

Voluntary Sector Unit Briefings

April – May 2010

Advice services for young people

Youth Access has published *Under strain*, which highlights that agencies offering advice and counselling to young people are facing challenges which may threaten their future sustainability. These include increasing demand, increasing complexity of need, which includes more complex and severe mental health and emotional problems, severely overstretched capacity and funding cuts. www.youthaccess.org.uk/news/upload/YA-under-strain-WITHOUT.pdf

Child development

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has published *Poorer children's educational attainment: how important are attitudes and behaviour?* The report considers the impact of aspirations, attitudes and behaviour of parents and children on the educational performance gap between poor and better-off children from pre-school to secondary school, identifying key factors that appear to explain the widening gap. www.jrf.org.uk/publications/educational-attainment-poor-children

Children and young people

The last government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport published (before the election) *A place for culture: developing a local culture offer for all children and young people*, setting out a vision that all children should have the opportunity to enjoy high quality cultural experiences in and out of school. www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/6808.aspx

Children and young people's services

The National Foundation for Educational Research has published *Integrated children's services and the CAF process*, which highlights progress on using the Common Assessment Framework and shows that the CAF can be a key mechanism for enhancing and embedding integrated working, leading to improved outcomes for children and young people. www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/LAQ01/LAQ01.pdf

Commissioning

The Pentagon Partnership in Tyne and Wear has published a *Survey of third sector organisations' experience of the sub/prime contractor model in the delivery of DWP/Job Centre Plus contracts*, which highlights the importance of good relationships between contracting organisations and how culture clashes can impact on these. www.pentagonpartnership.org.uk/documents/survey.pdf

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation with Age Concern London have published a discussion paper on *Involving users in commissioning local services*, which explores and reflects on the experiences of both service users and commissioners in the commissioning process. www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/user-involvement-service-commissioning-full.pdf

Kindle, a partnership of six VCS umbrella organisations (Community Matters, ACRE, bassac, Children England, NAVCA and NCVYS) has published *Commissioning and the community sector*, which explores how community organisations can get involved in the commissioning arrangements of Children and Young People's Trusts. www.commissioningsupport.org.uk/cs/groups/commissioning_and_the_community_sector/default.aspx

Community engagement

The Urban Forum, the University of Manchester and Ipsos MORI have published *Citizens and local decision making: what drives feelings of influence?* The survey investigates the factors relating to feelings of influence in terms of the local place and local activity and highlights three main themes: provision of information, consultation – listening to views and

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acting on them and attitudes towards the local authority and its partners.

www.urbanforum.org.uk/files/citizens_and_local_decision_making_full_report_2010_03.pdf

The New Economics Foundation and the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) have published *Public services inside out*, which finds that a collaborative approach between councils and local residents in the design and delivery of public services provides services more effectively and at less cost than conventional top-down approaches and encourages people to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

www.neweconomics.org/publications/public-services-inside-out

Disabled people

Leonard Cheshire Disability has published *Rights and reality: disabled people's experiences of accessing goods and services*, which finds that 40% of respondents to their survey experienced problems accessing goods and services (including public transport) in the past twelve months and that 23% of these had attributed their difficulties to discrimination.

www.lcdisability.org/?lid=12274

Health and wellbeing: libraries

Museums, libraries and Archives has published *Public library activity in the areas of health and well-being: final report*, which finds that public libraries are engaged in a wide range of activities that contribute to health and wellbeing, including providing health information and offering computerised cognitive behavioural therapy sessions, with most of the activities being delivered in partnership with local authorities and health care partners.

<http://research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/view-publication.php?pubid=1068>

Health inequalities

The Greater London Authority has published the *London Health Inequalities Strategy* which contains five core objectives: to empower individuals and communities to improve health and wellbeing; to improve access to high quality health and social care services; to reduce income inequality and the negative consequences of relative poverty; to increase opportunities for people to access the potential benefits of work and other meaningful activity and to develop London as a healthy place for all.

www.london.gov.uk/priorities/health/tackling-inequality

Inter-faith work

The London Civic Forum has set up a *Faiths Forum for London*, bringing together regional organisations and faith groups and inter-faith groups to foster engagement with public sector agencies. www.londoncivicforum.org.uk/our-projects/project-details/project/faiths-forum-for-london/

The Department for Communities and Local Government has published *Ensuring a level playing field; funding faith based organisations to provide publicly funded services*, which explores the myths and realities of providing funding to faith based organisations.

www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/15073411.pdf

Mental health

The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition has been launched to improve child and adolescent mental health services. The Coalition, whose members include Action for Children, Young Minds, the National Children's Bureau and the Prince's Trust, has produced a policy briefing, *Children and young people's mental health: the policy, the progress made, the challenges*. www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/children-and-young-people-coalition

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The Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health has published *Implementing recovery: a methodology for organisational change*, which sets out three stages that mental health service providers need to reach if they are to meet the needs of people with severe or long term mental health problems.

www.scmh.org.uk/pdfs/Implementing_recovery_methodology.pdf

National Health Service

The King's Fund has published *A high performing NHS? A review of progress 1997-2010*, which finds that many challenges have been successfully addressed, but some remain including improving cancer survival rates, increasing access to out-of-hours GPs and tackling obesity and alcohol related illnesses.

www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/a_highperforming_nh.html

New Government

NCVO has published a *Post election briefing* on what it sees as the key policy issues for the new Government in relation to the voluntary and community sector.

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/sites/default/files/Election_Briefing_12_may_10_0.pdf

The Coalition Government has published *The Coalition: our programme for government*, which sets out plans across all areas of work.

<http://programmeforgovernment.hmg.gov.uk>

HM Treasury has published its plans for reducing the Government deficit.

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/psr_reducing_government_deficit.htm

The Cabinet Office has published *The Big Society*, which outlines Government plans aimed at strengthening civil society, including the development of a National Citizen Service for 16 year olds, the devolution of power to local communities and support for co-operatives, mutual organisations, charities and social enterprises.

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/407789/building-big-society.pdf

Poverty

The Institute of Fiscal Studies and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation have published *Poverty and inequality in the UK*, which analyses regional differences in living standards, poverty and inequality and includes an assessment of the impact of the start of the recession. The report finds that London has the highest poverty rate and the greatest poverty amongst children and pensioners.

www.ifs.org.uk/comms/comm116.pdf

The Cabinet Office has published *State of the nation report: poverty, worklessness and welfare dependency in the UK*, which sets out a comprehensive assessment of poverty in the UK and will be used to inform Government policy decisions aimed at tackling poverty and improving life chances.

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/410872/web-poverty-report.pdf

Public sector regulation

The Centre for Public Scrutiny has published *Accountability works!*, which discusses the future of accountability in the public sector and highlights the need for robust local accountability arrangements to go alongside a reduction in central regulation and inspection.

www.cfps.org.uk/what-we-do/publications/cfps-general/?id=128

Supplementary schools

The last government's Department for Children and Families published (before the election) *The impact of supplementary schools on pupils' attainment: an investigation into what factors contribute to educational improvements*, which finds that attending at weekend supplementary schools helps children from disadvantaged backgrounds learn more quickly, improves exam and test results and increases confidence. The report suggests that success

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rests on their local voluntary nature and argues against a top down approach.

<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publication&ProductId=DCSF-RR210&>

Violence involving women

Race on the Agenda has published *The female voice in violence*, which highlights the lack of appropriate services and policies available to help women caught up in gangs and who become victims of sexual abuse and violence.

www.rota.org.uk/downloads/Female%20Voice%20in%20Violence%20Project%20report%20Executive%20Summary.pdf

Voluntary organisation development

NCVO has published *Sourcing innovative solutions: how to generate new funding and other ideas, changing your organisation for the better*, which uses case studies from Cancer Research UK to provide examples of how they approached this issue. www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/sies/default/files/UploadedFiles/Sustainable_Funding/Sourcing_Innovative_Solutions.pdf

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/sies/default/files/UploadedFiles/Sustainable_Funding/Sourcing_Innovative_Solutions.pdf

New Philanthropy Capital has published *Scaling up for the Big Society*, which suggests that there are two main barriers to realising the vision for charities and social enterprises playing an important role in building a Big Society: the failure to provide evidence of their impact and the problem of identifying proven, cost-effective approaches to service delivery by organisations that can be scaled up to meet the challenge.

www.philanthropycapital.org/publications/improving_the_sector/improving_charities_Scaling_up.aspx

Volunteering and charitable giving

The Department for Communities and Local Government has published *2008-09 Citizenship survey: volunteering and charitable giving topic report*, which provides statistics on participation in formal and informal volunteering, as well as trends in participation over time.

The report also outlines the kinds of activities that volunteers undertake, the organisations they help and their motivations for volunteering as well as the benefits from, and barriers to, volunteering. www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/1547056.pdf

Young offenders

The last government's Department for Children, Schools and Families published (before the general election) *Youth crime action plan: update*, which outlines the achievements of the YCAP since 2008 and steps to be taken to further reduce crime, including parental responsibility for young people breaking ASBOs and supporting young victims.

<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=YCAP&>

Ofsted has published *Transition through detention and custody: arrangements for learning and skills for young people in custodial or secure settings*, which highlights shortcomings in the assessment of young offenders' skills, aspirations and learning needs as well as in their preparation for independent living. www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Transition-through-detention-and-custody