

5 February 2009

Department for Children, Schools and Families

Statutory Guidance: The Roles and Responsibilities of the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services

The *Community Sector Partnership for Children and Young People* (CSPCYP) welcomes this opportunity to endorse the response and recommendations on the statutory guidance for the roles and responsibilities of the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services submitted by the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS).

The CSPCYP is a partnership that brings together seven key national organisationsⁱ that aim to influence the children and young people's policy and practice agendas, both nationally and through its members locally, in order to ensure that community sector organisations are able to play their full role in the local planning and delivery of services for children and young people.

As a national partnership, we strongly support the recommendation made by NCVYS that more emphasis needs to be placed on the Director of Children's Services to ensure that the third sector, in particular local infrastructure organisations and voluntary and community organisations, are well engaged in the development of local Children and Young People's Plans. This recommendation is particularly pertinent given that a recent Audit Commission reportⁱⁱ found that although 97% of Children's Trusts had third sector representation, these representatives felt the least understood and valued.

As part of the CSPCYP advocacy for the full involvement of the voluntary and community sector in the local planning and delivery of services for children and young people, we have published two guidance papers focusing on building relationships between Children's Trusts and the community sectorⁱⁱⁱ. Based on the success of these documents, we therefore also strongly support the recommendation that the Department for Children, Schools and Families should provide additional practical guidance for Lead Members on building effective partnership with the third sector, which would include focusing on commissioning processes and other local partners, such as schools, so that together, local areas can deliver a shared agenda and promote community cohesion.

As a partnership that brings together seven key national partnership that focuses on and has significant knowledge and experience of the voluntary and community sector's work with children and young people, we would be interested in working with and discussing this guidance with the department in more detail.

Again, we would like to thank you for this opportunity to consult on the statutory guidance for Lead Members and directors of Children's Services. The voluntary and community sector play a critical role in improving outcomes for children, young people, their families, and local communities more widely and it is essential that these established and trusted networks with some of the most deprived neighbourhoods and needy children and young people are supported, encouraged and maintained. Therefore, please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss this with the partnership in more detail.

Yours Sincerely,



David Tyler, Chief Executive, Community Matters and Chair, Community Sector Partnership for Children and Young People

ⁱ The members of the CSPCYP are:

- *Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)* is active in promoting the interests of rural communities. It also acts as the national umbrella organisation for 38 Rural Community Councils throughout England
- *British Association of Settlements and Social Action Centres (bassac)* is the national network of multi-purpose community based organisations, dedicated to tackling the causes and effects of poverty, exclusion and discrimination.
- *Community Matters* is the National Federation of Community Organisations with over 1,200 member organisations across the UK. We play a key role in promoting and supporting action by ordinary people in response to social, educational and recreational needs in their neighbourhoods and communities.
- *National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)* is the national voice for local voluntary and community sector infrastructure in England. Their 360 members work with 140,000 local community groups and voluntary organisations which provide services, regenerate neighbourhoods, increase volunteering and tackle discrimination
- *Children England (formerly National Council for Voluntary Child Care Organisations)* is the umbrella body for Children's charities in England; working with central, regional and local government to strengthen relationships and cross sector working for the benefit of children, young people and families
- *National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS)* is the only national independent voice of the voluntary youths sector in England; working to inform and influence public policy., support members, and raise the profile of the voluntary and community sector's work with young people.
- *Rural Youth Network (RYN)* is a national network of voluntary, community and statutory organisations which aim to make a difference on the issues that affect young people and those who work with them in rural areas through a framework of support, learning and exchange of good practice.

ⁱⁱ The Audit Commission report – '*Are we there yet? Improving governance and resource management in children's trusts*', published, 29 October 2008; available online: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports/NATIONAL-REPORT.asp?CategoryID=&ProdID=17AEBDA5-657E-4ef7-80BB-92214D4C04FF>

ⁱⁱⁱ The CSPCYP has published two policy papers focusing on the relationship between children's trusts and the community sector. The first, Talking Trusts, sets out straightforward recommendations encouraging children's trusts to do more to engage with voluntary and community sector partners, especially small organisations who are doing critical work with children or young people on the ground. The second, Community Involvement In Children's Trusts – Unlock Your Potential, offers guidance for community and voluntary organisations delivering services to children or young people on how to engage effectively with children's trusts. These are available online: http://www.communitymatters.org.uk/Projects/children_and_young_people/CSPCYP.htm