

News and information for Wales from:
Wales Council for Voluntary Action
Baltic House, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff Bay,
CF10 5FH t 029 2043 1700 f 029 2043 1701
www.wcva.org.uk t 0800 2888 329



Sector contributes to programme supporting young people into work

Third sector organisations will create almost 1,000 new job opportunities for young people across Wales between October 2009 and March 2010.

The sector will create almost half of the new opportunities in Wales under a UK Government programme set up to support long-term unemployed young people and people in unemployment hotspots.

The Department for Work and Pensions' Future Jobs Fund was announced in Budget 2009 and plans to create 150,000 new jobs across the UK during the next two years.

The programme aims to prevent long-term benefit dependency by targeting 18-24 year olds that have been out of work for between nine and 12 months, as well as local unemployment hotspots.

WCVA, Groundwork, Coalfields Regeneration Trust, Interlink and RNIB have all made successful

single or collaborative bids to support the programme.

WCVA Chief Executive Graham Benfield OBE said: 'The third sector is making a big contribution to this programme in providing vital opportunities to young people that have been affected by the economic downturn.

'Over 100 third sector organisations are part of WCVA's collaborative bid and will offer varied and rewarding jobs across a range of areas including environmental work, health and social care, childcare and youth and community work.'

The funding will support the creation of new additional jobs for a maximum period of six months. Any organisation interested in finding out more can contact the WCVA Helpdesk for more information on 0800 2888 329 or help@wcva.org.uk.

Recession package a BIG help, says WCVA

The Big Lottery Fund's announcement of a support package worth around £5.5 million will go some way towards helping Welsh communities combat the effects of the recession, WCVA has said.

Chief Executive Graham Benfield OBE, describing the decision as 'extremely good news', added: 'Our research and day to day contacts and intelligence are showing up increasing demands for services, and that many organisations are now facing financial difficulties, a loss of income, and even closure.

'This package will not meet all those needs - but will be warmly welcomed by advice agencies, existing BIG grant beneficiaries, and by projects providing direct help to recession hit communities.'

Following the announcement of the results of its Big Thinking consultation and how it plans to spend around £250m on a range of programmes in Wales over the next six years, BIG also consulted voluntary and charitable organisations about how it should respond to the economic downturn.

It decided to invest an extra £2.5m in new grants to tackle the recession. Through applications to its People and Places programme, BIG also estimates that up to £3m will be available to projects that provide direct support to most affected communities.

The new 'Recession Package' contains three elements aimed at providing a rapid response to affected communities and support to voluntary and charitable organisations currently providing essential advice services to the public.

The first element will see grants of up to £50,000 over two years offered to those organisations providing advice services, with £2m available to help them recruit and train additional members of staff and expand their services to meet extra demand.

Under the second element of the package, BIG is making £500,000 available to top up awards to existing grant holders that have demonstrated their project is suffering as a direct result of the recession.

Thirdly, BIG's People and Places programme will adopt 'recession' as a priority when deciding which projects to fund. The People and Places award-making committee has agreed to prioritise applications for projects that are likely to support communities to withstand the impact of the recession.

For further information about the People and Places programme and the recession package, visit www.biglotteryfund.org.uk or call the Big Lottery Fund helpline on 01686 611 700.



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Grants to enable groups to get online

Charities and community groups who are looking for IT equipment can apply for a grant from BT to help them get online.

BT Community Connections is an award scheme which enables community and charitable organisations to get online. Groups can apply for a laptop and a year's free broadband connection. Award packages will be given to groups who can demonstrate how an award will benefit their work and the local community.

Any organisation, working in any field of community benefit, located anywhere within the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland can apply. In the past voluntary projects, silver-surfers, conservation organisations, family support groups, sports teams and youth groups have been successful.

To find out more and see case studies from past winners visit www.btcommunityconnections.com. The deadline for postal applications is 5 January 2010 and the deadline for online applications is 7 January 2010.

Freedom of Information Act will not apply to charities

The Ministry of Justice has decided against extending the Freedom of Information Act to cover charities that deliver public services.

The ministry ran a consultation on whether to extend the list of 'public authorities' covered by the act to 'contractors who provide services that are a function of a public authority'.

However, in a response issued this month, the ministry said that the benefits of bringing charities under the auspices of the act would be significantly outweighed by the 'inevitable' negative impact on their charitable causes brought by the extra cost of compliance.

But it added that the Government would 'expect charities to respond as openly and promptly as possible to reasonable requests for the information they hold'.

Opportunities for development while working in sub-Saharan Africa

Public Service Management Wales Department (PSMW) which is part of the Welsh Assembly Government offers managers and leaders in the public service a range of unique and innovative development opportunities.

The International Learning Opportunities (ILO) programme offers a chance for personal and professional development, spending eight weeks working strategically in sub-Saharan Africa.

Opportunities include working on sustainable development projects and sharing experiences with African counterparts in countries such as Cameroon, Zambia and Ghana. Participants will be using their skills and experience in a new and challenging environment, often with limited resources. They will be encouraged to live and work more resourcefully and creatively and by sharing skills and experience, the participants' work will hopefully leave a long legacy.

'Applying for International Learning Opportunities was about me getting an experience I couldn't get in my normal day-to-day work.'

A recent participant commented: 'Applying for International Learning Opportunities was about me getting an experience I couldn't get in my normal day-to-day work. The friendships I made, the skills that I learned will stay with me for the rest of my life.'

Support will be available at every stage of the process and practicalities from accommodation to travel and visa arrangements will be covered. As the programme is in its final year, applications cannot be accepted after Friday 30 October 2009.

If you would like more information or an application pack please call 029 2068 1343 or email PLandD@wales.gsi.gov.uk. ILO is delivered by PSMW in association with international development charity VSO and is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government's Wales for Africa Framework.

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Equalities and Community Cohesion Workshop for the Welsh Assembly Government

The Equalities and Human Right Coalition, a network supported by WCVA, submitted a response to the All Wales Community Cohesion Strategy consultation in April 2009.

The consultation response highlighted a number of recommendations, including the need to explore the relationship between equalities and community cohesion and the impact the community cohesion agenda would have on funding for voluntary and community organisations in Wales, especially those with a focus on equality and human rights. The Coalition strongly advised that a full Equality Impact Assessment should be carried out on the strategy to meet statutory requirements and Welsh Assembly Government's best practice requirements on Inclusive Policy Making.

The Assembly Government's Consultation Report - July 2009, recognised that the strategy needed to be strengthened in this area. To support this work the Coalition and other voluntary organisations with an interest in this area were invited to take part in a workshop which explored these issues on Tuesday 18 August at the Assembly Government in Merthyr. A number of organisations attended, including representatives from different equality strands and organisations with a local remit. The Assembly Government also met organisations in North Wales on 28 August.

There was a lively discussion around the issues, including the need for new funding for the third

sector to support community cohesion work, how equal opportunities and social justice is an essential criteria for community cohesion therefore needs to be in the definition and how the relationship between community cohesion and equality needs to be clearly outlined in the strategy and guidance for local authorities to ensure it is not misunderstood with negative impacts on equalities organisations. The need for a full and inclusive Equality Impact Assessment was also strongly recommended. The group also provided examples of equalities projects which link to community cohesion agenda.

The Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan is due to be published in November 2009. The Equalities and Human Rights Coalition will continue to engage with this strategy through the Equality Impacts Assessment process.

For more information please contact Jessica McQuade on 029 2043 1759 or email jmcquade@wcva.org.uk.

The Equalities and Human Right Coalition and response to consultation

http://www.wcva.org.uk/policy/dsp_network.cfm?networkid=31&display_sitedeptid=9

Link to the consultation report

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/communitycohesion/?lang=en>

Link to WAG Inclusive Policy Making

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/equality/inclusivepolicy/?lang=en>

Grants available to help SMEs to 'add value'

The Local Investment Fund (LIF) Cymru South East Wales is a flexible grant scheme delivered through a partnership across the local authorities of Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Torfaen.

The project has been developed with support from the Welsh Assembly Government through the European Regional Development Fund, under the Convergence Programme. The LIF fund is specifically designed to support a range of SMEs.

Applicants will need to demonstrate that a significant proportion of their activity is business to business and that they have the ability to 'add value' or offer net benefits to the local economy (eg, through the creation of new jobs). Grants from £1,000 to £5,000 are available, based on 35% of the eligible project costs.

If your business is in Rhondda Cynon Taf please contact the Business Support Unit on 01443 495169 or email invest@rctbc.gov.uk. For businesses located in other areas of South East Wales please contact your local authority.



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Participation Cymru to boost public engagement in Wales

Participation Cymru, a partnership of public and third sector organisations that is hosted by WCVA, has now been expanded to further meet the challenges of public engagement in Wales. It will provide innovative training, support, information and policy direction in participatory approaches to citizen engagement.

Up to this point the focus has been on building the participatory knowledge and expertise of organisations in order to empower communities. A new Participation Cymru team has now been appointed which will continue to work with third sector organisations in order to assist with their community engagement work, and will also work with organisations from the public sector to assist them in developing and implementing public participation.

'As we engage with this agenda Participation Cymru's aim is to support public service providers in their commitment to participation and citizen engagement thus ensuring excellent public services that are vital to a prosperous, sustainable, healthier and better-educated Wales'

As Participation Cymru's new Manager, Mandy Williams will oversee the design and delivery of Participation Cymru services to each organisation. Sarah Jones will provide practical support, training, advice and signposting on good practice as the Participation Cymru Officer, whilst Dyfrig

Williams will promote and increase awareness of Participation Cymru's work as Participation Cymru Information Advisor.

When the Welsh Assembly Government published *Making the connections: delivering better services for Wales*, one of its core principles was to ensure that those who designed, developed and delivered public services did so through involving citizens at all levels of the process.

In response to this challenge, Mandy Williams commented: 'As we engage with this agenda Participation Cymru's aim is to support public service providers in their commitment to participation and citizen engagement thus ensuring excellent public services that are vital to a prosperous, sustainable, healthier and better-educated Wales'.

The Participation Cymru website and newsletter will continue to provide accessible information for organisations working in the participation field in Wales. We will also offer opportunities to exchange knowledge and experiences through participation networks, and Action Learning Sets to develop skills through shared learning.

Participation Cymru is in the process of developing a comprehensive training programme, which will begin in October. A booklet will be made available during September that will offer a variety of courses to organisations that are looking to develop their skills in public engagement approaches, methods and techniques. A bespoke training service is also available so that training can be designed and delivered specifically for the needs of public service organisations.

For further information please visit www.participationcymru.org.uk or email participationcymru@wcva.org.uk.

The next editions of this WCVA national supplement will be available at the end of October and November 2009 and January and March 2010.



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