

## Bristol's Building Bonanza?



**St Werburghs Community Centre  
secure their building and a  
£1 million capital grant**

**Also in this issue:**

**Community Buildings - Successful Asset Transfer in Bristol**

**What should you consider before taking on a community building?**

**Community Assets Conference**

**Interview with Bristol City Council's new Chief Executive**

**Is your venue accessible?**

**Equalities & Human Rights Commission Funding Successes**



# Improving and Supporting Diversity in your Volunteer Workforce

This new guide has been produced by Volunteering Bristol and Voscur, and has been specially written for volunteer organisers and managers within the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.

It is designed to help organisations improve the diversity of their volunteer teams and to support best practice and effective management, so that volunteering roles can be more inclusive.

Download the guide for free at:

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[www.bristolvolunteers.org.uk](http://www.bristolvolunteers.org.uk)

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## Voscur

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# Staffing Changes at Voscur

At the end of March 2008, various funding streams ended and like many groups in Bristol, Voscur entered the new financial year needing to make changes to ensure the organisation can continue to meet challenges and serve our members well.

We said goodbye this month to Subitha Baghirathan and Nigel Newton Sawyerr and wish them both well in the future.

We are pleased that existing staff, Denise Martin and Rebekah Hacker, have moved into new roles within the

organisation. Denise has now taken on the role of finance and administration support including dealing with membership enquiries. Rebekah has become the new contact for all enquiries related to training and events.

## Outcomes Super Champion takes off

Nigel Newton Sawyerr, Voscur's Deputy Chief Executive and Outcomes Super Champion takes off for pastures new this month.

Nigel joined Voscur in 2004 as Training Co-ordinator and was later promoted to Deputy Chief Executive. Nigel has developed and delivered training for Voscur, played a key role in the C3 partnership, managed the delivery of the Neighbourhood Renewal Learning plan, and has achieved the Charities Evaluation Service Outcomes Super Champion status. Nigel has overseen changes in internal processes including membership administration, and has been a great ambassador for Voscur in local, regional and national forums.



## Farewell from Subitha

With a lump in my throat, I am leaving Voscur. I joined in 2002 in the role of C-Net Development Worker, supporting vcse input at the Bristol Partnership. We had to work hard to establish our role and influence, and now in 2008, a vcse rep is Chair of that Partnership!

More recently I have been a Capacity Building Worker, in the area of Performance Improvement with the C3 Partnership. This is a new and promising area for the development of the vcse sector, which Voscur's breadth of services aims to support with training, information and networking.

I have consistently learnt and been inspired by my colleagues at Voscur and beyond. I look forward to taking all these experiences to help my work in Saudi Arabia - my partner, daughters and I are going to work and live there for a couple of years. I look forward to keeping up-to-date with you all via the trusty Voscur information channels.



## Women who make a Difference

Bristol Women's Forum celebrated 'Women Who Make a Difference' at their annual award ceremony in March. Speakers on the day included Hilary Neal (Deputy Regional Director of Government Office for the South West) and Val Jeal (Founder of One25 Project). The special guest was African-American writer Cupcake Brown, who recently published her memoir 'A Piece of Cake'.

Amongst the women who were honoured on the day were Ruth Pitter, Voscur's dynamic Equalities Development Manager, and Clare Hall, an inspirational member of Voscur's Board of Directors and former Chair. Congratulations to Ruth and Clare, and to all the other women from Bristol's voluntary, community & social enterprise sector who won the award. To find out the full list of winners contact Lorraine Gibb at Bristol City Council's Equalities Unit, email: [lorraine.gibb@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:lorraine.gibb@bristol.gov.uk) or tel: 0117 922 2662.



# A New Chief Executive for a Thriving Third Sector?

Was it a coincidence that during Bristol City Council's new Chief Executive's first week in post, Bristol City Council's cabinet accepted our recommendation that the target 'Environment for a Thriving Third Sector' should be included in the Local Area Agreement? Let's wait and see....



Jan Ormondroyd

Wendy Stephenson and Matthew Symonds from Voscur met the new City Council Chief Executive, Jan Ormondroyd, during her first week in Bristol and this is what she told us.

Jan has five priorities for the next year:

- Bristol's relationship to the sub-region – how can we work better together to address issues that affect us all?
- Partnership working – how can we improve the effectiveness of the Bristol Partnership?
- Neighbourhoods – how can we ensure that we have a strong and diverse voluntary and community sector that is responsive to need at neighbourhood level?
- Modernisation – how can we transform the way that the Council works? The Council is likely to be a smaller organisation in the future, but with a greater sphere of influence.
- Performance Improvement – how can we continue to improve the Council's performance?

Jan believes that effective partnership working is vital. It is important to have a transparent commissioning framework, which brings the key players and funders to the table. We should be working to achieve clear outcomes. This will help everyone to understand and be better placed to participate in the process. In Jan's previous role in Hull, such joint working had resulted in the Primary Care Trust bringing £1 million to the

table to tackle crime issues in the city, as there were clear benefits.

Jan agreed that some of the Council's ways of working need to be challenged. The question needs to be asked "who is best placed to deliver services and who can deliver best value for the increasingly tight resources available?". This is a complex issue to address.

We talked about the role of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector and Jan told us that she believes that the sector is well placed to understand local need and impact effectively. Jan was keen to work in partnership with the sector in Bristol and indicated that in her view infrastructure organisations should be supported to develop work in neighbourhoods.

It is good that Neighbourhood Partnerships are at an embryonic stage and Jan saw this as an opportunity for neighbourhoods to contribute to their development. Jan recognised that the Neighbourhoods Agenda needs a higher profile and we need to step up the pace to make a real difference.

There are high expectations of the role of Chief Executive – Jan believes that you should treat people as you want to be treated, think more laterally and strengthen front-line services. We can't disagree with that.

# Better outcomes for individuals and communities

Partners from all sectors were impressed with the presentation given by Dr Gordon Murray from the Government's Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA) at the re-launch of the Bristol Compact on 17 March. Gordon is the programme manager for the national programme for third sector commissioning.

Gordon talked about the commissioning cycle and the importance of involving the sector at all points in the cycle. He reminded us that Tony Blair had said "the truth is some of those organisations that are doing the most ground-breaking, most innovative work are to be found in the voluntary sector today". Gordon Brown, in June last year, said "choice, the use of competition and greater contestability must be driven forward. It must be supported by a diversity of supply – with business and third sector organisations delivering high-quality public services".

Gordon Murray talked about the sector's specialist knowledge, expertise and skills, its ability to spot emerging trends, involve people in service delivery, its independence, its ability to reach the "hard to reach" and its freedom and flexibility from institutional pressures.

Barriers to involvement were also identified: short-term funding; excessive risk placed on the sector; unrealistic prices and the excessive

burdens of monitoring and evaluation.

Big issues for the sector included lack of transparency in decision-making and the size of contracts exceeding the capabilities of specialist organisations.

Gordon introduced eight principles of good commissioning that aim to break down the barriers.

- Understand the needs of users by engaging third sector organisations as advocates to access their specialist knowledge.
- Consult provider organisations when setting priorities.
- Put outcomes for users at the heart of the process.
- Map the fullest practical range of providers.
- Consider investing in the provider base.
- Ensure contract processes are transparent and fair.
- Ensure long-term contracts and risk-sharing.
- Seek feedback to review effectiveness of the commissioning process.

The test now is to see how we can make this work in Bristol. Councillor Helen Holland, the Leader of the Council, expressed her commitment to the Compact. Simon Bale the Chair of the Bristol Partnership

reminded us that it's not just the Council that should be investing, grant aiding and commissioning from the sector – it's a partnership responsibility.

Since the event the I&DeA has contacted Voscur to ask us to monitor the impact of the event on commissioning practice locally.

We will keep you informed.

Read Gordon Murray's presentation at [www.voscur.org/compact](http://www.voscur.org/compact)

## **Compact Funding Consultation - Will this guidance be useful to your group?**

The Compact guidance on funding, investment and procurement has been reviewed to bring it in line with current policy and good practice. Will this guidance help your organisation? The Compact steering group wants to know your comments and questions on this important document, which will be used by public sector partners to guide the way that they invest in, fund, and buy from voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations locally. The consultation closes on 9 June 2008.

Please visit

[www.voscur.org/compact](http://www.voscur.org/compact) to download the guidance, or contact Polly Stewart at Voscur for a copy, Tel: 0117 909 9949 or email: [polly@voscur.org](mailto:polly@voscur.org)

# Feeling Influential?

The number of people who believe that they can influence local decision making in Bristol is rising according to the latest Quality of Life (QoL) survey. The recently released results of the 2007 survey (carried out during 2007/08) show that 26.1% of residents think they can influence decision making – up from the 2006/07 survey result of 24%. Increasing the number of people who feel they can influence decisions is a Local Area Agreement reward target being led by Voscur on behalf of the ChangeUp consortium. The target is a 5% increase on the 2006/07 QoL results by 2009/10, which, if met could deliver a financial reward.

## How influential do you feel?

Voscur is carrying out a mini-survey to find out how influential the voluntary and community sector feels at the moment. Tell us your views - it only takes a few minutes and the findings will help Voscur to lobby for the support you tell us is needed to help the local voluntary, community & social enterprise sector have more say. Find out more at:

[www.survey.bris.ac.uk/voscur/influence](http://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/voscur/influence)

## Things look brighter for a thriving third sector

After a strong argument by Voscur and other members of the ChangeUp consortium the National Indicator number 7 'an environment for a thriving third sector' looks set to be included in the new Bristol Local Area Agreement (LAA) – find out what else looks likely to be in the LAA see page 23

## Government wants to put communities in control

The Department of Communities and Local Government has launched a consultation on the Empowerment White Paper. Entitled 'Unlocking the talent of our communities' it details ideas on ways to make changes which give people more influence, control and ownership of local services such as employment, health, education and transport. For more details visit: [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities)

# Disability Equality?

Following the Council's proposal to outsource the Disability Equality Forum (DEF) to WECIL from 1 April 2008, a consultation meeting was held at the Council House on 10 March.

There was a strong feeling at the meeting that the consultation process has been unsatisfactory. People present asked the Forum advisors to explore four options: set up the forum as an independently constituted body; join with other Equalities forums to become an Equalities Consortium; become part of an umbrella group; remain within the Council.

Voscur's Chief Executive, Wendy Stephenson, pointed out that the consultation had not been Compact compliant, both the Forum and WECIL had been put into difficult situations, and that the only solution was for the Forum to be given more time and support to explore and consider a range of options.

The Women's Forum said that it felt that the DEF was best advised to stand firm and ask for a year to explore alternatives.

At the time of going to press no decision has been made, but Forum members are optimistic that their voices will be heard, and that the Council will review its decision.

For further information visit [www.voscur.org/consultations](http://www.voscur.org/consultations)

# A Quirky way to do business

When Barry Quirk, Chief Executive of Lewisham Council published his report on Asset Transfer in May 2007 he stated that transferring assets from statutory public agencies to voluntary and community groups could bring far greater community benefits. The report also outlined the barriers that often prevented the transfer of assets.

Awareness raising seems particularly necessary in Bristol; each year there are calls from groups for community assets to be transferred to benefit the community rather than simply sold on the open market to the highest bidder. In a positive move forward following the publishing of the Quirk Report, Bristol City Council committed to introducing an Asset Transfer Policy – we're still waiting to see what that policy will say.

In the past the transfer of assets in Bristol has been inconsistent, often dependent on being driven by a vocal community group, Councillor or officer rather than in the interest of greater community empowerment (one of the key benefits outlined by Quirk).

One year on from the publishing of the report and in advance of Barry Quirk's appearance at the Asset Transfer Conference in Bristol (see page 10), we've asked two local organisations about how having their own asset has affected them – in both positive and negative ways.

To read the full Quirk Report 'Making Assets Work' visit: [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities)



Linda Bell (St Werburghs Centre Director), Rennie Williams (member of the staff team), Everton Reid (St Werburghs Community Association Management Committee)

## Southville Community Development Association

### How did your organisation secure the Southville Centre from Bristol City Council?

Ashton Park Lower School vacated the building in the mid-80's and Avon County Council sold it to Bristol City Council for £1. A group of local people lobbied for it to be transferred to an organisation, which became Southville Community Development Association (SCDA). Strong support from local Councillors was very important in making this happen. Also, crucial in the development is that part of the site was developed as sheltered housing, thus providing capital that could develop the community centre too.

### What difference (positive and negative) has having your own asset made to your organisation?

SCDA and many other organisations would not have come into existence without the community centre acting as a catalyst. Negatively, it's hard work maintaining an old building. It's sometimes important to stop and make sure that the building is not your main focus, when that should be the work you do in the community.

**Ben Barker, Southville Community Development Association**

## Southmead Development Trust

### How did your organisation secure the Greenway Centre from Bristol City Council?

The Greenway Boys School closed in 1984. Southmead Development Trust was formed in 1995 and following the completion of a community benefit analysis study the Council agreed to lease the Greenway School Buildings to the trust. The Council Cabinet recently agreed a new 125 year lease that combined all of the previous leases on the Greenway Centre site into one all encompassing document.

### What difference (positive and negative) has having your own asset made to your organisation?

The main positive is that we now have the potential to operate as a commercial enterprise free from external influence. In terms of the current building programme the lease helped enable us to raise finance for the current building project (both grant aid and loan) since any lease above 30 years is generally regarded as being as good as having freehold tenure. Operationally, we will be able to develop services that secure the financial future of the company.

The negative side is that whilst everyone focuses upon 'asset transfer' they forget the flip side of the coin, that is, 'liability transfer'. The Council is likely to want to issue a full repairing lease and will probably only transfer over buildings that are quite old and in a general poor state of repair. This will increase your company's operational liabilities, for example. We've spent about £25,000 this financial year in mending drains, re-felting flat roofs and patch repairing tarmac. There's no real aesthetic improvement to the site as far as the customers are concerned and the Board aren't likely to remember this when it comes to the year end accounts, but it was something that was essential. Unless your company is capable of absorbing the operational costs it may be worth thinking about renting premises.

**Ian Steele, Southmead Development Trust**



*Above and below: Volunteers from the Southville Centre clearing and planting patches of derelict land*



### **STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS!**

At the time of going to press, **St Werburghs Community Association** have just announced some fantastic news. They have received a £1 million grant from the Office of the Third Sector to refurbish the centre and build a new annexe at the back. They have also completed a **successful asset transfer**, securing the lease of the Community Centre from the Council.

Linda Bell from St Werburghs Community Centre said "The success of the bid is the result of many years of hard work by the staff and management committee of the St Werburghs Community Association (SWCA), and reflects the commitment to ensuring the future of one of the most active and well used community resources in the city. SWCA have worked in partnership with the local communities it serves, Bristol City Council, the membership, and the goodwill and commitment of a number of organisations and individuals. The completion of this project will transform the centre into a modern neighbourhood resource enabling us to extend our much needed services into the future".

# Community Assets Conference



**Wed 21st May 2008  
9.30am – 2.00pm**

**Withywood Centre, Queens Road, Bristol BS13 8QA**

**Free conference and networking event for community organisations  
interested in Asset Transfer and Community Land Trusts**

Opening address: **Cllr Helen Holland, Leader Bristol City Council**

Keynote address: **Barry Quirk CBE – "Community Enterprise, Social Enterprise  
and Civic Enterprise - the conditions for successful places"**

This conference is an opportunity to hear directly from the author of the Quirk Review – the Government's report on Community Management and Ownership of Assets. There will be a choice of workshops, presentations and a panel discussion, followed by a hot lunch. The Council will be launching a new grants scheme to support the VISIBLE quality mark programme for community buildings & facilities at this event.

The conference will be chaired by Cllr Helen Holland. It is aimed at all community organisations in Bristol and will look at how community assets can be used to empower communities and create lasting change in local neighbourhoods.

The VISIBLE quality mark is based on operating standards for community buildings and multi-purpose community organisations. It is endorsed by National and Local Government and the Charity Commission and is externally verified and accredited.

**This is a free event, but places  
are strictly limited and  
booking is essential**

For details of the workshop themes and to download a booking form, please visit the Council's community buildings website:

**[www.bristol.gov.uk/communitycentres](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/communitycentres)**

For further information please contact John Bos on **0117 903 6440** or email **[john.bos@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:john.bos@bristol.gov.uk)**

For booking enquiries please contact Suzanne Hands on **0117 903 6415** or email **[communitydevelopment@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:communitydevelopment@bristol.gov.uk)**



# What should you consider before taking on a community building?

In the last two years the Government has encouraged local communities to take on ownership of community property. Major lenders to the voluntary and community sector, the Charity Bank and Futurebuilders England, warn that serious consideration needs to be given to the skills required and the risks involved in entering into property ownership, development and/or refurbishment.

Providing that a group's constitution allows for such activity, professional and legal advice is essential. This should take into account valuation of the asset, possible environmental matters and any development or refurbishment issues. Such advice incurs costs and groups should have access to initial feasibility or start-up funding.

Community groups need to think carefully about the risks involved in asset transfer or purchasing a community property. Will the project provide benefit and receive support from the community? Are there environmental issues associated with the land? If the land is contaminated, liability transfers with ownership. Can environmental insurance be obtained? Groups should consider whether planning permission is necessary for

any refurbishment and/or development work, and if they are likely to get it. Do the plans fall within the local authority's plan? Will any existing building have to be adapted to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) legislation and have the full costs and extent of any refurbishment and repairs been anticipated? Can the organisation secure a fixed price contract for any major buildings work? Is there a contingency sum for unforeseen circumstances?

Full consideration should be given to how the project will be financed. Will grants or loan finance be obtainable and what terms might be attached to this? How is any loan to be repaid? If, for example, repayments are to be met from cashflow, for example membership or bookings, are assumptions realistic? What happens if the community group is unable to meet its loan repayments? All lenders look for some sort of exit route while grant makers may have claw back mechanisms.

Banks and other lenders working with charities and community organisations understand the difficulties groups face. In each case they are looking for evidence that the group has a clear understanding of its aims, and long-

term goals and the risks involved. Assumptions should be realistic and where possible based on the performance of similar projects. Finally, they look for evidence that the Board of Trustees or Management Committee have the skills needed to manage the project or facility.

The 'Right to Buy' property and the transfer of assets from local authorities to community groups is a great opportunity, offering communities a real sense of ownership, but it should not be taken lightly. All those involved need to fully understand the risks and responsibilities that accompany property ownership.

**Adapted from Heyday, M and Sims C (Charity Bank) 'Power to the Community?', Charity Times, January - February 2006.**

# Capital Funding

Are you looking for a grant to purchase a building, renovate or modernise your community space, buy some new computers or play equipment? Then look no further. Below you will find information on some of the major trusts and foundations offering capital grants to the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. Remember to take a careful look at their websites to make sure they are right for you and your organisation.

## Clothworkers' Foundation

Grants are available under two programmes. Main grants (over £10,000) available to charities with a turnover of under £10 million and a small grants programme (between £500 and £10,000) available for charities with a turnover of below £250,000. Both programmes are for capital costs, including building purchase and renovation, equipment, vehicles and publications. The foundation supports organisations working in the fields of young people, social inclusion, older people, disability, visual impairment and/or textiles.

[www.clothworkers.co.uk](http://www.clothworkers.co.uk)

## The Trusthouse Foundation

The foundation offers grants under health care and disability, community support, and education and the arts. There is a small grants programme (capital and revenue grants), which offers grants of less than £10,000 to organisations with an annual income of below £300,000 for one-off capital items. A large grant programme is available to all organisations. Grants are normally between £10,000 and £30,000 for capital projects only.

[www.trusthousecharitablefoundation.org.uk](http://www.trusthousecharitablefoundation.org.uk)

## Henry Smith Charity

Grants are offered to organisations working in a number of areas including, but not exclusively: hospitals and medical care; hospices and palliative care; older people; young people; disability; drugs and alcohol; community and family services; and the homeless. The trust has a special list for grants exceeding £10,000 offered on a one-off and one-year basis for a specific project including purchase/refurbishment of a building, purchase of specialist equipment or one year's running costs. Longer-term grants are also available for specific items in a project budget which can include core costs. Small grants of £10,000 or less can also be applied for by organisations with an annual income of less than £150,000.

[www.henrysmithcharity.org.uk](http://www.henrysmithcharity.org.uk)

## Tudor Trust

The trust prefers smaller organisations which are community led, provide direct services to marginalised people, focus on building stronger communities by overcoming isolation and fragmentation and encouraging inclusion, connection and integration.

[www.tudortrust.org.uk](http://www.tudortrust.org.uk)

## Fidelity UK Foundation

The foundation provides grants to strengthen charitable organisations in the following priority areas: arts and culture; community development; education and health - helping them to achieve long-term self-sufficiency. Grants can be used for capital improvements, technology upgrades, organisational development and planning initiatives.

[www.fidelityukfoundation.org](http://www.fidelityukfoundation.org)

## News from Quartet Community Foundation

We are currently busy working on the bid for the Grassroots Grants programme. If we are successful in this, the programme will be running by September this year. This fund offers grants of up to £5,000 to organisations with an income of under £20,000. Thanks to all of you who have written to support the bid.

We anticipate that the Bristol City Council Development Fund will open again in April. Bristol City Council has agreed that a small grants fund for Children and Young People's organisations will be set up following the loss of the Local Network Fund. Thanks to Bristol City Council for this!

Look out for further details about the above programmes, as well as the full list of grants available on our website and, if you haven't already done so, sign up for the e-newsletter at [www.quartetcf.org.uk](http://www.quartetcf.org.uk) or feel free to call us on 0117 989 7700.

**Alice Meason**  
Grants Director, Quartet Community Foundation



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# Fundraising Training

## NCVO Sustainable Funding Project Train the Trainer workshop

Tuesday 20 May, 9.30am – 3.30pm

CEED, 97-107 Wilder Street, St Paul's, Bristol, BS2 8QU

For development workers who work in infrastructure organisations and funding advisors.

Cost: £75 for all participants.

## Making a Winning Application to the Big Lottery

Tuesday 3 June, 9.30 – 3.30pm

St Paul's Learning & Family Centre, Grosvenor Road, St Paul's, Bristol BS2 9JH

Full Members £55 / Associate Members £75 /

Non-members £125

## Working with Children & Young People?

Voscur will be running 8 half-day seminars for potential voluntary and community sector providers of services commissioned from Children and Young People's Services across Bristol. These will take place throughout June, July and September 2008. See the Voscur website for more details. [www.voscur.org/training](http://www.voscur.org/training)

## FunderFinder and other support

FunderFinder sessions will continue on Friday mornings as always with Sabrina, our Funding Advisor. These sessions will support you through the funding database and address other capacity issues you may have around fundraising including developing a fundraising strategy, writing applications, or communicating with donors. Voscur has recently subscribed to the Grant Finder programme, which provides a wider range of grants and

other funding sources. The Grant Finder programme will be available in the beginning of May 2008.

Are you thinking about fundraising from companies? You can also now access and search the Directory for Social Change Company Giving website through Voscur.

For more information on these databases and to make an appointment contact Sabrina Lee on [sabrina@voscur.org](mailto:sabrina@voscur.org) or call 0117 909 9949.

# How Accessible are your Venues?

When Voscur thinks about organising a training session, a network meeting or an assembly, the first thing we consider is how accessible the venue is.

This is not just in terms of disabled access, but in terms of how accessible it is to everyone who wants to use it.

We don't just consider what the building has to offer internally, we also think about where it is and how easy it is to get to.

As we use so many types of venues, we have developed a checklist that enables us to see how accessible the building is that we want to use. This accessible venues list is on our website at [www.voscur.org/equalities#resources](http://www.voscur.org/equalities#resources)

## Why is it important to use an accessible venue?

Voscur believes that empowerment is achieved through equality and inclusion and this is made possible once real access has been provided. A fully accessible building means everyone will benefit, including:

- People with little or no vision.
- People with limited or no hearing.
- People who walk with difficulty, short distances or unsteadily.
- People using sticks or crutches.
- People who use wheelchairs, self-propelled or powered.
- People with no access to private transport.
- People who may find it difficult to travel distances across parts of the city.
- People with limited strength or dexterity in one or both hands and/or arms.
- People who may feel uncomfortable visiting unfamiliar parts of the city.
- Children and vulnerable adults.

## So what do you need to consider when looking for a venue?

Below are the headings from Voscur's Accessible Venue Checklist.

### Getting there

If you want people to come to your event then you need to consider if the venue is easy to find; whether it is on a local map; if it is on public transport routes; if it is well lit and away from narrow streets and alleyways; and any other issues which will make people feel less vulnerable about accessing, and being at, the venue.

### Arriving at, and entrance to, the venue

Here you need to consider if there is accessible parking and bike spaces, and how many of each. In terms of getting inside the building, if the entrance is raised then a ramp at the entrance makes it much easier for wheelchair users and those who walk with difficulty. Automatic doors mean that those with limited mobility and wheelchair users are able to get in without necessarily having to ask for help.

### Inside the building

Here you need to consider a lot more things! It is worth thinking about how welcoming and accessible the reception is to diverse communities - this includes the publicity and posters there are displayed in the building.

For full access the building should have automatic doors throughout; be able to accommodate wheelchairs in corridors; include an induction loop system (sometimes called a hearing loop) in all rooms and lifts. It is also worth considering if the fire alarms are visible and audible.

Toilet and kitchen areas are particularly important. There should be accessible toilets (not disabled toilets as many people say!) easily located and with alarm systems. The taps in the toilets and kitchen areas should be easily operated and floors need to be non-slip.

## Finally

As you can see there are many things to consider. In our experience, there are very few Bristol venues that are fully accessible. The best thing to do when you use a venue you know is not fully accessible is to ask people attending your event what they need to accommodate them. This enables them to access the venue without feeling they have to ask for help. Finally, give feedback to the venue on its accessibility. Remember an accessible venue is one that can be used by everyone.

### Further support

Download a list of venues with their accessibility highlighted, and our checklist at

[www.voscur.org/resources](http://www.voscur.org/resources)

Bristol City Council has a guidance document on making information more accessible <http://tinyurl.com/36rh82>

Bristol Equalities Toolkit includes an Equalities jargon buster, Equalities impact assessments, information on planning a new building or adapting an old building and more. [www.voscur.org/resources/equalities](http://www.voscur.org/resources/equalities)

Bristol City Council Environmental Access Standards <http://tinyurl.com/2x25ou>

Centre for Accessible Environments - [www.cae.org.uk](http://www.cae.org.uk)

Skillset has an accessible venues checklist on their website - <http://tinyurl.com/2mwabz>

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has information on how to tackle discrimination and promote equality and has some sources of advice on improving accessibility for disabled people at this link -

<http://tinyurl.com/2j3loq>

# Ethical Property Foundation

Almost all charitable organisations come into contact with the commercial property world through letting or buying a building to run their projects. The Ethical Property Foundation was set up in recognition of the fact that the property world can be a daunting prospect without access to specialist advice. Their Property Advice Service was developed in response to the lack of accessible, low cost commercial property advice and consultancy to charities and community organisations.

The Foundation's London office was established in 2005, with 2007 seeing the expansion of the Property Advice Service to Bristol. Patsy Newton, the Foundation's Regional Property Manager currently provides advice to charities and community groups in Bristol and the surrounding area.

## What services do you offer?

At present our main focus in Bristol is our Property Advice Service, which provides information, advice and expertise from the property sector on all aspects of renting, buying and managing property. We help organisations to grow their skills and confidence to enable them to achieve positive property outcomes. The basic Property Advice Service is free of charge, although we do also offer longer term, or more in-depth pieces of work which can be commissioned on a consultancy basis. We also run training events, seminars and workshops aimed at keeping the sector up-to-date with property issues.

## What are your recent successes?

The Property Advice Service has received a very positive response from its users since it was established just over a year ago and has delivered face-to-face advice to over 50 organisations in the area. The nature of the property sector means that problems generally cannot be overcome instantly. Property Advice Service clients have identified the service as an "incredibly helpful, reassuring and understanding" source of advice and support.

Success stories from our Property Advice Service so far have included assistance provided to a community group around the removal of a significant charge placed on their building. Their success has meant that ownership of the building has been transferred to the community group making the organisation freeholders, and has thus enabled them to be more flexible about how they might tackle their need for more space.

In July 2007 the Foundation partnered with Social Enterprise Works, and with support from Bristol Development Trusts Network and Bristol City Council (BCC), delivered a successful and topical day conference on 'The Quirk Review and Asset Transfer'. The event attracted over 90 participants from 49 organisations, with national speakers including Quirk Review author Andrew Robinson, local case studies, and presentations from South West agencies including Bristol City Council (BCC), the South West Regional Development Agency, Development Trusts Association and the Big Lottery. The day provided opportunities for voluntary sector attendees to network with decision makers and funders and to hear directly about important Government policy and developments in community buildings.

## What is an ethical commercial property sector and is it achievable in Bristol?

The Foundation would take into account a range of factors in defining what an ethical commercial property sector might look like. Does a landlord manage their properties environmentally? Is the lease fairly balanced between landlord and tenant? Do they purchase ethical services ensuring, for instance, that cleaners are paid a fair wage? Our core area of work in Bristol is delivering property advice around a whole spectrum of property queries including environmental issues. Through such advice provision we are contributing to achieving our goal of an ethical commercial property sector in Bristol.

## How do you see asset transfer working for voluntary & community groups in Bristol?

This is an exciting time for the third sector with the current shift in Government policy to addressing the issue of asset transfer. The Foundation is keen to support asset transfer to the third sector. Our Quirk Review seminar was an exciting opportunity for us to bring together groups that could potentially benefit from asset transfer with those individuals who have the power to implement such changes.

## What benefits do you get from being a member of Voscur?

One of the most important benefits is being a part of a network of organisations that seek to positively influence what happens in Bristol. Receiving regular e-bulletins that Voscur circulates is a great way for us to stay up-to-date with events taking place in the community, and changes in the sector which may affect our work.

## How can people get in contact with you?

Looking for new premises? Problems with your landlord or tenants? Could your premises be earning you more? Need help 'greening' your office? For advice or support around these or any other areas of concern regarding your property please contact the Foundation's Regional Property Manager, Patsy Newton, on 0117 916 6455 or email: [patsynewton@ethicalproperty.org.uk](mailto:patsynewton@ethicalproperty.org.uk)

The Foundation's website is packed with jargon-free information on finding, renting, buying and managing premises – from a charity perspective. You will also find information on funding for premises projects and getting the best from property professionals. Use of our web-based resources is free of charge.

[www.ethicalproperty.org.uk](http://www.ethicalproperty.org.uk)



*Victoria Howse, Property Advisor, providing advice to a community group*



*Training event*



*A property professional at work*

# Voscur's Summer Training Programme

We have a range of new sessions and old favourites in our Summer Training Programme. To book onto the training go to [www.voscur.org/training](http://www.voscur.org/training) and fill in the online booking form. Or contact Rebekah Hacker on 0117 909 9949 if you would like a paper booking form.

For more detailed information on Voscur training, and information on bursary places, contact Sophie Bayley on 0117 909 9949 or email: [sophieb@voscur.org](mailto:sophieb@voscur.org)

## Why Can't Equalities Communities Reach Us?

Thursday 1 May (9.30am - 3.30pm)  
The Withywood Centre, Queens Road, Bristol, BS13 8QA.

Trainers: Ruth Pitter & Sophie Bayley - Voscur  
(Full Members £55 / Associate Members £75 / Non-members £125)

The session will provide you with information, ideas and tools to assist you in moving your organisation forward to becoming more inclusive.

## Refugee Awareness Session - low cost!

Tuesday 13 May (9.30am - 3.30pm)  
Windmill Hill City Farm, Philip Street, Bedminster, Bristol, BS3 4EA.

Trainers: Volunteers from Refugee Action.  
(£20 for Voscur members)

This one-day session will give you all you need to know to support refugees and asylum seekers; improve the service you offer to them; and action plan for better inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees in your organisation's activities.

## Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees 1 - evening course!

Thursday 8 May (6.30pm - 9.30pm)  
Beacon Centre, City Academy Bristol, Russell Town Avenue, Bristol, BS5 9JH.

Trainer: Sophie Bayley - Voscur  
(Full Members £35 / Associate Members £55 / Non-members £75)

Book Roles and Responsibilities 1 & 2 together and only pay £55!

This course will give anyone who has the role of a trustee a basic overview of their legal duties and responsibilities.

## Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees 2 - evening course!

Thursday 22 May (6.30pm - 9.30pm)  
The Beacon Centre, City Academy Bristol, Russell Town Avenue, Bristol BS5 9JH.

Trainer: Sophie Bayley - Voscur  
(Full Members £35 / Associate Members £55 / Non-members £75)

Book Roles and Responsibilities 1 & 2 together and only pay £55!

This session complements part one and looks in greater detail at how trustees can be more effective in their role.

### Making a Winning Application to the Big Lottery Fund

Tuesday 3 June (9.30am - 4.00pm)  
 St Pauls Learning & Family Centre, Grosvenor Road,  
 St Pauls, Bristol, BS2 9JH.  
 Trainer: Sabrina Lee - Voscur  
 (Full Members £55 / Associate Members £75 /  
 Non-members £125)

This session will give you up-to-date information on the Big Lottery Fund and equip you with skills to make a winning application to the Big Lottery's demand-led programmes.

### What are Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs) and Community Interest Companies (CICs)? - free!

Tuesday 1 July (6.00 - 7.30pm)  
 Beachcroft, Portwall Place, Portwall Lane, Bristol, BS1 6NA.  
 Led by Tom Gauterin, Solicitor with Charities and Social Enterprise Unit - Burges Salmon  
 (Please note Voscur full members will get priority at this event)

If you've heard of CIOs and CICs, but don't know what they are or how different they are from current legal structures then this event is for you!

### Time Management - Taking Control of your Workload!

Wednesday 11 June (9.30am - 3.30pm)  
 The Fonthill Centre, Stanton Road, Southmead,  
 Bristol, BS10 5SJ.  
 Trainers: Sophie Bayley & Hannah Parker - Voscur  
 (Full Members £55 / Associate Members £75 /  
 Non-members £125)

Do you want to have more time? Do you want to be better at prioritising? Do you want to be able to say 'No'? If so, then this day is for you!

### Health and Safety

Wednesday 9 July (9.30am - 4.00pm)  
 Barton Hill Settlement, 43 Ducie Road, Barton Hill,  
 Bristol BS5 0AX.  
 Trainer: Brian Hibbert - BHTS Limited  
 (Full Members £65\* / Associate £85\* / Non-members £140\*)

\* This fee includes accreditation

This one-day course is designed to give a basic introduction and covers many aspects of health and safety. The day concludes with a 30 question multiple-choice test and provides you with a certificate.

### Employment Law - Managing Redundancy - free!

Wednesday 18 June (6.00 - 7.30pm)  
 Beachcroft, Portwall Place, Portwall Lane, Bristol, BS1 6NA.  
 Led by Ben Loxton, Employment Lawyer - Burges Salmon  
 (Please note Voscur full members will get priority at this event)

Are you worried that you need to make people redundant? This session will give you all the information you need in order to be good employers in a difficult and uncertain time. There will also be a chance to get follow up support from Pro-Help. (ProHelp is a national network of professional firms, which offer professional and strategic support, free of charge, to voluntary and community groups).

### Working with Children and Young People?

8 half-day sessions across Bristol in June, July & September 2008.  
 Dates and venues to be confirmed.

These sessions will give you a chance to find out more about opportunities to deliver services for Children and Young People through the commissioning process; develop an outcomes focused approach; and network with other organisations.

Further details will be available on the Voscur website shortly at [www.voscur.org/training](http://www.voscur.org/training). You can also contact Sabrina Lee (Funding Advisor) on [sabrina@voscur.org](mailto:sabrina@voscur.org) or call 0117 909 9949 for more information.

# They have something to say, so where next?

Voscur ran an innovative learning programme in 2007/08 to help residents in Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) areas in Bristol to be effective activists in their communities.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Learning Plan (NRLP) delivered a range of training, events and visits for residents and workers in the NR areas across the city. It complemented existing projects by targeting support at residents through a programme of learning and development opportunities, aimed at improving confidence and helping people to speak out and speak up about issues affecting their neighbourhoods.

The programme's independent evaluators report that it has succeeded in engaging a range of residents and acted as a springboard for further training.

## Key Findings from the Evaluation:

The Programme exceeded its targets in reaching 223 residents and 85 workers.

Its accessible and informal style has attracted and retained new learners.

It has highlighted the need for locally delivered unaccredited training focused on the needs of local people.

Feedback from participants has been consistently positive reporting immediate and ongoing benefits.

"I don't watch television anymore! Every night is taken up with meetings"  
NR Resident

The programme has been particularly successful in building people's confidence, enabling them to participate more in their communities and in wider decision-making processes.

As a result of taking part in the learning programme participants report they are now more likely to sign up for further training and events.

Effective early consultation together with feedback-based review ensured that the programme successfully met the learning needs of a wide range of people.

The mix of traditional training, creative sessions and facilitated sessions has been a winning one, offering different routes into learning.

The popularity of the visits highlights the value of such learning not only for its own sake but also as a way to build confidence to go onto to other forms of learning.

The visits and shadowing opportunities have proved to be both

popular and highly effective as ways of enabling people to gain new knowledge and understanding.

"Seeing what a small Welsh community had achieved off its own back made me realise how much we could do for ourselves if we put our mind to it" NR Resident

The cross-city NR area visits have contributed significantly to community cohesion, building understanding and networks.

"The networking was almost as important as the training for residents"  
Community Worker

The success and momentum of the programme has built credibility with stakeholders as a good practice model, which needs to be maintained and extended in the future.

Much of the success of the programme can be attributed to the high quality and commitment of the programme delivery team. They have managed the difficult trick of combining professionalism in developing and delivering a high quality and varied programme with a

friendly and accessible approach that has enabled them to remain connected with the communities they are serving.

The use of the existing structures and neighbourhood expertise held within the posts of Neighbourhood Facilitators was effectively harnessed and strong relationships built with people in these key roles.

## Key Success Factors

The evaluation identified the following factors as core to the programme's success:

- Programme content developed in direct response to the aspirations and needs of local residents and regularly reviewed in response to feedback and demand.
- Flexible and creative responses to residents learning needs drawing on a range of styles and approaches including tailored locally delivered courses.
- A 'No barriers' philosophy including no fees, no formalities/accreditation and 'no hassle' transport and childcare arrangements.

- Consistently high quality and accessible training, events and visits.
- The citywide approach allowing and encouraging people to move across the city, meet new people, share ideas and see other neighbourhoods in action.
- Commitment to sufficient and excellent human resources to develop and deliver the programme including a full time dedicated programme co-ordinator and admin support.

## So Where Next?

A clear message came out of the NRLP final event 'Got Something to Say? Where Next?', held in March. There was an overwhelming view from residents and workers alike that the programme had been so successful that it must be taken forward in spite of the fact that it hadn't been prioritised for any ongoing funding at this time.

Voscur has succeeded in entering into partnership with the Council's Learning Communities team to roll out the "be" programme of personal development to other areas of the

city during 2008/09. Voscur's Hannah Parker will link with neighbourhoods and the Learning Communities teams to support this programme. She will also work to enable continuation of as many of the successful training events provided through NRLP as possible.

Voscur has begun a series of meetings with the Council's Engagement team and Quartet Community Foundation to work towards making resident learning support available to support the new Neighbourhood Partnership structures.

To see a full version of the Evaluation Report go to [www.voscur.org/training/nrplan](http://www.voscur.org/training/nrplan) or contact Hannah Parker on 0117 909 9949.



NRLP event 'Got Something to Say? Where Next?' March 2008

## Free ICT One-2-One mentoring

Want a new website for your group, but don't know where to start? Too much spam in your email? Computers slow or broken? Speak to Sean Kenny, Voscur's ICT Development Worker for free advice and guidance to help you through the jargon and minefield of choices in developing an ICT strategy for you. You can contact him on 0117 933 0508.

## Social Source South West

The Social Source South West (SSSW) Event at St Werburghs Community Centre in February was a fantastically attended Voscur hosted event, bringing together groups and practitioners from across Bristol and the South West to look at the latest advances and offerings from the Free and Open Source Software community. Over 40 attendees heard talks from Paul Webster (the National ICT Hub Champion) and Dr Gavin Beckett, **Bristol City Council's Head of ICT strategy**, who told us about the Council's implementation of Open Office across its desktops that had resulted in a **saving of 1% of the total council tax bill** across the city. A video of his talk is available at [www.voscur.org/ict](http://www.voscur.org/ict). This was followed by workshops on moving from Microsoft to Open Office - the pitfalls and the benefits; using Content Management software to keep your website up to date and invigorated (specifically Drupal), on which the

Voscur website is built; and a very interesting and popular workshop on Moodle, a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which can be used to support everything from Remote Learning to the induction of staff and volunteers in your organisation. Some organisations were already using Open Source and had come along to see how they could continue to improve costs savings and increase efficiency, others were curious to take their first steps. Dr Beckett agreed that he would like to explore more ways that the Council's IT department could share their growing expertise in this area with the voluntary & community sector in Bristol through Voscur. Voscur will keep you updated with progress and further activities in the newsletter, on the website, through the ebulletin and our new forums area. <http://moodle.org>  
[www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org)

## Give One In, Get One Back!

Our recycling project has now come to an end, so the discounted service is no longer available. However Byteback and Bristol Wireless are still working together to provide low cost services around computer equipment disposal and refurbishment. If you want to know more you can contact them directly.

Byteback Computer Recycling -  
0117 370 6456  
Bristol Wireless - 0117 325 0067

## Voscur Forums

As part of continuing improvements to our website, next month Voscur will be launching an interactive forum area, for members and other interested parties to ask questions, share experiences, tell stories and build a knowledge base together. We have already begun to add ICT news and articles relevant to the members in the ICT section of the forum. If you'd like to take a look and see how it works, make suggestions for improvements, or just ask questions either go to <http://lists.voscur.org/forums> or contact Sean Kenny at [seank@voscur.org](mailto:seank@voscur.org) for more details.

# Successful lobbying for LAA 'Thriving Third Sector' target

The shape of the new Bristol Local Area Agreement (LAA) is starting to become a little clearer. The Cabinet and LAA Officers group have agreed in principle that the Bristol LAA should focus on tackling disadvantage, and from the possible 198 National Indicators (NIs) the Council's ruling Cabinet has said the new LAA should be much shorter and more focused than the first LAA. The Cabinet initially identified 22 indicators that it supports being in the LAA, these include 6 potential Multi Area Agreements (MAA). The new LAA will focus on the following National Indicators:

- Serious acquisitive crime rate
- Rate of proven re-offending by young people\*
- Assault with injury crime rate
- Specialist support for victims of a serious sexual offence\*
- Substance abuse by young people\*
- Mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75
- Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice and information\*
- People supported to live independently through social services (all ages)\*
- Percentage of vulnerable people achieving independent living
- Working age people on out of work benefits (MAA)
- Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods\*
- Net additional homes provided (MAA)
- Number of affordable homes delivered\*
- Supply of ready to develop housing sites (MAA)
- Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher (MAA)
- Congestion - average journey time during the morning peak (MAA)
- Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling
- Local bus journeys originating in the authority area (MAA)

- Per capita CO2 emissions in the authority area
- Household waste recycled and composted\*
- Municipal waste-land filled (MAA)
- Improved street and environmental cleanliness \*
- 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training
- Emergency day beds per head of weighted population
- Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police\*
- Repeat incidents of domestic violence\*
- Obesity among primary school age children in Reception\*

As a result of arguments put forward by the ChangeUp consortium that the vcse sector in Bristol is in a very vulnerable position given the current funding pressures, the Cabinet has also agreed to support the inclusion of:

- An environment for a thriving third sector\*

\*Twelve of the NIs on the Cabinets' list are targets supported by vcse groups during the ChangeUp consultation events held in January. A further 5 NIs with vcse support are on the list of 18 (not supported by the Cabinet) that at the time of going to press are still in negotiation. The vcse supported targets under negotiation are:

- Under 18 conception rate\*
- Proportion of children in poverty\*
- New business registration rate\*
- Working age people with access to employment by public transport (and other specific modes)\*
- Planning to adapt to climate change\*
- Improved local biodiversity – active management of local sites\*

To see a list of the NIs under negotiation and more visit [www.voscur.org/brispartnership/laa](http://www.voscur.org/brispartnership/laa)

# A Chair's eye view

The Bristol Partnership (BP) has been working closely with the City Council on the new Local Area Agreement, due to be completed this June. From Voscur's (and my) perspective, a key target is that we need to have an 'Environment for a thriving third sector' in the city. As chair, I have been actively engaged in discussions on how our LAA should be drafted. All local stakeholders have important targets they want included in the final LAA and I am continuing to oversee this process so that Bristol gets the best possible deal.

A significant part of my work this year has been looking at how we can assess the value and effectiveness of the Partnership. Since January, there have been several events for Partnership members to reflect on their contribution to the BP, and how their organisations join with others to achieve the vision we all have for the city. This culminated last month with a 'Peer Review' of the Partnership. The review asked hard questions about how we make decisions, how we are seen by others, and what difference we make. The report is about to be published (it will be available at [www.voscur.org/brispartnership](http://www.voscur.org/brispartnership)) and will be used as a basis for change across all partnership functions.

Finally, last month, the Partnership re-launched the Bristol Compact at a well-attended meeting in the Council House. The Compact is vital to a thriving city as it helps to ensure that decisions are made appropriately and with due consultation. The Compact is not simply a document, but a way of working. The Compact is delivered through the Partnership, and I hope to ensure that it remains 'centre stage' in all our activity. See the article on page 6 for more information on the launch event.

I am always available to discuss the work of the Partnership with any Voscur members and value your input. Quite simply, a partnership is nothing without commitment from its members.

**Simon Bale is Voscur Rep to, and Chair of, the Bristol Partnership.**

Email: [simon@ccisr.org.uk](mailto:simon@ccisr.org.uk) or 0117 955 7430.

# Economy but no enterprise in the LAA

The Economy Delivery Group has been having long discussions on the economy Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets. Although at the time of our meeting we did not have the definitive list being negotiated between the Government Office for the South West (GOSW) and the Bristol Partnership – we saw a GOSW paper with the latest thinking about the economy targets, and they are very disappointing. Three are around housing (because they match with Multi Area Agreement indicators), two on out of work benefits and one on skills. So having spent all this time on the Government's inadequate list of indicators we are now talking about having a special meeting to work up some local targets which could reflect the refresh of the Community Strategy. (See page 23 for more details on LAA indicators).

The role of the Economy Delivery Group (EDG) will be discussed at our April meeting – it is clear that the chair (from Business West) wants to see a wider grouping of employers round the table (not a bad idea in itself) but also to be clear about the remit at a point when there are few funded programmes around for which EDG would have performance management responsibility. The engagement of employers is welcomed as, of course, they have the potential to provide the employment routes that are so difficult to access for many of those in our most deprived communities.

**Elaine Flint is Voscur Rep to the Economy Delivery Group**

Email: [elaine@socialenterpriseworks.org.uk](mailto:elaine@socialenterpriseworks.org.uk) or call 0117 907 0080.

## Some confusion and some progress in housing

At the last meeting of the Housing Strategy Group, confusion was expressed about the relationship between the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the Multi Area Agreement (MAA). The group was told that housing targets “may well find their way onto the MAA” and yet it's still unclear whether those targets will also need to be in the LAA as well. The Housing Strategy Action Plan was reviewed at the last meeting and 30 targets have been achieved or are on course, there has been some progress with thirteen others and seven are causing problems. Several pieces of guidance (both local and national)

concerning our Housing Strategy should be produced in the near future, so we may well be arranging an additional meeting to discuss our strategy in the light of these developments. It is clear that Bristol needs more affordable family homes, but it is not yet clear how we can achieve this. (See page 23 for more details on LAA and MAA indicators).

**Paul Hazelden is Voscur Rep to the Housing Strategy Group**

Email: [paul@crisis-centre.org.uk](mailto:paul@crisis-centre.org.uk) or 0117 942 3088.

# Funding Success!

We are pleased to announce that SARI; Avon and Bristol Law Centre; Bristol Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Forum; and Voscur are to receive funding from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission for 2008/09 under its funding streams to promote good relations; promote equality and human rights; and delivering casework.

Avon & Bristol Law Centre will be using the funding to provide a legal advice and representation service for people who have suffered discrimination or harassment at work due to their age, disability, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation. They will also be providing a consultancy service to 'first tier' advice agencies and other organisations.

Bristol Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Forum will be conducting research and consultation with Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) people from Black & Minority Ethnic and Faith communities on how best to meet their needs. They are seeking LGB people from these communities to form a steering group - if you are interested please contact them on 0117 352 5633 or email: [info@bristol-lgb-forum.org.uk](mailto:info@bristol-lgb-forum.org.uk)

Batook Pandya, Director of Support Against Racist Incidents (SARI) reported that they are delighted to receive the funding. They will use the grant to fund a Community Safety Officer post. The Community Safety Officer will work with victims of Hate Crime, expanding on their work around Race Hate Crime to also look at all forms of Hate Crime including homophobia, and crimes against older people and women.

The aim of the funding coming to Voscur is to improve dialogue, integration and cohesion within and between Equalities groups, including joint-working, networking, improved representation on voluntary and community sector management committees, neighbourhood governance structures and the Bristol Partnership. We will be working with partner organisations to roll out a programme of training and networking events throughout the year, including sessions on Hate Crime reporting.

The reason that Voscur applied to do this work is to meet recognised gaps in Equalities knowledge among Equalities and wider groups, and to highlight and encourage better Equalities representation on boards so that they can influence the designing and delivering of services, and bring better benefit to Equalities communities.

We are pleased to have received this funding and look forward to some interactive and challenging Equalities awareness sessions, and to vcse groups benefiting from the project.

## New guide to help improve diversity in volunteering

Voscur and Volunteering Bristol have produced a new 24 page guide called 'Improving and Supporting Diversity in your Volunteer Team' in consultation with a range of Bristol organisations. The guide is for volunteer organisers and managers within the vcse sector to help support best practice and good management so that organisations can be more inclusive. The tool can be

used to assist recruitment and induction; support the supervision of volunteers; as a discussion tool at volunteers' meetings and support events; plan the learning and development of volunteers and to help improve the culture within organisations.

It provides useful sections for organisations to get them thinking

about what volunteering actually means, things to consider when working with specific groups, and more!

The guide is free. Hard copies can be obtained from Voscur or Volunteering Bristol and the guide is available to download at

[www.voscur.org/resources](http://www.voscur.org/resources) and [www.bristolvolunteers.org.uk](http://www.bristolvolunteers.org.uk)

## Role models for tackling work-based stereotypes

The GERI (Gender Equality & Race Inclusion) Project is putting together a portfolio of role models in the South West to be used in colleges, schools and other youth organisations. The campaign is designed to tackle work-based stereotypes and prejudice by promoting equality and diversity, and they will be producing a DVD featuring interviews with people from a range of professions, all chosen to provide positive role models to young adults.

The DVD will be shown in schools, colleges and by learning and guidance

professionals across the UK in an effort to break down the gender and racial stereotypes which govern many professions. Examples of positive role models they are seeking to involve in the project might include female motor mechanics, engineers, fire fighters, police inspectors and managing directors, to male nurses, hairdressers and carers.

They are looking for people working in a gender-stereotyped job who might be interested in taking part in the project or any help with distributing

information through mailing lists, newsletters or websites.

For more information go to:

[www.voscur.org/equalities#news](http://www.voscur.org/equalities#news)

Or contact Lorraine Gibbs (Bristol City Council are providing support to the GERI Project), email:

[lorraine.gibbs@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:lorraine.gibbs@bristol.gov.uk) or phone 0117 922 2749.

## Lone parent employment toolkit

The Single Parent Action Network has published a unique, free toolkit for organisations helping lone parents into a job and keeping it.

'Proofed for Parents by Parents' enables policy officers, equality teams and service managers to improve how their organisation supports parents to volunteer, train and sustain paid work.

Tools include eleven accessible cards outlining the employment challenges parents face and their own solutions; a 3-step plan to 'one parent proofing' your initiative; case studies and helpful tips.

The toolkit has been developed using participatory research evidence, that Bristol parents are now using to influence ministers and local policy-

makers. There is a 'Proofed for Parents by Parents' report that goes alongside the toolkit. Both publications are free to download or contact SPAN for a hard copy.

Tel: 0117 951 4231 or email:

[sorrel@spanuk.org.uk](mailto:sorrel@spanuk.org.uk)

[www.singleparents.org.uk/span](http://www.singleparents.org.uk/span)

# Update on Bristol's Integrated Youth Support Services

Work currently being undertaken will implement two important Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) initiatives for teenagers - the Integrated Youth Support Service development and the 14-19 reform agenda. Although separate, they are aimed at the same Young People. From April 2008, Connexions, Youth and Play Services and partners will start to work together in ten locality areas to meet the needs of Young People and deliver the Youth Offer as part of the Bristol Core Offer 0-19. Services will be designed to reach and target Young People in different ways to ensure their needs are met.

Here are some things to look out for:

## Go places do things - New website

Look out for the launch of a new website in June [www.goplacesdothings.org.uk](http://www.goplacesdothings.org.uk) which will provide a complete guide to going places and doing things in Bristol for Young People. It will hold a calendar of activities to help Young People to find out what is on in their local area and beyond. This new website is a development of the One Big Database and you can register your organisation now. Complete the online form or call 01454 868008. If you want to shout about the good work you are doing for Young People, this can help. [www.1bigdatabase.org.uk](http://www.1bigdatabase.org.uk)

## Centre for Youth

Centre for Youth aims to ensure all Young People consider the centre a natural part of their extended community and access its range of facilities and attractions without fear of stigmatisation or exclusion. This work grew out of a 2005 feasibility study looking at the possibilities of a place for Young People in the city centre. Although this is still very much a possibility, current work is focusing on supporting existing organisations such as the Colston Hall, Watershed,

Odeon and Arnolfini to develop a 'youth campus' feel to the centre. Young People will be welcomed and seen by these organisations as a valuable part of their customer base.

For more information about Centre for Youth contact Sarah Galvin, tel: 0117 907 4484, email: [sgalvin@connexionswest.org.uk](mailto:sgalvin@connexionswest.org.uk)

## Vinvolved

Recently Young Bristol, and its partners in the Bristol Youth Volunteering Network, launched the replacement for Millennium Volunteers - the Bristol 'Vinvolved' team. This is an expansion of current work, developing even more new and innovative volunteering opportunities for Young People, and reaching out to more Young People than ever before. 'Vinvolved' is a national programme of the youth volunteering charity V - [www.wearev.com](http://www.wearev.com). To find out more about the work of the Bristol team contact Ben Silvey, email: [bs@youngbristol.com](mailto:bs@youngbristol.com) or phone 0117 953 7921.

## The Youth Opportunities and Youth Capital Funds

The Youth Opportunities and Youth Capital funds are managed by a panel of Young People, supported by youth workers at Bristol's Participation Team at Youth and Play Services. In Bristol over £500,000 was distributed in 2007/08 to 70 projects including youth clubs, schools and voluntary groups. Funding will be available for 2008/09. For more information call the Participation Team on 0117 377 3673.

If you would like to the opportunity to discuss Integrated Youth Support Services or you have any feedback, please don't hesitate to contact Rose Richards on [rose.richards@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:rose.richards@bristol.gov.uk)

# Changes To Children's Workforce Strategy

Recent changes to the strategy have included an emphasis on specific measures to develop the playwork workforce. SkillsActive is the representative Sector Skills Council, and has welcomed the changes included in the document 'Building Brighter Futures'.

'Building Brighter Futures - Next Steps' prioritises the delivery of Level 3 Playwork qualifications for 4,000 playworkers over the next 3 years, starting in autumn 2008 with the emphasis on playwork National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

The Government has also demonstrated a commitment to developing a graduate led workforce, a goal that SkillsActive shares. Work will also be carried out looking at support for continuous professional development through the establishment of a management and leadership award. The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) will be managing these projects, with strategic input from SkillsActive.

For more information go to [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)

## Let's Play!

Young People in Bristol, and their families, will benefit from a successful £2.5m Play Pathfinder bid. The cash boost will have a massive impact on play parks and play spaces across the city. Bristol's Play Pathfinder proposals include:

- A large-scale innovative adventure play/public space in St Pauls.
- Extending the range and quality of three major play parks at Blaise, Hengrove and Oldbury Court.
- Twenty-eight new or enhanced public play areas including improvements to four existing adventure playgrounds.

- An involvement team to help children and communities participate in the design process.
- An emphasis on inclusion, innovation, creativity and natural play for children aged 8 - 13 years.
- Play Watch - sustainable community owned play areas.
- Play training for public sector workers.
- A cross cutting high level strategic approach to play.
- A strategic approach to improving public access to provision.

To find out more about these proposals contact Tom Williams on [tom.williams@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:tom.williams@bristol.gov.uk)

# Time Together Refugee Mentoring Project

Volunteering Bristol's successful partnership with TimeBank running the Time Together Refugee Mentoring project has been extended for a further six months.

Although it is hoped that the Immigration and Borders Agency, as the ultimate funder of any successor scheme, will be making decisions soon on how money will be distributed and if any mentoring service is to be delivered. TimeBank has been given interim continuation funding to continue to work with some of the existing partners, including Volunteering Bristol, to carry on delivering this useful and worthwhile service.

The project has been well received in Bristol and there has even been a waiting list for mentors seeking to volunteer. The next six months will see a further 15 refugees, at least, being placed with a mentor to help them learn about British culture and way of life, and to help them integrate into the community. And the mentoring works both ways as the mentors learn about their mentees' cultures and the reality of life as a refugee in the UK.

Deborah and Mastura began a highly effective mentoring relationship, meeting each week in Bristol to work on Mastura's aims and objectives as a Time Together mentee. Mastura, having arrived in Bristol as a refugee from Sudan in 2007, was keen to use her medical training and skills to help her and her family move to a normal life in the UK. The many years of violence and internal conflict in the Sudan had not dented Mastura's enthusiasm and ability to move forward positively, and with the help of Deborah, who is also a medical student with a background of living in the Middle East, is beginning volunteer work in a health setting, looking at retraining options at University, and benefiting from Deborah's knowledge of the UK health system and British culture in general. Mastura and her husband, also a

Time Together mentee, are being supported by their mentors to deliver a talk to Bristol University students about the situation in Darfur, so that more people are aware of what the conflict means and the very real human crisis that is unfolding.

For Mastura the mentoring provides vital support, as she said: "We meet once every week for one or two hours. She helps me look for a job. She has even helped me take my baby to hospital!"

Working with other organisations in the city, Tom Blower, the project co-ordinator, has arranged English language classes and other events including volunteer taster days that have resulted in really positive developments for the mentee refugees. Keeping in touch with the mentees and using feedback data, the project can report that more than three-quarters of the people on the scheme have made good progress in learning English, and all had made some progress. Similarly, almost three-quarters have made progress towards their goals to gain employment. All the mentees reported that they now have a better understanding of British culture thanks to being part of the scheme.



*A Mentee and Mentor getting to know each other and Bristol on a river trip together*

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*Michaela Fudge-Quinlen, Self Help Housing*