

# Regional Consortium Newsletter

Newsletter 1  
February 2005

## Related documents

- Early Spend Report
- ChangeUp
- Regional Plan
- Consortium membership list
- Consortium Terms of Reference
- RAISE newsletters
- Sub-region contacts
- National Hub, Funding and Finance Business Plan

Links to these documents are at  
[www.raise-networks.org.uk/quicklinks/](http://www.raise-networks.org.uk/quicklinks/)

RAISE is the Secretariat to the  
Regional Consortium



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## Network News from the ChangeUp/Defra Regional Consortium

This is the first special edition newsletter offering the voluntary/community sector (VCS), public and private sector up to date information relating to this major programme of activity in the South East region and it offers an opportunity to track the work of the Regional Consortium. The Regional Consortium was developed to oversee the ChangeUp/Defra infrastructure programme. This newsletter has been prepared by RAISE, with information gathered from the members of the Regional Consortium as we assumed responsibility for the secretariat to the Regional Consortium in January 2005.

To recap on information relating to this programme, you will find details in RAISE Newsletters from October 2004. You can follow the links and download them electronically from [www.raise-networks.org.uk/quicklinks/](http://www.raise-networks.org.uk/quicklinks/).

## The Regional Consortium

It has taken some time to establish a framework, Governance, terms of reference\* and accountability structure for the Regional Consortium. As explained already the purpose of the Consortium is to oversee the ChangeUp/Defra Programme. There is a 50/50 split between the public/private sector and the VCS, with the Consortium currently being chaired by Jacinta Thorley from the VCS. Government Office South East (GOSE) are the accountable body for the programme and as such are the lead agency. All other members\* of the Regional Consortium bring a perspective to include volunteering, CVS, Rural, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), frontline VCS, faith, local authority, the Regional Assembly, the Regional Development Agency, Learning and Skills Councils, health and funders. All members of the Consortium will be in place for March 2005 and have been secured through a variety of transparent mechanisms.

## Programmes of Activity

The Regional Consortium is committed to ensuring that the majority of the funding for this programme is to be spent locally and ideally to be fund managed by the VCS. There are 6 priority areas of work that the Consortium will focus on:

### Infrastructure Development Plans (IDPs)

Local IDPs are to be created to enable the VCS and its statutory partners to better understand how VCS infrastructure services are developed and delivered in a locality and how accessible and appropriate they are for frontline voluntary/community organisations (VCO's). Guidance has been produced and funding allocated to each County and Unitary Authority area. There is a lead body in each area which has agreed to receive the funding, although the funds are not for the individual organisation as it is to develop the local consortia and create the IDP. It is not to replace core/infrastructure funding for any VCO unless the organisation in question is key to delivering infrastructure services in the locality and is evidenced as such through the IDP process. The Government Guidance for ChangeUp is quite clear that the funds for this programme are not to replace funds already provided by statutory agencies and the programme of activity should be seen as a catalyst for the 'step change' in partnership working and increased delivery of Public Services via the VCS. There was inevitably some confusion in the early days of this programme as delays in the publication of ChangeUp meant that we had 2 parallel Early Spend Programmes running which were combined when ChangeUp arrived. However some of the rural funding had already been allocated and these funding allocations were honoured as part of the IDP allocations to each County. Work is now underway to start the development of IDPs which need to be completed by March 2006.

### Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Programme

This programme is to be launched in late February 2005. Local Consortia lead organisations have received a letter asking the consortia to think about an appropriate BME organisation which could take forward a programme of activity to run alongside the IDP development.

### Funding and Finance for the VCS

This programme has temporarily stalled as the National Funding and Finance Hub has just published its draft business plan\* and much of their work duplicates the proposed draft programme for the South East. We are meeting with the Chair of the National Hub Steering Group and will report back on developments to you in forthcoming newsletters.

*continued overleaf >>>*

\* related document(s) available to download from [www.raise-networks.org.uk/quicklinks/](http://www.raise-networks.org.uk/quicklinks/)

## ... Programmes of Activity (cont'd)

### Social Enterprise

Work is currently underway to define this programme of activity working in partnership with the South East Regional Social Enterprise Steering Group, led by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA).

### Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Work is underway to define this programme which needs to be targeted as the issues for the VCS in this area completely outstrip the resources available.

### Capital Programme

You will not have heard much about this as it is in the early days of development. ChangeUp like all Government programmes has a capital element to it.

## Contacts

If you want to find out more about the Regional Consortium or simply want some clarification about anything in this newsletter please contact either:

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## The National Context

The ChangeUp programme is being rolled out both nationally and regionally. Regionally, the Government Offices in the 9 English Regions are the lead bodies as already identified in this newsletter. However, ChangeUp has also created five National Hubs of expertise as follows:

- Workforce Development
- Governance
- Performance Improvement
- Financing Voluntary and Community Sector Activity
- ICT

These hubs will be responsible for gathering and promoting best practice to frontline VCOs and their funders and signposting organisations to the most helpful

forms of assistance. These hubs are all at the early stages of development and we will post information onto the RAISE website as it evolves. It is not clear as to how they will link regionally yet, but the Regional Consortium are pursuing this with the Home Office to ensure that there is minimal duplication and maximum impact in the South East.

To support the volunteering element of ChangeUp Volunteering England has a 10 year plan "Building on Success" that is supporting the development of a coherent and effective local volunteering infrastructure. Further information is available on the Volunteering England website at [www.volunteering.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.org.uk) or email on [volunteering@volunteeringengland.org](mailto:volunteering@volunteeringengland.org).

## What is Happening in Other Regions?

There is a variety of activity happening in all of the 9 English Regions under the banner of ChangeUp. It is worth noting that whilst the Government Offices were given some guidance from centre, there was flexibility in the way in which it could be approached.

The South West and East Midlands are very similar to the way in which the South East has developed in that there is a huge amount of VCS involvement, research work undertaken as part of the Early Spend and IDPs at the heart of building for a more sustainable future.

In some of the other regions, the work has only just started

and the VCS are in the very early days of getting to grips with this. In the South East, whilst we acknowledge how difficult and confusing the early stages of the programme were there is a real sense of purpose now, with the majority of the funding going to VCOs at a local level to develop the infrastructure services.

We do not know what will happen post March 2006 but the ChangeUp funds are 'new' money into the South East region for the benefit of the VCS and to this end it is important that both the VCS and their statutory partners and funders understand and engage as fully as possible in the programmes.

## Sub-regional VCS Secondees

Part-time secondees to GOSE have been appointed from the VCS. They are there to support the local consortia development and the creation of local IDPs. If you have any related queries, please do email them directly.

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\* more advice to follow shortly