - www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/NorthEast/
- North East Service Provider Register - www.onebrokerage.co.uk
- Department for Work and Pensions (including Job Centre Plus) - <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/supplyingdwp/>
- www.tendertap.co.uk

www.funderfinder.org.uk and www.fit4funding.org.uk may be of use if you're looking for more grant-oriented funding sources.

We'll be expanding and updating this list in future issues of the e-bulletin to keep you right up-to-date on where to look for contracting opportunities.

[Back to Top](#)

Thank you for reading. Please feel free to circulate this e-bulletin to your networks. Read previous e-bulletins [here](#).

To unsubscribe, email jon.goodwin@pentagonpartnership.org.uk