

ChangeUp/Defra Infrastructure Programme in the South East



Regional Consortium Newsletter

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More info online at:

[www.raise-networks.org.uk/
changeup](http://www.raise-networks.org.uk/changeup)

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The End of the Beginning

Government Office South East (GOSE), and the Regional Consortium, wish to record their joint thanks to all local consortia and their lead bodies for submission of Local Infrastructure Development Plans at the end of March 2006. The Plans vary considerably to reflect the different needs and aspirations of different localities. The common element has been the immense amount of thought and careful consideration that has been contributed to each one of the Plans by the voluntary/community sector, and its stakeholders, that has resulted in a complete set of Plans to be assessed by the Regional Consortium. These Plans, and their assessments, will be passed over to Capacitybuilders who will be helping local consortia with the implementation of the actions identified in the Plans. GOSE's role is now ending but the improvement in support services for frontline organisations is just beginning.

Formal Launch of Capacitybuilders

Capacitybuilders was formally launched in Birmingham on Monday 3rd April attended by some 280 representatives including representatives of local consortia and the Regional Consortium. Speakers included Paul Goggins MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Home Office); Chris Pond (Chair of Capacitybuilders) and, Simon Hebditch (Chief Executive of Capacitybuilders). All Capacitybuilders Board members were present.

Highlights from Paul Goggins included:

- The voluntary/community sector (VCS) is unique in its reach – to local communities and on social issues; in its innovation – it is diverse and independent; and, in its opportunity for the delivery of services.
- Congratulations to the sector on the achievements of ChangeUp. It is imperative that Capacitybuilders continues the good work. He quoted several new government initiatives designed to help this work including the new review on the future role of the third sector and the appointment of the Compact Plus Commissioner.
- He would work with local authority leaders to establish a level playing field for the VCS in the delivery of public services.

Chris Pond and Simon Hebditch were confident of continuing government support, including continued funding for ChangeUp beyond 2008. Simon emphasised, however, that Capacitybuilders must prove itself by bringing about evident benefits both in infrastructure and to frontline groups and communities. Capacitybuilders aims to deliver its funding effectively, influence policy, and encourage engagement of local authorities and specialist VCS organisations. It has a great opportunity to get funding down through the pipeline to the grassroots.

For those not at the launch there is more on the Capacitybuilders web site, particularly its strategy called "Fit for Growth" (www.capacitybuilders.org.uk). The afternoon of the launch was used as a consultation opportunity to discuss the aims and objectives of Capacitybuilders and implementation.

At the launch, Simon Hebditch stated that Capacitybuilders is committed to supporting local consortia with funding to 2008 and beyond - if the system appears to be working. The new funding programmes will be available to existing regional and local consortia via a simple application process. Targeted programmes will ensure that disadvantaged groups benefit. This will include all marginalised groups. Capacitybuilders hopes to fund up to three priority projects per consortium. Timings have not been finalised but suggested as possibly early autumn 2006. The expectation is that decisions will be made within one month of receipt of applications.

Regional Co-ordinators have been appointed but no other details provided.

Web Site Update

The regional website - www.raise-networks.org.uk/changeup - has been substantially updated over the last few weeks with all the March 2006 Infrastructure Development Plans, examples of good practice and a new FAQ page. It is anticipated that more examples of good practice will be included during April.

National Hubs Launch Event

The six national ChangeUp Hubs were formally launched on 28 March. Speakers included Chris Pond, Chair of Capacitybuilders and Stuart Etherington, Chief Executive of NCVO. Chris Pond stated that his vision for the sector in 2014 was that it would:

- be independent - a voice for people and for communities;
- be sustainable - this required a significant change in culture and expectations in the public sector as well as the sector itself;
- mainstream diversity and equality;
- work effectively and efficiently.

The Hubs would play a key role in achieving this by identifying best practice and giving the sector the tools it needs without being prescriptive.

Each Hub held a workshop in the morning, repeated in the afternoon. Some workshops (eg. Governance) took the form of consultation whilst others (eg. ICT) concentrated on demonstrating, through exercises, how they could help frontline organisations.

In his closing remarks, Stuart Etherington claimed that the sector is of more interest to the political parties than ever before. This is because it has a unique contribution to make - not only in public service delivery now that the golden age of public sector funding is ending but also by bringing the worst off and hard to reach into the mainstream.

At the Capacitybuilders launch it was announced that the work of the Hubs will be reviewed over the summer of 2006. Two basic questions will be asked:

1. What do people need from national services?
2. What is the best way of meeting these needs?

Regional Meeting with Capacitybuilders

Representatives of the Regional Consortium met with the Chairman of Capacitybuilders on 14 March as part of the formal transition of responsibility from Government Office South East (GOSE) to Capacitybuilders. The regional messages to Capacitybuilders were entirely based on the evaluation undertaken by external consultants with local consortia late in 2005 and early this year. A summary of the meeting and a copy of the short paper given to Chris Pond can be downloaded from the Regional Consortium ChangeUp South East website at <http://www.raise-networks.org.uk/changeup/regional.html>.

Additional Support Programme (ASP) Seminar - Opportunities for the future

ASP workers, consultants and ASP group Chairs met on 23 February in Guildford to reflect and discuss the work undertaken and how it would be incorporated in the single Local Infrastructure Development Plan in each locality. In a packed day with a number of key speakers, an open discussion about future ASP regional representation also took place, with a consensus to take that agenda forward. The next meeting is to be held in Crawley on 11 May 2006 and details will be sent out soon. A full report has been circulated to those attending and can be found on: www.raise-networks.org.uk/changeup/regional/regEvents.html.

Infrastructure Funding

The Big Lottery Fund have launched their BASIS programme with £155m funding until 2009. The programme aims to make infrastructure support available to all voluntary/community organisations (VCOs) in England by funding those whose main or only purpose is to support the work of other VCOs, including work outlined in the Infrastructure Development Plans. Funding is awarded in three rounds, the first part of applications for the first round in November 2006 must be received by 30 June 2006. Further information can be found at www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/programmes/basis/index.htm.

Regional Contacts

The existing ChangeUp Co-ordinators will continue in post until 30 June 2006 on a transitional basis until the new Regional Co-ordinators, one full time and one part-time covering both the South East and South West and employed by Capacitybuilders, are in post. Interviews for the full time post took place in March and the person appointed is already involved in ChangeUp. Your existing co-ordinator will provide you with the name, contact details and start date of the new Regional Co-ordinators as soon as possible. The two Additional Support Programme Co-ordinators (David Simmons and George Mathew) will continue in post until 30 September 2006 to ensure completion of that Programme and its full integration into the Local Infrastructure Development Plan as soon as practicable.