



Leading learning and skills

**Working Together West Yorkshire  
Mapping and Benchmarking**

**Prepared by Tokos Solutions, June 2005**

# Working Together West Yorkshire Mapping and Benchmarking

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Introduction and Context**

1. This project was commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council West Yorkshire (LSC West Yorkshire) as part of its programme of activities towards the implementation of the Working Together Strategy.
2. The Working Together Strategy is intended to help national, regional and local government in their relationships with VCS organisations. The aims of the strategy include:
  - Creating a step-change in its relations with VCS organisations to maximise the contribution they can make to the accessibility, range and quality of education and training provision for individuals, employers and the wider community;
  - Opening up access to LSC mainstream funding for more VCS organisations;
  - Establishing a principle of partnership and mutual benefits between VCS and the LSC;
  - Extending best practice throughout the LSC and the sector; and
  - Creating a framework of minimum expectations and useful ideas to be interpreted and implemented jointly by the LSC and the sector regionally and locally.
3. At a local level, i.e. West Yorkshire, LSC West Yorkshire recognises that in order for any strategy implementation activity to be effective, there needs to be a clearer understanding of the sector as a whole and how LSC West Yorkshire is currently working with the sector. This project is intended to contribute to this understanding, by identifying current relationships between the LSC West Yorkshire and the VCS, and obtaining a profile of VCS infrastructure, expertise and communication networks in West Yorkshire. In particular the project aims were:
  - To support the implementation of the Working Together Strategy at a West Yorkshire Level
  - To develop a clear picture of LSC West Yorkshire progress against principles outlined in strategy.
  - To develop a clear picture of the key elements of the VCS infrastructure across West Yorkshire.
  - To identify clear indicators and bench-marks against which future progress can be measured.
4. The project was undertaken in the context of a range of other activities and planning supported by the LSC to contribute to the Implementation of Working Together, including the development of a Regional and 5 Local Plans, and the development of BME networks at the local level. The consultants drew on this work to support the findings.
5. The project was undertaken in three strands:
  - Internal LSC West Yorkshire mapping
  - Mapping of West Yorkshire VCS infrastructure

- Bench-marking - i.e. the assessment of the current state of the LSC and VCS engagement that should form the basis for action.

The focus of the wider West Yorkshire mapping and bench-marking, was agreed as channels of communication and expertise within the sector.

### **LSC West Yorkshire Internal Mapping Findings**

6. This element of the project comprised the following:
  - Collation of a previous internal LSC West Yorkshire mapping exercise, which was undertaken in November 2004.
  - Analysis of the data and identification of gaps in the earlier mapping information.
  - Undertaking further mapping through the use of a questionnaire (which was developed using the Tool-kit guidance). This was forwarded to key contacts (and members of the internal Steering Group) in each section/department in the LSC.
  - Follow-up telephone and email contacts and clarification and a face-to-face interview with the main LSC West Yorkshire contact on Working Together.
7. The contract mapping identified that LSC West Yorkshire held direct contracts worth over £10m through 5 funding streams (Neighbourhood Learning Fund, Adult and Community Learning, Work Based learning, European Social funding via Co-financing and FE funding). The contracts are primarily focused on VCS organisations supporting the LSC objectives through engagement and delivery activity to specific groups of learners (and in some instances non-learners) – i.e. the VCS as a provider.
8. Contracts are held with a range of organisations including local infrastructure organisation, local training provider organisations, local voluntary organisations providing support to specific groups, and national voluntary organisations with local offices.
9. The mapping and follow on data collection did not provide contract details of indirect contracts with VCS organisations that have been sub-contracted through non-VCS organisations, but have a focus on working specifically through and for VCS organisations. These include a substantial amount of funding through Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC) funding, that includes support for the sector to capacity build them to engage and provide learning to disadvantaged groups; Local Intervention and Development funding, that has supported research and development activity and testing innovative delivery through the sector; Co-financing resources that the sector has received through sub-contracts in theme chests or flagship projects; and Skills for Life, Bite Size and e2e programmes. Further work is required to obtain an accurate picture of working relationships and funding supporting the VCS in its role as a provider and supporting LSC objectives.
10. The LSC West Yorkshire internal survey highlighted working relationships with a number and a wide range of VCS organisations, covering the VCS as a provider, employer, as a source of expertise and a channel of communications.

11. Different Directorates and teams within Directorates had differing relationships with the sector:
- The Development team's primary linkages with the sector are as a source of intelligence and expertise and a channel of communications (each element accounting for 40% of the total work). The team works with 57 organisations, the large majority of these involved in education (65%).
  - The Skill Development team indicates that they have worked with 112 VCS organisations, across the size spectrum, supporting them through Investors in People. Additional work that the directorate has overseen includes the VCS skills brokerage. This directorate only works with the sector as employers, and the work contributes to 20% of the LSC employer engagement targets.
  - The main linkages between the Programmes Directorate and the VCS are through mainstream funding stream. In 2004-5 direct contracts were in place with 10 VCS organisations as follows: 7 organisations for WBL; 2 for FE; 1 for ACL. In addition to the direct contracts, indirect contracts are held with many VCS organisations through a third party, for Programmes managed activities, including FE college franchising with 11 organisations, WBL sub-contracting on Entry to Employment with 18 organisations, ACL commissioning with 33 organisations (including 4 BME organisations), and NLDC commissioning with 35 organisations (including 6 BME).
  - The Quality Improvement directorate indicate that they work with range of organisations involving them in an advisory capacity (70% of this section's work) in the work they are undertaking on equality and diversity issues and as a channel of communications for the StAR activities (accounting for 80% of this section's work with the sector). This Directorate has also produced a database of VCS organisations.
  - The Strategy and Resources directorate appears to have a more limited relationship with the sector, with an on-going relationship with only one organisation, the Regional Forum, which provides expertise at the ESF(European Social Fund) research Planning Group.
12. The research indicates that the most effective mechanisms for communications with the VCS appear to be LSC workshops and seminars, VCS websites, letter/mailshots via VCS networks or consortia, and joint LSC/VCS steering groups and working groups.
13. There is a range of activity taking place to support the VCS in their roles as an employer and provider, in the form of workforce development and skills support, and capacity building activities, using LSC resources. These include:
- Delivery of training to address priority sector needs of: information technology, management and leadership, equality and diversity, managing effective relationships and training for trainers
  - Grant provision to enable organisations to purchase training for staff meeting specific organisational needs
  - PQASSO training for 75 organisations
  - Training the trainer and Assessor training

- Investor in People support.
  - Working Together - BME capacity building fund
  - Capital investment in provider organisations to support engagement of new learners and enable organisations to raise their delivery standards and environment through NLDC
  - Workshops and briefings to enable sector organisations to understand the Common Inspection framework, ALI inspection and quality requirements of the LSC
14. However, the research identified that there are weaknesses that need to be addressed in LSC West Yorkshire's approach to working with the VCS, including:
- There is a lack of clear management information held across the organisation on the types of groups or organisations that LSC West Yorkshire is engaging with locally, in terms of the categories /activity of the VCS organisations. This is the case despite the development of the database by the Quality Directorate. Further work is clearly required on this database and management information systems, as part of the work currently taking place in LSC West Yorkshire to develop a single database of contacts/contracts for the organisation.
  - There is also limited (and inaccurate) management information on the proportion of LSC funding going to VCS organisations. There is a need to obtain a clear picture of funding going to the VCS through in-direct contracting, in addition to direct contracting.
  - Each directorate appears to have their own approach to working with the sector, with little coordination or communications between them. This could lead to some duplication of effort and confusion within the sector. Different directorates need to be clear about activities involving the sector and how they are to be taken forward and through what channels within the sector, so that relevant linkages can be made and resources invested be used most constructively.
  - More consideration is required with regard to the barriers preventing effective implementation of some elements of the Working Together Strategy, in particular issues such as availability of funding, and the implications of these in relation to some of the aims of the Strategy. If LSC West Yorkshire operationally is unable to realistically fulfil some of the aims, this must be made clear, to all those involved, and plans and activities should be based on what can be done within these constraints, rather than raising expectations that cannot be met.

#### **Mapping of VCS Infrastructure**

15. This strand of the project comprised:
- Desk-based research on Infrastructure Support Organisations (ISOs) across the sub-region including both local and sub-regional representative bodies and networks; and
  - Liaising with lead organisations working on the development of local Working Together Implementation Plans to collate information on infrastructure collected through the drafting and development of these plans.

This strand also took into account and draws heavily on work that was undertaken by West Yorkshire Local Development Agencies (WYLDA), to support the development of an infrastructure consortium and infrastructure investment plan for West Yorkshire under ChangeUp. This work resulted in the report entitled “Meeting the Infrastructure Needs of the Community and Voluntary Sector in West Yorkshire”.

16. This mapping demonstrated the diversity of the sector and the different make-up of the sector and infrastructure in each District.
17. At the Sub-Regional level the VCS Infrastructure includes the following organisations and networks:
  - West Yorkshire Local Development Agencies (WYLDA)
  - West Yorkshire Learning Consortium
  - West Yorkshire Community Accounting Service
  - Community Work Training Company
  - Charities Information Bureau
  - The Fairplay Partnership
  - Working Together West Yorkshire Steering Group for Working Together and BME Capacity Building.
  - Asian Trade Links
  - QED-UK
  - CEMVO
  - West Yorkshire Grants
  - Pay and Employment Rights Service
18. The research identified the following elements as weaknesses in the infrastructure:
  - Lack of infrastructure and key players/resources to take a strategic role developing the sector, particularly for organisations involved in learning, in Calderdale.
  - There is a limited picture of involvement with the LSC from the VCS perspective, except for in Calderdale, where they included this element as part of the Implementation Plan.
  - Several organisations hold their own database of sector organisations. However, they are focused on specific geographies, themes, sub-sectors, etc, and none cover the whole of the sub-region and all the roles of the sector, as outlined in the Working Together Strategy.
  - As a result of a lack of coordination of collection of such information at a higher strategic level, there are difficulties of getting a clear picture of the sector characteristics.

### **Benchmarking**

19. This strand of the project comprised the following activity:
  - Survey of VCS infrastructure organisations and cascading the survey through their e-groups (full questionnaire at Annex B).

- Follow-up telephone and /or face-to-face interviews with ISOs and sub-regional organisations.
  - The identification of good practice case studies.
20. 35 organisations completed the questionnaire, which was sent to 19 organisations and circulated through 8 of these organisations' e-groups. In addition 10 representatives of VCS organisations agreed to be interviewed at short notice to provide additional information and feedback
21. Respondents to the survey were primarily local community or voluntary organisations and/ or local charities, in addition nearly a third were ISOs. The organisations had a wide range of purposes including grant-making charities, support for specific groups (including local residents, those with autism, elderly, offenders, homeless, abused women, disabled, parents, children and young people), advice organisations, regeneration companies, learning support organisations and infrastructure support. There is no uniform picture of the organisations and response to the survey, although not a large sample size, clearly demonstrates the diversity of the sector.
22. Key points regarding the organisations surveyed include:
- They undertook work outside their own offices, through outreach, and bases in schools, community centres, churches, learning centres and offices of other groups.
  - The public sector provides substantial funds to a large proportion of organisations to undertake their work, however, many organisations also have a relatively diverse funding base to support their work.
  - 91% of respondents had paid workers, totalling 672 staff (an average of 21 staff in each organisation); and 69% of organisations had regular volunteers, totalling 517 (an average of 22 per organisation that had volunteers).
  - All cited barriers to training. The majority (91%) cited time to undertake training and lack of funding to support training as providing the biggest barriers to workforce development.
  - It is evident that at a local and sub-regional level the expertise available includes: Strategic skills, Community development, Regeneration management and housing, and specialisms in health, youth work and social care.
23. The organisations cited membership of the following sub-regional networks and forums:
- WYLDA
  - West Yorkshire Learning Consortium
  - LSC West Yorkshire Working Together Steering Group
  - Charities Information Bureau
  - LSC Adult Learners Forum
  - WYCAS
  - NIMHE/NIACE regional network

24. The respondents to the survey cited membership of one or more of the following local networks and forums:
- Local learning partnership (and their sub-groups)
  - Local Strategic Partnerships and their linked partnerships
  - Community Empowerment Networks
  - Local Connexions Management Committees
  - Local infrastructure consortia
  - Local community and regeneration partnerships
  - Local learning forums
25. Respondents also used one or more of the following resources for information about developments and activities:
- CIB bulletins, which were very highly recommended
  - Local CVS newsletters/bulletins and events
  - Learning partnership emails
  - E-groups including YHRFVConet, LearningNet and SEDnet
  - YH Regional Forum web-site
  - YH European Office info-notes
  - Government departments web-sites (including Home Office)
  - Council websites
  - NACVS newsletters
  - CWTC newsletters
26. A significant number had had involvement with the LSC (49%). They mainly cited applying for funding (34% of total respondees), consultations (29%) and sub-contracting (26%) as the type of involvement. At the same time just over half did not have any involvement with the LSC.
27. Respondents and interviewees provided a wide range of comments with regard to the relationship between the LSC and the VCS. The following points summarise the key views from the representative of the VCS organisations:
- Frustration regarding the relationship between VCS organisations (particularly provider organisations) and the LSC particularly focused on: a perception of a risk-averse culture within the LSC; short-term contracting periods; delayed contracting (making timescales difficult to manage); clarity regarding outputs.
  - LSC appear to lack understanding that hard to reach groups that the VCS work with are also the most expensive to engage. Sustainable and realistic funding is required if this work is going to have any long-term benefits.
  - A model of contracting through intermediary organisations is generally supported if the difficulties in the contracting process can be sorted out.
  - LSC documentation is well presented and processes are clear and documents easy to read.
  - Difficulties around general understanding by the LSC of VCS capacity issues.
  - Cultural differences between the LSC and the VCS.

28. On the whole, those involved in either the survey or the interviews believed that with regard to channels for communication between the LSC and the VCS, these already existed through local Learning Forums, via Learning Partnerships, however, they raised issues about Learning Forum representatives needing support if this route for communication is to be formalised or continued.
29. The rationale for establishing the WYLC was to represent the views of the sector at sub-regional level to the LSC, however, clarity around WYLC's role was lacking.
30. The research identified the view that there is a need to work with current structures and recognise key partners in the community which are used by other public sector partners. Given the issues of capacity in the sector, it is important that the LSC works with the key players in both the public sector and VCS to avoid duplication of effort, for example, in relation to consultation/ surveys and also recognises where it should contribute in financial /resource terms for the expertise it uses in the sector.
31. There is a perception that it is always "the usual suspects" who attend partnership meetings etc and that the LSC does not get a representative enough view. This, however, may be a result of only a few organisations and individuals that have the capacity and skills to interact at strategic level with public sector funders and planners.
32. There is evidence that much research and work has been done around the development of the sector or issue relating to the sector, but little information is apparently disseminated about this work by the sector itself. Details about this work needs to be more readily available for other VCS organisations and public sector organisations. Appropriate tools such as the popular and well-used web-sites, e-mail groups and newsletters could be utilised much more effectively to channel briefings about these activities.

### **Case Studies**

33. As part of the mapping and bench-marking discussions and surveys four examples of good working practice stood out and these were outlined in the full report.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

34. In evaluating the findings of this report and looking at conclusions, in particular in relation to channels for communication and the role of the VCS as a provider of expertise, the Consultants have endeavoured to take an impartial approach i.e.:
  - the VCS is one of a number of sectors with whom the LSC works and VCS organisations need to recognise that in many respects they are on a 'level playing field'

- the LSC needs to recognise that the VCS may have particular characteristics and to clarify their impact in terms, particularly in terms of culture (e.g. flexible ways of working, high proportion of unpaid workers) and capacity to interact at a strategic level.

35. A structure for communication between the LSC and VCS already exists in West Yorkshire which has developed along 'straight-line' principles:



Locally, much of LSC West Yorkshire's engagement is undertaken via the Learning Partnerships, which receive funding from the LSC to support this activity. The VCS has, for its part, sought to establish Learning Forums in each district with links to both the Learning Partnerships and other local networks such as the Community Empowerment teams. The Learning Forums link into West Yorkshire Learning Consortium, which was established by the sector specifically to interface with WYLSC and which comprises a wide membership of local ISO organisations and sub-regional training providers.

36. With the appropriate support and recognition, the above structure has the potential to work well both as a channel of communication between the LSC and VCS and as a means of accessing the considerable expertise within the sector. However a number of issues appear to have so far prevented this from occurring, including:
- The WY Learning Consortium as the primary vehicle for strategic working between the LSC and VCS has suffered from an increasingly operational focus and confusion about its remit, apparently as a result of its contracted role as sector broker.
  - VCS organisations, even those operating strategically at local level, often have problems with capacity and being able to access the necessary strategic skills to interface with public sector professionals, particularly where this involves making multiple linkages between the various agencies, initiatives and funding streams operating at local, sub-regional and regional level. Mechanisms for 'feeding back' to the grass-roots also need to be improved.
  - Learning Forums in some districts have suffered from a lack of funding and support affecting their ability to represent the sector locally and feedback centrally.
  - LSC West Yorkshire has not found it easy to determine the most representative channels for communication within the sector from a multitude of local and sub-regional organisations.
  - This last point is however exacerbated by poor internal co-ordination by LSC West Yorkshire in working with the sector, resulting in a lack of coherent internal management information and ad hoc ways of working with the sector leading in some cases to duplication.
37. This report has highlighted the strengths and developments of current VCS infrastructure and strategic networks in West Yorkshire. However, a more detailed 'de-jargonised' mapping, including specialist networks, would be helpful, to be disseminated to partners on the WT Steering Group.

38. LSC West Yorkshire is clearly keen to engage in the widest possible sense with the VCS and there are structures in place to make this achievable, but co-ordination needs to be explored, particularly in relation to other sources of funding and the parallel activities being undertaken through ChangeUp and Investment Planning.
39. Whilst we recommend consideration is given to 'new' ways of working, it might be helpful to recognise the effectiveness of current local arrangements, supported by a greater level of strategic working at sub-regional level.
40. Any model is likely to involve a high proportion of infrastructure organisations as channels of communication; however, in keeping with the learning agenda consideration will also need to be given to the involvement of 'specialist' expertise e.g. sub-regional training providers, BME networks etc.
41. It is recommended that a joint VCS/LSC structure should include the following base requirements:
- Clear strategic terms of reference for the primary joint LSC/VCS group, with a commitment from all involved, including the LSC to maintain representation at a senior level.
  - Formalised mechanisms for linkages with work taking place elsewhere either locally, sub-regionally or regionally e.g. a standing item for VCS/LSC representative to report/explain information gained in other arenas; production of regular de-jargonised joint 'briefing' to be widely circulated to all partners.
  - Development of a mechanism whereby the structures/VCS networks with whom the LSC works are periodically 'benchmarked' for representativeness, i.e. in terms of dissemination of information, particularly 'hard to reach' and grass-roots groups etc. This is particularly important where the LSC allocates resources to support these structures.
  - A similar system of co-ordinated management information to be developed by the LSC regarding its working arrangements with the sector, including the nomination of a clear lead officer, which is known throughout the organisation; and a single database of contacts and communications with organisations in the sector. In particular, the LSC needs to take on board the need for joined-up working with other public sector departments / organisations to add value and prevent duplication of effort / overloading the sector with consultative work.
  - It is recommended that, aligned to its workforce development agenda, the LSC allocate specific resources to the development of strategic and partnership skills within the sector, starting with the primary strategic group. Any skills development needs to take into account the existing expertise of representatives.
42. Consideration needs to be given to a robust system of local engagement by and with the VCS. The LSC already provides support to local Learning Partnerships. Consideration needs to be given as to whether it is appropriate for the LSC to offer further support to local VCS structures.

Furthermore, resources are being sought by key sector organisations from other sources such as ChangeUp and Investment Planning and it is unclear to what extent this need is already covered in these bids. It is likely to be covered to some degree and it may be more appropriate for the sector to consider activities to improve coordination to “join-up” these different strands to make the most of resources being allocated to the key organisations for various development activities.

43. The principles of Working Together need to be promoted more effectively internally within the LSC, to ensure that they become embedded in all activities with the sector, rather than potentially a cosmetic approach simply to “tick the boxes”.
44. The attachment / secondment scheme(s) between LSC and VCS should be rolled out further to increase understanding on both sides of cultural differences / working constraints.
45. Good practice / ways of working between the LSC and VCS both within West Yorkshire and in other areas e.g. South Yorkshire (see recommendation within Regional Plan) need to be explored.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 This project was commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council West Yorkshire (LSC West Yorkshire) as part of its programme of activities towards the implementation of the Working Together Strategy.
- 1.2 The project aims were to:
- Support the implementation of the Working Together Strategy at a West Yorkshire Level
  - Develop a clear picture of LSC West Yorkshire progress against principles outlined in strategy.
  - Develop a clear picture of the key elements of the VCS infrastructure across West Yorkshire.
  - Identify clear indicators and bench-marks against which future progress can be measured.
- 1.3 The project objectives were to:
1. Collate mapping undertaken to date by the LSC West Yorkshire internally and identify gaps in information.
  2. Undertake further mapping internally in the LSC West Yorkshire as required.
  3. Collate the mapping of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) infrastructure across West Yorkshire by liaising with Learning Partnership led activities at local level.
  4. Undertake bench-marking using method outlined in the working together tool-kit.
  5. Ensure that all interested parties are kept informed of developments in the project and have an opportunity to contribute.
- 1.4 This project was one of series of projects that have been taking place concurrently and were commissioned by the LSC West Yorkshire, to support the implementation of the Working Together strategy including:
- A regional Implementation Plan supported by the Regional Forum and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) offices in West Yorkshire, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and Humberside.
  - Local District Implementation Plans in West Yorkshire, taken forward through the Learning Partnership VCS sub-groups and Learning Forums.
  - Local District Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) network development.
- 1.5 Where relevant this report draws on the work undertaken in this parallel activity, and in particular draws together information from the District Implementation Plans as part of the development of a map of the VCS infrastructure in the sub-region.

## **CONTEXT**

- 1.6 There are many different types of community-based or voluntary organisations – from large nationals to very small community groups, from those engaged in training and learning to those undertaking environmental projects or providing accommodation for homeless people. Collectively the LSC recognises the significance of all these groups, which together make up the Voluntary and Community Sector as:
- A major group of employers of workers both paid and unpaid (i.e. including volunteers)
  - Including a large number of providers of education and training services
  - A source of expertise and communication about how to plan and improve services.
- 1.7 The LSC recognises that it needs to work proactively, effectively and productively with organisations in the VCS if it is to increase numbers of those participating in learning and achieve a better skilled workforce. “Working Together” is the national strategy that the LSC has produced to achieve this. The strategy is intended to help national, regional and local government in their relationships with VCS organisations. The aims of the strategy include:
- Creating a step-change in its relations with VCS organisations to maximise the contribution they can make to the accessibility, range and quality of education and training provision for individuals, employers and the wider community;
  - Opening up access to LSC mainstream funding for more VCS organisations;
  - Establishing a principle of partnership and mutual benefits between VCS and the LSC;
  - Extending best practice throughout the LSC and the sector; and
  - Creating a framework of minimum expectations and useful ideas to be interpreted and implemented jointly by the LSC and the sector regionally and locally.
- 1.8 The strategy outlines specific actions that the LSC will undertake at national, regional and local levels.
- 1.9 The strategy is supported by a toolkit, “Working Together in Practice”, identifying good practice across a range of themes and activities, including benchmarking.
- 1.10 At a local level, i.e. West Yorkshire, LSC West Yorkshire recognises that in order for any strategy implementation activity to be effective, there needs to be a clearer understanding of the sector as a whole and how LSC West Yorkshire is currently working with the sector. This project is intended to contribute to this understanding, by identifying current relationships between the LSC West Yorkshire and the VCS, and obtaining a profile of VCS infrastructure, expertise and communication networks in West Yorkshire.

## **PROJECT METHODOLOGY**

- 1.11 The project has been undertaken in three strands:
- Internal LSC West Yorkshire mapping
  - Mapping of West Yorkshire VCS infrastructure
  - Bench-marking - i.e. the assessment of the current state of the LSC and VCS engagement that should form the basis for action.
- 1.12 It was agreed that the focus of the wider West Yorkshire mapping and bench-marking, would be channels of communication and expertise within the sector.
- 1.13 As part of the project good practice examples would be sought and highlighted.

## **REPORT STRUCTURE**

- 1.14 The report follows the methodology and goes into detail on the following for each strand:
- Data collection approach
  - Findings from the data
  - Gaps and issues
- Section 4 also includes good practice.
- 1.15 The report then summarises the overall findings with the following:
- Baselines, i.e. table of progress to date against actions in Working Together strategy
  - West Yorkshire infrastructure map, specifying communication channels, and key sources of expertise.
  - Conclusions and issues for consideration.
- 1.16 The report annexes include the questionnaires used as part of the data collection and a list of the sources used in the report.

## 2. LSC WEST YORKSHIRE INTERNAL MAPPING

### DATA COLLECTION APPROACH

2.1 This element of the project comprised the following:

- Collation of a previous internal LSC West Yorkshire mapping exercise, which was undertaken in November 2004.
- Analysis of the data and identification of gaps in the earlier mapping information.
- Undertaking further mapping through the use of a questionnaire. This was forwarded to key contacts (and members of the internal Steering Group) in each section/department in the LSC.
- Follow-up telephone and email contacts and clarification and a face-to-face interview with the main LSC West Yorkshire contact on Working Together.

A focus group discussion was also planned with the internal LSC West Yorkshire steering group members, however, the meeting during which it was due to take place was cancelled and timescales did not allow for re-scheduling it.

2.2 The main focus of this strand of work was to assess the level of contact with VCS organisations across the organisation, both in terms of numbers of organisations engaged with, and type and nature of engagement.

### FINDINGS FROM THE DATA

2.3 The mapping that took place in November 2004 comprised the following:

- The details of the contracts that the LSC West Yorkshire held directly with voluntary and community organisations; and
- Details of specific activities being undertaken against the action plan included in the Working Together document.

2.4 The contract mapping identified that LSC West Yorkshire held direct contracts worth £10, 301,481 with 24 organisations.

2.5 The funding break-down was as follows:

**Table 1: LSC Contracts with VCS organisations by Funding**

<b>Funding/Programme</b>	<b>Contract Totals (£)</b>
Neighbourhood Learning Fund	140,000
Adult and Community Learning	193,565
Work Based Learning	5,671,807
European Social Fund (via Co-financing)	3,662,662
FE funding	633,447
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,301,481</b>

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- 2.6 The organisations with contracts include local infrastructure organisations such as Wakefield Voluntary Action; local training provider organisations such as Russell Street Project; local voluntary organisations providing support to specific groups such as SACAR; and national voluntary organisations, with local offices such as NACRO and The Prince's Trust.
- 2.7 The list of 24 organisations includes 7 organisations, with Work Based Learning contracts, totalling £3932716, that are employer led organisations or training companies (albeit limited by guarantee) that would not normally be considered as being part of the VCS, thus indicating that there may be an issue with the definition of what is a VCS organisation.
- 2.8 The list does not include contract details of indirect contracts with VCS organisations that have been sub-contracted through non-VCS organisations, but have a focus on working specifically through and for VCS organisations. These include a substantial amount of funding through Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC) funding, that includes support for the sector to capacity build them to engage and provide learning to disadvantaged groups; and Local Intervention and Development funding, that has supported research and development activity and testing innovative delivery through the sector. Both types of funding have in most instances been sub-contracted via the Learning Partnerships, to a range of voluntary sector organisations.
- 2.9 Further funding that has supported VCS delivery has been provided through co-financing resources which have been contracted to mainstream organisations as theme chests or flagships, but has then been sub-contracted to VCS organisations for specific specialisms and access to specific learner groups.
- 2.10 Furthermore, VCS organisations have been in receipt of resources to support delivery for Skills for Life and programmes such as Bite Size and e2e, however, this has not been recorded in this earlier mapping work related to contracts. More work clearly needs to be undertaken to map this in-direct contracting with the VCS, to identify the extent of LSC support and delivery through LSC resources.
- 2.11 During 2004-5, funding was made available, by LSC head office, to support capacity building amongst BME VCS organisations, how this funding was used, has not been included in the details on contracting.
- 2.12 The internal mapping work identified the extent of progress made by LSC West Yorkshire against specific actions to be undertaken at the local level, and the role of staff in the individual directorate. The information also provides details about specific relationships with the VCS organisations. The following summarises the key points in the mapping.

- 2.13 In addition to those outlined above in 2.6, work to provide learning opportunities, through sub-contracting routes, is taking place with a number of VCS organisations including the following:
- Cathedral Centre, Bradford
  - Mencap
  - Project Challenge
- 2.14 The Cathedral Centre is involved in provision through FE funding and also holds a contract in Bradford for Adult and Community Learning provision, acting as an “umbrella” body sub-contracting provision to a wide range of VCS organisations across the city. This role is undertaken by the LEA in other LAD areas.
- 2.15 A number of colleges supported by the LSC are in franchise relationships with VCS organisations. The details of these arrangements need to be included to reflect the true nature of support for the learning provision element of the strategy (although it is recognised that these relationships and the sub-contracting arrangements are a source of tension in some cases).
- 2.16 A significant part of the Bite Size initiative budget was allocated to the VCS via 15 providers. These included ethnic minority groups, community groups and women’s groups from across West Yorkshire. The LSC recognise that these organisations are attracting a high number of non-learners and have offered advice on further learning opportunities available to them.
- 2.17 Under work-based learning and the role of the sector as an employer, some employer placements are with the voluntary sector, however further research is required to quantify the extent of this, because details of the placements are with the learning providers.
- 2.18 The sector has also contributed expertise and intelligence in the work of the LSC through the development of the e2e programme, and its role as a sub-contractor in this programme.
- 2.19 The earlier mapping information focused on the direct contracts with the VCS organisations and the VCS as a provider, and some support for the VCS as an employer. It did not, however, take into account the role of the sector as a channel for communication, nor as a source of expertise (other than through the provider role).
- 2.20 The survey of LSC key staff took into account these gaps in information and also attempted to obtain an up-to-date picture of the relationships individual departments/ sections may have with different VCS organisations. The survey took on board the proposals for this bench-marking as identified and outlined in the “Working Together in Practice” Tool Kit. It specifically asked questions of the experience and engagement of each department /section that included the following:
- Numbers of VCS organisations worked with over the last 12 months
  - Types of organisations worked with

- Learner engagement numbers and route
- Type of funding supporting sector
- Role of sector in engagement with specific department
- Channels of communication
- Actions to support workforce development and capacity building
- Strategic linkages with sector organisations on steering groups and partnerships
- Use of expertise within the sector

(The full questionnaire is included in Annex A)

- 2.21 The survey resulted in responses from the following Officers:
- Ebrahim Dockrat, Development
  - Anne Craven, Quality Improvement
  - Shafqat Rahim, Quality Improvement
  - Alan Rushworth, Information, Strategy and Resources
  - Steve Crowther, Research, Strategy and Resources
  - Lynne Wharton & Fiona McManaman, Skills Development
  - Keith Lumb, Programmes
- 2.22 The Development (comprising Skills Development and Development teams), Programmes and Quality Directorates outline working relationships with a number and a wide range of VCS organisations, covering the VCS as a provider, employer, as a source of expertise and a channel of communications.
- 2.23 The Development team's primary linkages with the sector are as a source of intelligence and expertise and a channel of communications (each element accounting for 40% of the total work). The team works with 57 organisations, the large majority of these involved in education (65%). The team indicates that work with the sector contributes 30% of LSC employer engagement targets, 30% of widening participation targets, 20% of neighbourhood renewal and 10% of both level 2 and basic skills targets.
- 2.24 The Skill Development team indicates that they have worked with 112 VCS organisations, across the size spectrum, supporting them through Investors in People. Additional work that the directorate has overseen includes the VCS skills brokerage, for which they have not been able to specify the numbers of organisations supported, since the indicator recorded was not organisations supported, but number of learners, which totalled 687 learners. This directorate only works with the sector as employers, and the work contributes to 20% of the LSC employer engagement targets.
- 2.25 The main linkages between the Programmes Directorate and the VCS are through mainstream funding streams: Further Education (FE), Work-Based Learning (WBL), Adult and Community Learning (ACL) and Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC). In 2004-5 direct contracts were in place with 10 VCS organisations as follows:
- 7 organisations for WBL
  - 2 for FE
  - 1 for ACL

- 2.26 In addition to the direct contracts, indirect contracts are held with many VCS organisations through a third party, for Programmes managed activities, as follows:
- FE college franchising 11
  - WBL sub-contracting on Entry to Employment 18
  - ACL commissioning 33 (including 4 BME organisations)
  - NLDC commissioning 35 (including 6 BME)
- 2.27 The proportion of Programmes Directorate budgets to go to VCS organisations in direct contracting is as follows:  
FE – 3%  
WBL – 14%  
ACL – 4%  
NLDC – 11%  
Further work is required to identify the proportions to include indirect contracting.
- 2.28 The Quality Improvement directorate indicate that they work with range of organisations involving them in an advisory capacity (70% of this section's work) in the work they are undertaking on equality and diversity issues and as a channel of communications for the StAR activities (accounting for 80% of this section's work with the sector).
- 2.29 The Quality directorate has produced a database of VCS organisations, although the information held is not in a format that is either user-friendly or extensively detailed. It also appears to be used only within the directorate, rather than the LSC West Yorkshire as a whole.
- 2.30 The Strategy and Resources directorate appears to have a more limited relationship with the sector, with an on-going relationship with only one organisation, the Regional Forum, which provides expertise at the ESF research Planning Group.
- 2.31 The most effective mechanisms for communications with the VCS used by respondents as a whole, appear to be LSC workshops and seminars, VCS websites, letter/mailshots via VCS networks or consortia, and joint LSC/VCS steering groups and working groups. Other methods used include LSC website and letter/mailshots to individual organisations, however, the majority of respondents, did not know how effective these methods were.
- 2.32 The actions undertaken to support the workforce development activity and skills development within the VCS, primarily through the Skills Development directorate, include:
- VCS broker support through an allocation of significant ESF resources
  - Delivery of training to address priority sector needs of: information technology, management and leadership, equality and diversity, managing effective relationships and training for trainers

- Grant provision to enable organisations to purchase training for staff meeting specific organisational needs
  - TNA support and sign-posting to provision.
  - PQASSO training for 75 organisations
  - Training the trainer
  - Assessor training
  - Investor in People support.
  - Management Skills Brokerage, which is open to the VCS
  - Train to gain, which is open to the VCS.
  - Research into disadvantaged groups to better understand existing abilities, and skills needs, and how to engage them in learning.
- 2.33 The actions undertaken to support capacity building of the sector, in addition to those outlined in 2.8, include:
- Working Together - BME capacity building fund (although no details are provided on this)
  - Workshops and briefings to enable sector organisations to understand the Common Inspection framework, ALI inspection and quality requirements of the LSC
  - £1million of co-financing resources have been ring-fenced to support the Working Together implementation plans and specific capacity building.
- 2.34 Sector expertise is used in a number of steering group and partnerships including the following:
- StAR steering and advisory groups
  - ESF research planning group
  - Equality and Diversity Advisory group
  - West Yorkshire Investment Planning Skills Theme Group
  - Co-financing Steering group
  - Working Together Steering group.
- 2.35 The VCS organisations listed by respondents, as a whole, as providing their expertise to support LSC-led work include:
- CIB
  - WYLC
  - Local CVSs
  - Local BME groups
  - CEMVO
  - Regional Forum
  - Kala Sangam
  - Chinese College of Physical Culture
  - Russell Street Project
  - Calderdale Voice
  - Calderdale Voluntary Action
  - TAGLAB
  - Leeds Voice
  - VOX
  - Voluntary Action Wakefield

- 2.36 Feedback comments provided to the LSC by VCS organisations include:
- VCS are engaged in the StAR process but not in a truly representative way.
  - LSC are keen to consult VCS but do not involve them in decision-making process.
- 2.37 The LSC West Yorkshire respondents on this survey believe that the following challenges need to be addressed to support the implementation of Working Together:
- LSC Staff need a better understanding of the definition of the VCS and BME led organisations.
  - To support staff back-filling and similar initiatives to enable VCS staff to participate in learning and skills development activities.
  - To empower the VCS to be involved in decision-making process of the implementation of Working Together.
  - For VCS provider organisations to understand the constraints that the LSC is under in specific relation to funding delivery of learning and qualifications. There is a mis-conception about the type of qualifications that can be supported for the sector beyond the initial engagement of learners.
  - There is a need for the sector to look beyond its sectoral boundaries to achieve excellence, just as businesses look outside their own organisations and bring in expertise from outside to enable further development and growth.
  - There is a focus of sector on attracting funds, rather than influencing what and how LSC might fund, therefore involvement in activities such as planning is likely to be limited.
  - Working with the sector is time consuming, because of diversity and the fact that they do not have champions that are needed to establish effective communications. Furthermore, the VCS agenda is different to LSC and tends to be more operational than strategic, therefore, return on investment made in working with the sector is limited, whilst LSC have limited (and diminishing) resources to develop the relationships, as a result this activity is not high on many LSC staff agenda.
  - Seconded from VCS to LSC.
  - The need to understand barriers related to availability of funding and the needs of LSC West Yorkshire for further provision. During 2003-04 and 2004-05 LSC West Yorkshire mainstream budgets have been over-spent in the majority of areas, which has meant that entering into contracting arrangements with new providers (from a range of sectors including the VCS) has been difficult, and by necessity has been restricted to filling identified gaps in provision. Negotiations are currently taking place with one VCS organisation regarding new provision through mainstream funds.

## **GAPS AND ISSUES**

- 2.38 The survey results as a whole indicate that there is a lack of clear management information held across the organisation on the types of groups or organisations that LSC West Yorkshire is engaging with locally, in terms of the categories /activity of the VCS organisations. This is the case despite the development of the database by the Quality Directorate.

Further work is clearly required on this database and management information systems, as part of the work currently taking place in LSC West Yorkshire to develop a single database of contacts/contracts for the organisation.

- 2.39 Furthermore, there is also limited (and inaccurate) management information on the proportion of LSC funding going to VCS organisations. There is a need to obtain a clear picture of funding going to the VCS through in-direct contracting, in addition to direct contracting.
- 2.40 Only two of the respondents to the survey were able to specify how many organisations they were working with that are BME led organisations.
- 2.41 Each directorate appears to have their own approach to working with the sector, with little coordination or communications between them. This could lead to some duplication of effort and confusion within the sector. Different directorates need to be clear about activities involving the sector and how they are to be taken forward and through what channels within the sector, so that relevant linkages can be made and resources invested be used most constructively. This could be taken forward through the Working Together Internal Steering Group. However, communications from this work must be cascaded through to other officers that are not on the steering group, but may be involved with the sector.
- 2.42 There is concern that those that do not sit on the Internal Steering Group may not be aware of the Working Together principles and activities. It is not clear how other officers are informed of developments and certainly it is a concern that only one respondent was able to identify the key contact on Working Together in LSC West Yorkshire.
- 2.43 More consideration is required with regard to the barriers preventing effective implementation of some elements of the Working Together Strategy, in particular issues such as availability of funding, and the implications of these in relation to some of the aims of the Strategy. If LSC West Yorkshire operationally is unable to realistically fulfil some of the aims, this must be made clear, to all those involved, and plans and activities should be based on what can be done within these constraints, rather than raising expectations that cannot be met.

### 3. MAPPING OF VCS INFRASTRUCTURE ACROSS WEST YORKSHIRE

#### DATA COLLECTION APPROACH

- 3.1 This strand of the project comprised:
- Desk-based research on Infrastructure Support Organisations (ISOs) across the sub-region including both local and sub-regional representative bodies and networks; and
  - Liaising with lead organisations working on the development of local Working Together Implementation Plans to collate information on infrastructure collected through the drafting and development of these plans.
- 3.2 This strand also took into account and draws heavily on work that was undertaken during the summer of 2004 and reported on in September 2004 by West Yorkshire Local Development Agencies (WYLDA), to support the development of an infrastructure consortium and infrastructure investment plan for West Yorkshire under ChangeUp. This work resulted in the report entitled “Meeting the Infrastructure Needs of the Community and Voluntary Sector in West Yorkshire”. This report did not take into account Bradford District, since a separate report into the District’s infrastructure had been commissioned.
- 3.3 The main focus of this strand was to develop a picture of the make-up of the sector and the key organisations working in it at a district and sub-regional level.

#### FINDINGS FROM THE DATA

- 3.4 The WYLDA report indicates that “there is a difficulty in getting a coherent picture of the size, services, coverage and economic contribution of the sector in West Yorkshire”, primarily because data is collected differently and by separated bodies. The report states that “Leeds has a huge VCS (up to 5000 organisations)” however, in Calderdale and Wakefield the sector is under-developed.
- 3.5 It is useful to summarise the key elements of each District’s sector and infrastructure (excluding Bradford), as stated in the WYLDA report:

##### **Calderdale**

- Sector is relatively under-developed compared to rest of West Yorkshire
- At least 975 voluntary and community groups.
- Sector struggled because of lack of funding in recent years [not eligible for Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and European Objective 2 and Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) came to an end] – tend to be reliant on Local Authority funding.
- 3000 paid part-time/ full-time staff work in the sector (including national organisations).

- Geographically diverse communities resulting in limited sharing of good practice and support, and network creation by main ISOs proving very difficult.
- Limited infrastructure support, but generally high quality.
- Infrastructure comprises mainly local regeneration partnerships that were set up to deliver area based regeneration initiatives such as SRB programmes.
- Reliance on sector to fulfil its own needs since no community development function in Calderdale Council.
- Key infrastructure organisations are: VA-Calderdale (CVS); Groundfloor Project (providing support to 60 groups in upper Calder Valley); and Calderdale Community Foundation (providing funding and support to a number of groups).

### **Kirklees**

- VCS organisations engaged in wide range of activities, but largest sector is those working with older people, whilst limited number working with children and young people.
- Proliferation of small organisations (many receiving less than £1000 income in last financial year).
- No coherent picture of size, services, coverage and economic contribution of the sector in Kirklees.
- Issues include human resource management and the need to develop workforce development strategies.
- 20 ISOs form part of the local infrastructure, of which 4 of these are sub-regional providers, and 9 providing targeted support to BME VCS organisations.

### **Leeds**

- 1988 organisations were identified as part of this research, but it is estimated that there could be up to 5000 organisations and groups.
- 19% of organisations deliver services in respect of recreation and leisure, 13% involved in Health and Social care, whilst 5% (94) concerned with physical and sensory impairment and Learning Difficulties. 4% of organisations are BME-led.
- 319 staff and 200 volunteers are involved in ISOs.
- The ISOs budget was just over £2.8million.

### **Wakefield**

- 1270 VCS organisations in the district – 41% are small organisations and 18% are groups operating in rural areas, whilst 49% of groups cover the whole of the district.
- Advice, support, training, leisure and help and care are largest categories of service provided by groups.
- Sector is under-developed in comparison with other districts of a similar size, particularly in respect of minority populations.
- A minimum of 666 and possibly up to 2623 people are employed in the sector. 63% of these have a degree level qualifications or higher education.
- Every £1.00 invested locally in the sector generates at least £3.99 to the local economy.
- Key issues are lack of health and safety policies, equal opportunities policies, business plan, and development plan in a large number of organisations.

- Key training needs are: funding, communications, health and safety, accounts and finance, volunteering etc.
  - 7 VCS infrastructure organisations were identified.
- 3.6 The Implementation Plans that have been drafted to support local Working Together activities provide additional information on the local make-up of the sector and key infrastructure. This information, drawing directly from these plans, is summarised by district below:

**Bradford**

- C-Net is the community empowerment network, involving some 18 grass-roots and umbrella organisations. It links directly to the LSP, Bradford Vision.
- The Investing in Community-Based Learning Action Programme Group of the Learning Partnership comprises a range of VCS learning providers. The Group's mailing lists comprises over 100 CVS organisations, and it includes BME representation.
- The Building Communities Partnership is focused on strengthening the VCS and over 160 organisations are involved in the forum which forms part of the partnership.
- 22 organisations make up the ISO network, including the District's 5 CVSs based in Bingley, Bradford, Ilkley, Keighley and Shipley. The Joint Training Board is the training arm of the CVSs.
- Bradford District Learning Forum is a network to support VCS organisations involved in learning provision.
- The Consortium of Ethnic Minority Organisations is an ISO providing support to BME VCS organisations and will take forward BME networking activity to support Working Together.
- Key infrastructure tools include: the DIVA project, focused on developing a comprehensive database of VCS organisations; Bradford Resource Centre, providing expertise and resources to support VCS networks; a learning resources partnership set up by Community Work Training Company.

**Calderdale**

- Taking a wide definition of the sector, it comprises approximately 3000 groups and organisations in the District covering campaigning groups, community associations, community care services, health groups, faith groups, education and training organisations, arts and culture groups, environmental groups, tenants' associations and children's and families' organisations. Several groups incorporate more than one activity.
- Voice is the Calderdale District Learning Forum, bringing together voluntary and community organisations involved in skills and learning to network, share good practice and to communicate local, regional and national developments and opportunities. Voice represents the sector in the Calderdale Learning and Skills Partnership.
- VYONIC (Voluntary Youth Organisations Network in Calderdale) is another key sector organisation, not previously mentioned.
- Organisations from the sector are involved in the following activities with LSC West Yorkshire:
  - Skills for life
  - Adult and Community Learning

- Neighbourhood learning in deprived communities
- Learning provision for disadvantaged groups supported by co-financing

### **Kirklees**

- Sector described as a “loose and baggy monster” because of its complexity.
- Key players include the following:
  - TAGLAB (the Kirklees Learning Forum), which has a mailing list of 140 organisations. Recent work undertaken by TAGLAB identified that 36 VCS organisations were involved in learning.
  - Kirklees Learning Partnership, which has representatives from the VCS sitting on the partnership and its various groups.
  - Neighbourhood Learning Networks - there are currently 8, but a further 2 are to be developed. The networks report to the Neighbourhood Learning sub-group of the Learning Partnership.
  - Voluntary Action Kirklees (VAK), the CVS, but also providing a range of courses and support services.
  - Voluntary Action Network, the community empowerment network providing channels of communications and representation on the LSP.
  - BME networks include the Afro-Caribbean Trust, the Pakistani Community Alliance and the Indian Muslim Welfare Society. Work is currently taking place to develop a BME network for learning organisations.
  - A Kirklees Steering group has been set up to take forward ChangeUp and the development of the infrastructure.
- Details included in the plan from the “Not Just the Cherry on the Cake” report produced by CWTCO on behalf of TAGLAB indicate that 453 people were in paid employment in VCS learning providers and they were involved in catering for the needs of 5000 learners per year.

### **Leeds**

- The Leeds Voice Learning Forum comprises 400 members. The membership reflects the diversity and scale of the VCS and includes large national organisations and their local branches to small community organisations working with specific groups. The members are, in the main, involved in other activities in addition to skills and learning at various levels.
- The Learning Forum links directly to, and supports the Learning Partnership.

### **Wakefield**

- VOX is the community empowerment network of 350 VCS organisations and groups.
- Voluntary Action Wakefield (CVS) has 191 members providing organisational support and training.
- Wakefield Learning Forum has 21 members that have an interest in learning and skills.
- Community Training Group is an informal group of 14 providers, which is accountable to the Neighbourhood Renewal Learning Strategy.
- Wakefield Learning Network comprises 27 organisations mainly hosting Adult Education provision.
- A BME sector development project is currently working with 22 BME groups to undertake capacity building and develop a BME strategy for BME organisations that are involved in, or wish to be involved, in learning delivery.

- BME organisations supporting wider activities include the Wakefield Mosque Committee, the Wakefield Asian Community Forum and the South Asian Community Liaison Forum.
- 3.7 At the Sub-Regional level the VCS Infrastructure includes the following organisations and networks:
- West Yorkshire Local Development Agencies (WYLDA)
  - West Yorkshire Learning Consortium
  - West Yorkshire Community Accounting Service
  - Community Work Training Company
  - Charities Information Bureau
  - The Fairplay Partnership
  - Working Together West Yorkshire Steering Group for Working Together and BME Capacity Building.
  - Asian Trade Links
  - QED-UK
  - CEMVO
  - West Yorkshire Grants
  - Pay and Employment Rights Service
- 3.8 A 'map' of the infrastructure is included in section 5 of this report.

### **GAPS AND ISSUES**

- 3.9 Lack of infrastructure and key players/resources to take a strategic role developing the sector, particularly for organisations involved in learning, in Calderdale.
- 3.10 There is a limited picture of involvement with the LSC from the VCS perspective. Calderdale, however, through its work on developing the Implementation Plan has tried to map the extent of the relationship between the sector and the LSC within its district. It may be useful to expand the work undertaken in Calderdale to cover the other districts, and to further expand the information presented from Officers in LSC West Yorkshire.
- 3.11 Several organisations hold their own database of sector organisations. However, they are focused on specific geographies, themes, sub-sectors, etc, and none cover the whole of the sub-region and all the roles of the sector, as outlined in the Working Together Strategy.
- 3.12 As a result of a lack of coordination of collection of such information at a higher strategic level, the WYLDA conclusion relating to the difficulties of getting a clear picture of the sector is apparent. The key organisations within the sector (particularly those who are leading on collaboration with the key public sector organisations), needs to collaborate and agree how data should be collected and recorded, with the public organisations that are working with and funding them. LSC West Yorkshire could support this work through contributing to discussions in relation to learning providers and the sector organisations as employers, based on work with other sectors, in addition to the collation of the information in a single database at the sub-regional level.

## **4. BENCHMARKING**

### **DATA COLLECTION APPROACH**

4.1 This strand of the project comprised the following activity:

- Survey of VCS infrastructure organisations and cascading the survey through their e-groups (full questionnaire at Annex B).
- Follow-up telephone and /or face-to-face interviews with ISOs and sub-regional organisations.
- The identification of good practice case studies.

4.2 The aims of the survey were as follows:

- To assess expertise within VCS infrastructure and umbrella organisations. (There was not enough time within the scope of the study to extend this element to other organisations).
- To identify channels of communications used and recommended by the sector.
- To determine the level /extent of previous contact with the LSC and gain feedback.
- To undertake a quick market research exercise to assess the potential level of response by the sector when sending via CVS organisations /networks etc. [This element was severely hampered by time constraints. The aim was for a 5% response rate. The eventual responses received were far below that, similar to the experience of surveying the sector in developing in the Wakefield Working Together Implementation Plan].

4.3 The follow-on interviews were aimed at identifying networks, clarifying linkages, and assessing how organisations themselves were making linkages with other partners.

### **FINDINGS**

4.4 35 organisations completed the questionnaire, which was sent to 19 organisations and circulated through 8 of these organisations' e-groups. Wakefield organisations were not asked to circulate the questionnaires further because of the detailed survey recently undertaken as part of the development of the Working Together Implementation Plan. The Consultants are grateful for the time and effort taken to complete and return the questionnaires within such a short timescale.

4.5 The following representatives agreed to be interviewed at short notice to provide additional information and feedback and once again our thanks are extended to these individuals for making the time to be involved in this survey:

- Anthony Clipsom, Bradford CVS
- Jane Daguerre, Leeds Voice
- Jennie Williams, West Yorkshire Learning Consortium
- Tony Hermann, Community Work Training Company
- Sue Shaw, K-VAN

- Richard Jackson, Voluntary Action Leeds
  - Jill Jones, West Yorkshire Community Accounting Service
  - Kerr Kennedy, VYON
  - Mike Quiggin, Bradford Resource Centre
  - Katherine Wyatt, Joint Training Board
- 4.6 Of the respondents, 16 were local community or voluntary organisations and 17 were local charities, in 9 instances organisations were both. 10 ISOs responded to the survey and 4 branches of national organisations. On a geographical basis, the spread of responses were as follows: 8 Calderdale based organisations, 10 Bradford-based, 5 Leeds-based, 1 Wakefield, 3 working in more than one district, 5 West Yorkshire, 1 Regional and 2 national.
- 4.7 The respondent organisations had a wide range of purposes including grant-making charities, support for specific groups (including local residents, those with autism, elderly, offenders, homeless, abused women, disabled, parents, children and young people), advice organisations, regeneration companies, learning support organisations and infrastructure support. There is no uniform picture of the organisations and response to the survey, although not a large sample size, clearly demonstrates the diversity of the sector.
- 4.8 As expected, given the nature of the sector, all respondents undertook work outside their own offices, through outreach, and bases in schools, community centres, churches, learning centres and offices of other groups.
- 4.9 80% of respondents received between 5 and 100% funding from the public sector, averaging 75% support for those that received public sector funding; 43% of respondees received an average of 22% of their funding from Trust Funds; 31% received an average of 17% of their funding from public donations; and a quarter of organisations received funding from the lottery and from corporate donations, accounting for 15% and 7% of funding respectively. Three organisations are also generating income to support their beneficiaries. It is clear that the public sector provides substantial funds to a large proportion of organisations to undertake their work, however, many organisations also have a relatively diverse funding base to support their work.
- 4.10 91% of respondents had paid workers, totalling 672 staff (an average of 21 staff in each organisation); and 69% of organisations had regular volunteers, totalling 517 (an average of 22 per organisation that had volunteers).
- 4.11 91% of those surveyed offer training to their staff, but all cited barriers to training. The majority (91%) cited time to undertake training and lack of funding to support training as providing the biggest barriers to workforce development. Other barriers included: Information about what training is available and how to identify appropriate courses, flexibility, relevancy of training to meet needs, staff cover and lack of cultural sensitivity.
- 4.12 With regard to expertise a range of expertise was identified within specific organisations, however, focusing on the infrastructure organisations, it is evident that at a local and sub-regional level the following expertise is available:

- Strategic skills
  - Community development
  - Regeneration management and housing
  - Specialisms in health, youth work and social care
  - Provision of support and IAG services
  - Counselling and working with marginalised groups
  - Information skills – websites, newsletters, e-groups and research
  - Lobbying, advocacy and issue-based awareness.
- 4.13 Again with regard to expertise, although respondents cited a range of skills in the surveys, through discussions in the follow-on interviews it became evident that there were gaps in a number of the areas cited as areas of expertise, and that the specified expertise is not held across the board, but is concentrated in individual organisations. As such, across the sector as a whole, there are gaps in expertise which could be regarded as generic (particularly in ISOs) such as strategic skills.
- 4.14 The National and Regional networks/forums that respondents belong to include:
- National representative bodies, including National Refugee Forum, NACVS.
  - YH Regional Forum
  - National Federation for Community Development Learning
  - Volunteering England
- 4.15 The sub-regional networks and forums that respondents belong to include:
- WYLDA
  - West Yorkshire Learning Consortium
  - LSC West Yorkshire Working Together Steering Group
  - Charities Information Bureau
  - LSC Adult Learners Forum
  - WYCAS
  - NIMHE/NIACE regional network
- 4.16 The majority of respondents cited membership of one or more of the following local networks and forums:
- Local learning partnership (and their sub-groups)
  - Local Strategic Partnerships and their linked partnerships
  - Community Empowerment Networks
  - Local Connexions Management Committees
  - Local infrastructure consortia
  - Local community and regeneration partnerships
  - Local learning forums
- 4.17 Respondents also used one or more of the following resources for information about developments and activities:
- CIB bulletins, which were very highly recommended
  - Local CVS newsletters/bulletins and events
  - Learning partnership emails
  - E-groups including YHRFVConet, LearningNet and SEDnet

- YH Regional Forum web-site
  - YH European Office info-notes
  - Government departments web-sites (including Home Office)
  - Council websites
  - NACVS newsletters
  - CWTC newsletters
- 4.18 The respondents indicated that they have been involved in several surveys to support the development of reports, specific examples included:
- WYLC survey about training needs
  - Local learning plan development
  - Working Together local implementation plan development
  - ChangeUp via WYLDA
  - Connexions strategy development.
- 4.19 One respondent cited work undertaken by the Active Partners Unit of the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Forum, entitled “Powerful Connections: How Agencies Connect with the Voluntary and Community Sector”. They indicated that there were several good case studies about partnership working between the public sector and the VCS, and lessons that could be learnt by the LSC.
- 4.20 Just over half of the respondents had not had any dealings at all with LSC West Yorkshire, reflecting comments made by interviewees. And also reflecting that even with this small sample, through the channels used in this survey, it would be possible to communicate to a wider audience and capture a large number of organisations that had not had involvement with the LSC, should the LSC wish to communicate much wider.
- 4.21 A significant number had had involvement with the LSC, as would be expected, given the type of organisations (mainly ISOs) responding to the survey. They mainly cited applying for funding (34% of total respondees), consultations (29%) and sub-contracting (26%) as the type of involvement.
- 4.22 Respondents and interviewees provided a wide range of comments with regard to the relationship between the LSC and the VCS. The following points summarise the key views from the representative of the VCS organisations.
- 4.23 There appears to be a frustration regarding the relationship between VCS organisations (particularly provider organisations) and the LSC and the following issues have arisen in discussions and survey responses:
- A perception of a risk-averse culture within the LSC and as a result a preference to contract with statutory organisations where the risk may be less.
  - Short-term contracts mean that projects are often just getting off the ground when the funding ends.
  - Although there were positive comments about the helpfulness and commitment of LSC West Yorkshire staff, there were persistent issues around delayed contracting (making timescales difficult to manage), and clarity regarding outputs at the bidding stage which are then subsequently revised.

- A model of contracting through intermediary organisations is generally supported if the difficulties in the contracting process (cited elsewhere) can be sorted out, however, this view was by no means universal.
  - Positive comments include statements that LSC documentation is well presented and processes are clear and documents easy to read.
- 4.24 General understanding by the LSC of VCS capacity issues, this was a comment response in relation to the commissioning of consultations at the end of the financial year when many VCS organisations are stretched to meet funding deadlines and retain project staff.
- 4.25 Cultural differences between the LSC and the VCS.
- 4.26 The channels for communication between the LSC and the VCS already exist through local Learning Forums, via Learning Partnerships, however, there are issues about Learning Forum representatives needing support if this route for communication is to be formalised or continued, not least in terms of the development of skills and knowledge for them to undertake the role more effectively.
- 4.27 Local VCS infrastructure organisations are generally sustained by relationships with local councils and strategic partnerships. A number of these organisations had had little or no contact with the LSC, although they were represented on local strategic groups and seen as key partners locally. This was the rationale for establishing the WYLC – to represent the views of the sector at sub-regional level to the LSC, however, clarity around WYLC’s role was lacking – and might in part be due to lack of support of local learning forums or sustained support with funding from the LSC.
- 4.28 There is a recognition that the LSC as a primarily purchasing organisation may not be a mainstream funder of the sector, however, it should consider contributing mainstream funding for specific hard to reach groups, or for specific core functions such as communications.
- 4.29 The LSC needs to recognise that many of the VCS target groups which are by definition hard to reach are also the most expensive to engage. Sustainable and realistic funding is required if this work is going to have any long-term benefits. Furthermore, in the context of full-cost recovery, the LSC has to be more realistic about the management fees – 5% fees do not cover the real costs of management.
- 4.30 There is a need to work with current structures and recognise key partners in the community which are used by other public sector partners. Given the issues of capacity in the sector, it is important that the LSC works with the key players in both the public sector and VCS to avoid duplication of effort, for example, in relation to consultation/surveys (as in the case of similar surveys for ChangeUp and the Working Together Implementation Plans within a few months of each other) and also recognises where it should contribute in financial /resource terms for the expertise it uses in the sector.

- 4.31 Formalised relationship management is required between the LSC and VCS to break down any barriers of misunderstanding. This could include a dedicated lead person at the LSC with experience and knowledge of the sector, rather than including it as part of the role of someone who is already too busy undertaking other activities.
- 4.32 The LSC needs to welcome rather than be wary of the lobbying role of VCS organisations, particularly at sub-regional and strategic level. VCS organisations have an issue-based culture after all.
- 4.33 There is a perception that it is always “the usual suspects” who attend partnership meetings etc and that the LSC does not get a representative enough view. This, however, may be a result of only a few organisations and individuals that have the capacity and skills to interact at strategic level (as is evidenced in point 4.13) with public sector funders and planners. There is nothing necessarily wrong with this as long as the views represented are genuine of the sector as a whole. This may be an area that could be benchmarked.
- 4.34 Respondents were also asked about the gaps in information and resources. Their responses include:
- VCS employers database
  - Training providers database (e.g. alternative routes for NVQ accreditation, flexible learning, training geared to BME communities).
  - Regional directories of specialisms e.g. agencies working around refugee employment and training.
  - Internet access for volunteers to access information on training opportunities.

#### **GAPS AND ISSUES**

- 4.35 It is disappointing that no responses, other than those through a face to face interview were received from Kirklees organisations, despite several attempts at obtaining responses through various different routes. This may demonstrate a number of issues including: a lack of networking infrastructure through to grass roots organisations in Kirklees; a weariness on behalf of VCS organisations at being involved in so many surveys recently, asking similar questions and trying to obtain similar information; and the lack of time and resources in key organisations to be involved in such activities.
- 4.36 There is a wide range of expertise available within the sector that could and does support the LSC in its work. There is potential to harness more of the expertise, however, the key issue is how to make more use of this expertise, whilst still enabling staff to undertake their existing and often heavy work-loads.
- 4.37 The organisations within the sector that hold expertise could do more to share that expertise and support other organisations that could benefit from it, to ensure that a wider range of organisations than the “usual suspects” can be involved in influencing strategies and investment decisions, if they wish to be involved.

Wider information dissemination within the sector on where specific expertise is, and if individuals/ organisations are willing and able to share it (given the requirement for individuals to do their normal work), would be helpful. Where gaps exist, these could be highlighted for specific support as part of the workforce development /sector brokerage provision.

- 4.38 All organisations are part of one or more networks and partnerships and obtain information about developments and themes such as funding through these channels. The existing infrastructure that LSC West Yorkshire uses, including the Learning Partnerships, WYLC and CIB, are proving to be very useful channels for communications for the majority of organisations, however, respondents have indicated that dedicated resources are required to support these channels if they are to continue effectively to reach existing network members.
- 4.39 Further work needs to be undertaken to identify how these channels could be used even more effectively and disseminate information about the LSC. At the same time, consideration is also required by the sector organisations as to how the channels could be used by them to ensure that the LSC is better informed about their work and the developments taking place that they are involved in, particularly where the work complements (and may duplicate) LSC objectives and activities.
- 4.40 The issue of representation needs to be looked at, with regard to involvement with the LSC activities, within a wider context of sector discussions about this theme. Both the VCS and the LSC need to be clear about the role of sector representatives and in what capacity they 'sit at the table'. At the same time, the representatives need to clarify their channels of consultation and further communications and their representation.
- 4.41 80% of organisations are receiving on average of 75% of their funds through the public sector (this does not include the additional funds that have recently been allocated specifically for development of the sector). It would be useful for the sector as a whole, to look into this funding in depth, i.e. who are the funders and what is the funding supporting specifically, where could better coordination improve the use of this funding etc. This review could contribute to a dialogue between the VCS and the public sector organisations and enable a process of clarifying joint objectives, and channelling funding to clear and complementary objectives, whilst also tackling issues of duplication, bureaucracy and quality. This work could also take on board good practice cited in the survey and undertaken by the Active Partners Unit of the Regional Forum.
- 4.42 Funding for the development of the sector as a whole from the public sector also need improved coordination, to ensure that resources made available for Implementation Plans does not duplicate work that might be commissioned through ChangeUp for example.  
At a local and at sub-regional levels the key stakeholders need to come together to agree an overall strategy and what is to be supported through the various sources. It is evident that there is much overlap and not enough coordination by the key sector organisations at either level.

- 4.43 There is evidence that much research and work has been done around the development of the sector or issue relating to the sector, but little information is apparently disseminated about this work by the sector itself. Details about this work needs to be more readily available for other VCS organisations and public sector organisations. Appropriate tools such as the popular and well-used web-sites, e-mail groups and newsletters could be utilised much more effectively to channel briefings (as opposed to full details, given the information overload many officers suffer) about these activities. This could enable a reduction in surveys, research etc and more a focus on actions with public resources.

## **5. CASE STUDIES**

5.1 As part of the mapping and bench-marking discussions and surveys four examples of good working practice stood out. This section outlines these case studies.

### **5.2 VYON Case Study (based on interview with Kerr Kennedy, Youth Organisations Strategy Development Officer)**

Bradford Voluntary Youth Organisations Network (VYON) is a project located within Bradford CVS and overseen by the Youth Organisations Strategy Development Officer

The project's remit is to:

- map the full range of voluntary and community youth organisations in Bradford district (currently those providing services to young people in the 11-25 yr age group – around 230 organisations on the database);
- facilitate information sharing between members and the network 'hub';
- facilitate face-to-face work with youth organisations, including practical support to get established, obtain funding etc);
- establish channels of communication and act as a gateway to ensure the strategic involvement of these groups in publicly funded services e.g. the Connexions strategy and participation in national and local initiatives.

Bradford CVS are creating a new post to map voluntary & community children's sector organisations and give specialist support and guidance to these organisations, especially around preparations for the 'Change for Children' agenda. This person will work alongside the VYON project and be line managed by the Youth Organisations Strategy Development Officer.

To date, Bradford VYON has been successful in attracting funding primarily through the Transforming Youth Work Development Fund and Connexions West Yorkshire. It now employs 2 members of staff: a Youth Organisations Strategy Development Officer and Communications Officer, both qualified youth workers with good knowledge of youth funding, project management and communication expertise. The YOSDO in particular has wide experience of managing youth projects in the voluntary and community sector. Bradford VYON has been instrumental in developing relationships within the public sector, particularly with Connexions West Yorkshire where it is represented on the LMC, has contributed to the local Delivery Plan and receives and distributes regular mailshots and bulletins. It has also been involved in drafting the Connexions sub-regional plan. The YOSDO has close working relationships with Bradford Council Youth Service and regularly attends Senior Management Team meetings and contributes to their Business Planning process. Bradford VYON also works increasingly closely with the Local Strategic Partnership, through the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership voluntary sector group, which recognises the requirement for a local framework for young people's services in response to the Change for Children agenda.

The Project is primarily promoted through a regular and widely read newsletter which is distributed to around 250 local VCS and public organisations and disseminated through the Youth Service, which includes a range of up-to-date support and advice on funding, training initiatives and national and regional events and consultations. Much of the Project's success is cited as being down to good personal networks between the individuals concerned and good longstanding working relationships between departments within the local council (e.g. the Information Service) and the voluntary and community youth sector.

Bradford VYON is a successful example of a wider national initiative by the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) to harness specialist knowledge in the sector, build a collective voice for voluntary youth organisations and fill a gap in infrastructure support. The Youth Organisations Strategy Development Officer is also current chair of the Yorkshire & Humber VYON. This Network is assisting the development of local VYONs subject to adequate funding being identified. This has met with some success, with funding having been allocated by Connexions West Yorkshire to a Kirklees VYON. In Leeds, this role is currently seen to be fulfilled through the Children's and Young People's Forum (Leeds Voice). An important element is seen to be independence from the public sector and to achieve a 'critical mass' of organisations within the sector which can together fulfil an important lobbying and influencing role.

### **5.3 Bradford Resource Centre and Community Statistics Project (based on interview with Mike Quiggin, Librarian)**

Bradford Resource Centre has been selected as a case study because of the way in which the organisation has adapted to change, embracing innovation and developing its core expertise as a resource for the sector.

BRC is an infrastructure organisation (ISO) established to resource and support community action. Originally it was intended as a resource for community-based campaigning and activist groups, including trade unions, for services which these groups found expensive/inaccessible e.g. photocopying, word processing and basic IT, printing. It now caters for the full range of VCS organisations, and has developed its facilities to include internet access, desktop publishing, CD-ROM and online resources e.g. for funding.

Nowadays demand for these services, whilst still part of BRC's core business, has however been superseded by a need for expert advice and support and BRC has developed its remit to provide research and analytical services to the sector. It participates fully in local, regional and national research projects and accommodates and supports a number of innovative community development projects in partnership with the local authority and other infrastructure organisations, aimed at helping community organisations to engage with the public sector and take a wider role in strategic decision-making.

These notably include:

- The Bradford Community Statistics Project, which is funded by European Regional Development Fund, is seen by many local fundraisers and researchers as an invaluable and user-friendly online resource which clearly breaks down the latest Census statistics into geographical area and by broad theme. The resource is constantly being developed and improved to include a greater range of data. Outreach support for the Project is provided through community-based surgeries.
- DIVA, a joint initiative bringing together the resources of several local organisations - Bradford CVS, Bradford DIAL, Bradford Health Informatics, plus several departments from the local council (BMDC) - to develop a comprehensive database of local VCS organisations. The project is joint funded by Bradford Health Authority, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the Community Empowerment Team Cnet.
- The Flying Giraffe report "Bradford Infrastructure Investment Plan"
- RADSTATS Report 2000 "How do Community Agendas for Research differ from Government Agendas?"

BRC also provides advice on organisational development (e.g. dealing with conflict, supervision and support systems in VCS organisations, supporting volunteers to become advice workers, manage relationships with funders), helping organisations to write press releases, lobby at local level etc. This includes areas of workforce development. Some of this training is accredited; however the emphasis is on flexibility and meeting individual needs.

BRC operates primarily across Bradford (80%) although its services are also offered outside the district boundary with approximately 15% being delivered within West Yorkshire. Services outside the Bradford boundary are generally provided on a charged basis. Key partners/funders are the local council (BMDC) and Rowntrees (opposing race hate). Locally the Centre promotes its work through leaflets / word of mouth and the BMDC website. There are also links with other, cross-sector networks such as the trade-union Hazards movement, Bradford Occupational Health Project, and RADSTATS.

The organisation currently employs 9 paid workers and at any one time 2 or more volunteers, and operates as a collective of expertise in law, research, training and consultancy as well as in more specialist areas such as anti-fascism and welfare rights. The current team includes a barrister with considerable experience of working with local authorities, qualified researcher qualified teachers, qualified librarian, and qualified community workers. BRC staff are encouraged to identify their own development needs through regular team meetings where individuals bring suggestions for discussion / agreement.

The main barriers to a structured programme of development are time and pressure of work, but the availability of appropriate training is also an issue as this tends either to be not specialist enough or too specific / advanced. Some of the most useful learning occurs through networking at National events / conferences (BRC is a member of BASSAC and FIAC), particularly those which are issue-based and fall within BRC's established activist-based remit.

BRC acknowledges that there is a proliferation of infrastructure organisations now operating in Bradford as a result of multiple funding streams e.g. ACU,

Lottery Funding, ODPM, City Challenge. Notwithstanding that the organisation has clearly embraced new technology and the development of its own expertise, there are concerns at “an obsession with innovation”. The organisation welcomes the move, facilitated by work around ChangeUp to set up local strategic ISO groups and work in partnership with other agencies to ensure greater effectiveness.

It has worked with the LSC on a number of occasions, including NLDC and Co-Financing contracts and found the experience generally positive, although there was some reticence about allocating a managing agent role to intermediary organisations with the potential for “power relationship” issues to develop. Alternatively, the suggestion was for more funding to go directly to community groups with a proportion of sustainable funding allocated to ISOs and other specialist groups to play an advisory / supporting role.

#### **5.4 Leeds Voice / Voluntary Action-Leeds (Information gathered from interviews with Jane Daguerre, Leeds Voice Director and Richard Jackson, Partnership Manager, Voluntary Action Leeds -VA-L)**

Leeds Voice and Voluntary Action Leeds have been selected as a case study for this report because of the way in which, as the two main VCS infrastructure organisations in Leeds, they have developed, defined and promoted their respective roles to ensure clarity for the groups and interests they serve, and to enhance the sector’s role in local decision-making. These roles have been summarised and promoted through the publication of a joint leaflet (a summary can be found at the end of this case study). VA-L as the local CVS broadly defines its remit as providing support and resources for the voluntary and community sector, whilst Leeds Voice as facilitator of the Community Empowerment Network exists to facilitate and ensure representation of the sector at a grassroots and strategic level.

##### ***Leeds Voice***

Leeds Voice was established in 1999 as the Leeds Voluntary and Community Sector Initiative, a reference group of people from a range of voluntary and community groups, in response to an identified need for the sector to be represented on the Leeds Initiative “Vision for Leeds” Steering Group. The group’s remit was to facilitate representation of the voluntary and community sector at both a strategic and grassroots level. Leeds Voice has since successfully secured VCS places on all the main strategic and partnerships bodies in the city.

The organisation currently employs 16 paid workers and up to 150 volunteers (including Forum representatives and members of the Management Committee) with its Management Committee including 20-25% representation from BME communities. Leeds Voice particularly welcomes those with the skills to work at strategic level and to be representative ‘across the patch’ rather than catering to specific interests.

Leeds Voice is 100% public funded from a range of sources including Leeds City Council, the Single Community Programme, Connexions and Yorkshire Forward. The local authority, LSP and GOYH are key partners with GOYH in particular the key funder, having contributed much to the organisation's sustainability and growth in past years.

The organisation is structured around 3 'Teams'. Smaller 'grass-root' groups are specifically served through the 'Link' Community Development Team whilst larger organisations are represented through Leeds Voice's issue-based Forums (including the Leeds Learning Forum which was established in 2000 to ensure appropriate representation by the sector on the local Learning Partnership). Leeds' 5 wedge-based cross-sector District Partnerships are supported by the Community Participation Team. The Forums teams work with other strategic bodies such as the local Connexions Management Committee and a new Children and Young Peoples Strategy group to facilitate the election of VCS representatives.

Leeds Voice receives information through government websites, a range of paper based newsletters and information and networking within the sector. It is required to measure the effectiveness of its engagement with the sector as part of the contract with GOYH and achieves this through the Leeds Voice website, Forum e-groups and newsletters, and the Leeds Voice newsletter. Clear, high-quality literature has been produced which explains and promotes the role of the Forums both to members and external agencies.

Leeds Voice recognises that the quality of feedback of those representing the sector at Forums and other local partnerships is fundamental to its success as an organisation and has set up structures to ensure this communication to key people within the organisation.

Leeds Voice acknowledges that, in common with other communities of interest within the sector, there are problems with attracting and retaining people from BME communities, particularly those with the necessary strategic skills. Initiatives such as Leeds Connecting Communities funded by the Home Office are an attempt to address this issue.

### ***Voluntary Action - Leeds***

VA-L provides direct support to front-line groups in Leeds, through the provision of a variety of services and projects. Its primary remit is to address developmental and operational needs within the sector and the organisation employs 30 paid workers and 8 volunteers with a range of skills relating to small group development, training, advice, community development, fundraising support, payroll, finance, volunteer development and management, ICT and communications. The organisation currently has approximately 10% BME representation on its Management Committee and is 100% publicly funded.

VA-L is a member of several groups, including WYLDA, Leeds Infrastructure Consortium, SRIP ICE group, Leeds Voice VCS Strategy group and WYLC.

The organisation acts as a networking location and receives most of its information about developments in the sector from delivery agencies, which it in turn disseminates to member organisations. Sources of information cited as particularly useful are the CIB bulletin, Third Sector magazine and CVSnet e-group.

**Definition of Roles and Joint Working**

Whilst Leeds Voice and VA-L have made significant progress to achieving and promoting their joint and separate ways of working, inevitably there is occasional blurring of lines between the two organisations and in these circumstances Leeds Voice and VA-L staff are encouraged to work together to maximise resources and expertise for the benefit of the group or community concerned. A referral system is in place to ensure that both organisations can try to provide the most appropriate support.

Both VA-L and Leeds Voice enjoy a close working relationship with the local authority and have welcomed the development of a Local Infrastructure Consortium to develop a partnership agreement between all ISOs, provide valuable clarity about support for the sector, and go some way to assisting with capacity-building and support for infrastructure / intermediary organisations. However there are concerns that the sector, although improving, faces persistent problems in terms of capacity to attend / keep up with changes and the skills to put what is happening in context / ensure it is translated to those working at the ‘grassroots’. VCS workers with the partnership skills to confidently interface with full-time public sector workers are in short supply. The sector needs to more clearly understand its niche role / specialisms in order to maximise its contribution on these groups, particularly in terms of decision-making.

**VOLUNTARY ACTION- LEEDS AND LEEDS VOICE**

<b>Leeds Voice</b>	<b>Voluntary Action – Leeds</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Running issue-based forums: Health, Learning, Children and Young Peoples Services, Environment and Connexions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing sector representation on the Modernisation Team – Disability, and around Volunteering development</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing district-based voluntary and community sector forums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Running the Volunteer Centre Leeds</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining a positive relationship with Leeds Initiative, Leeds Local Strategic Partnership and running selection processes for representatives both at grassroots and strategic level across the city</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Running a payroll service</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Running a range of events for information, consultation &amp; celebration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing information services and a resources library</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting small groups so that they can become more involved both locally and strategically</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing support to small group groups around issues associated with set-up and running, advocacy, staffing and volunteers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving funding support in applying for Neighbourhood Renewal Community chest and Community Learning Chest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving funding advice to groups in certain areas of Leeds and providing the Funderfinder resource in the VA-L library</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a formal mediation process for the Compact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing a programme of training courses throughout the year</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing a quarterly newsletter containing information about strategic developments for the sector, local initiatives and representational issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing a monthly newsletter containing a wide range of local and national information relevant to the voluntary and community sector</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing specialist work and support around issues relating to physical and sensory impairment</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing project management facilities – e.g. Funding Advice Project (Headingley, Kirkstall and Weetwood), Equal Fund, Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health</li> </ul>

*Source: Voluntary Action–Leeds and Leeds Voice: Our Work*

## **5.5 The College of Chinese Physical Culture (CCPC)**

CCPC is presently in discussion with LSC West Yorkshire regarding becoming an External Institution in 2006/07. CCPC is currently funded through a franchise arrangement with Leeds College of Technology (LCT). LCT is supporting this transition to becoming an EI by offering a reverse franchise arrangement for a development period. CCPC is also funded in part via ACL and e2e streams.

This case study demonstrates how a VCS organisation has developed mechanisms and systems to enable them to become a provider for the LSC.

Chinese Physical Culture (CPC) is a form of whole body education, originating in China that has been taught and practiced in a community setting in the UK since the 1930s. In 1998, CCPC became a registered charity, and, working with the Open College Network, created programmes to accredit the learning involved.

To facilitate and sustain growth the organisation employed an incremental development process, beginning with offering short funded courses whilst establishing and developing its infrastructure and quality systems. As its capacity increased, it took on larger and longer-term projects.

The organisation focused on the recruitment and development of its staff, as a 'business' investment for long-term sustainability, developing expertise in finance, funding, quality and MIS.

All of this supported the organisation in establishing a track record of success. Its' financial and business development has proven that it can handle large sums of money, can market its provision effectively and can satisfy rigorous audit and quality requirements.

Two good examples of the many projects that the organisation has successfully completed with the LSC are:

*Funky Chinese Moves*, and *SmartFit*.

*Funky Chinese Moves* developed the learning potential, health, fitness and life skills of over 100 disadvantaged and disaffected young people, as well as 80 adults with learning difficulties, across West Yorkshire. It used a balanced mix of fun and training, which incorporated movement, dance and gymnastic-based exercise to improve participants' life styles generally, enhance their employability, and achieve accreditation.

It was highly successful, with an independent impact assessment commenting that: "*the project* had a powerful impact on the participants. It has developed and enhanced their life skills, their self-expression and creativity, their interpersonal social and communication skills, *and* made significant and positive changes in their attitude and behaviour towards themselves and others".

*SmartFit* used a unique approach to engaging and developing the skills of people working in voluntary and community organisations in West Yorkshire. It focused on increasing the capacity of these organisations by developing their staff's ability to manage relationships effectively, deal with conflict, reduce stress, and develop leadership skills. 80 people benefited and achieved accreditation in key skills at levels 2 & 3.

Quote from one manager: "I believe all should have the opportunity to participate in a CPC programme, particularly if dealing with members of the public. CPC promotes greater awareness of self and others, and of the components of effective communication"

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 6.1 There is clear evidence that a range of work is taking place in LSC West Yorkshire to support the implementation of the Working Together Strategy, not just in the form of processes and specific actions outlined in the strategy, but in additional work involving the sector to support the overall objectives of both the LSC and the strategy. However, there are also clear indications that this work is concentrated in selective teams and directorates, rather than across the whole of the organisation. (Details included in baseline table).
- 6.2 The key relationships with the VCS organisations are in their role as a provider or as an employer.
- 6.3 The VCS in the sub-region provides some expertise through a limited involvement of 'usual suspect' organisations on steering groups and partnerships, although this level of involvement may be more to do with capacity and capability of organisations and representatives to be involved.
- 6.4 There are limitations in the work of LSC West Yorkshire to support the implementation of the strategy and more work is needed to improve internal communications; coordination of the relationship and work with the sector; and improving the management information.
- 6.5 There are constraints from an LSC West Yorkshire operational perspective that could prevent a full implementation of the Working Together Strategy. These include availability of funding to support new provision from more providers including those from the VCS.
- 6.6 The VCS infrastructure is not uniform across the sub-region and in Calderdale, in particular, the sector needs to undertake more work to develop to the level of other districts in the Sub-Region. (Details in the map of the infrastructure).
- 6.7 Limited coordination takes place within the sector, with regard to strategic and funding issues. This is primarily related to the difficulties of representing a "sector", especially one as wide ranging and diverse as the VCS.
- 6.8 Over 50% of organisations in the sector have no dealings and in many instances have not heard of the Learning and Skills Council and its work. The LSC will need to agree to what extent they wish to reach these organisations, what they want to communicate and what their 'offer' is to them. The LSC needs to have an understanding that their objectives, priorities, culture and ways of working, may mean that there is neither desire nor possibility of "Working Together" with a large number of VCS organisations.
- 6.9 Despite a range of expertise available within the sector, gaps in expertise and knowledge in individual and key organisations in the sector are preventing full and effective involvement in such activities as Working Together and other strategic activities within and involving the sector.

- 6.10 Through the Learning Partnerships and their VCS partners such as the Learning Forums, CVSs and Community Empowerment Networks, there are channels of communications that can enable communications with almost the full extent of the sector across the sub-region. At a sub-regional level, organisations such as CIB and WYLC offer similar channels for communication. However, resources are an issue across the board.

### **BASELINES**

- 6.11 The following table outlines the progress made by LSC West Yorkshire on specific actions to be undertaken by the local LSC offices that have been included in the Working Together Strategy:

**Section 1: Aims and rationale of the strategy**

<b>LSC National Action</b>	<b>LSC West Yorkshire Supporting Activity</b>
Develop a model framework for defining and benchmarking LSC engagement with the sector and measuring progress, reflecting established local practice.	<b>DEVELOPMENT:</b> Activity initiated at sub-regional brokerage level
Include actions relating to engagement with the voluntary and community sector in its annual local planning processes.	<p><b>QUALITY:</b> The Equality Strategy 2002 – 2005. One of the key challenges states that the LSC West Yorkshire ensures the participation and impacts of the Community and Voluntary Sector in learning and skills, decision making and delivery in order to widen participation of disadvantaged groups.</p> <p><b>PLANNING:</b> In previous years a sample of V &amp; C organisations have been asked to provide feedback on our draft plans. Responses have been very low e.g. in 2001, 125 were invited to respond, 5 did to the outline plan and 7 for the final draft. This year they were contacted if they hold a mainstream contract (WBL or FE) or are members of a learning partnership.</p> <p>The Regional Forum, which is umbrella body for the V &amp; C sector, is represented on our ESF funded regional research-planning group.</p> <p><b>SKILLS DEVT:</b> Brokerage Model – as a result of LLM Research the VC sector was identified as a priority sector for the LSC support to address skills gaps and needs within the sector.</p>
Report annually, in local and national business plans, on progress towards implementation of this strategy, against benchmarks already established.	<b>QUALITY:</b> Implementation of the above key challenge within the LSC West Yorkshire – Business Plan
Compile and distribute a compendium of good practice relating to engagement with the sector.	<b>DEVELOPMENT:</b> Future action planned

**Section 2: The voluntary and community sector as a provider of learning opportunities.**

<b>LSC National Action</b>	<b>LSC West Yorkshire Supporting Activity</b>
<p>Promote capacity-building funding to the VCS, where appropriate.</p>	<p><b>QUALITY:</b> Community and Voluntary Sector event held in October 2003 to provide an overview of the LSC West Yorkshire</p> <p><b>DEVELOPMENT:</b> Activity initiated at sub-regional brokerage level. Sustainability need recognised.</p> <p><b>SKILLS DEVT:</b> Use of co-financing funds round 3 and 4 for capacity building in the VCS. Funded from round 3 co-financing a Brokerage Model, single interface between LSC &amp; sector and will be responsible for the delivery of skills and learning activities identified as priorities. Involvement in an LSC National Office pilot for the sector to define an appropriate structure for provision and the development of a funding regime. (70 candidates undertaking NVQs levels 2-5 inclusive of 10 non funded learners already receiving provision from the identified Provider. Round 4 co-financing providing capacity building, sustainability and succession planning for the V &amp; C, not for profit and faith sectors. Under co-financing R5 the Brokerage Model will continue to carry out TNA's and signpost organisations to core funded provision, where core funded provision is not available anticipate funding grant process. BME Assessor Professional Development available through National Office BME fund.</p> <p><b>PROGRAMMES – WBL:</b> The involvement of voluntary and community organisations is required as part of the Co -financing WBL Capacity building project</p>
<p>Continue to work with the VCS on quality improvement initiatives and disseminate the joint findings widely.</p>	<p><b>QUALITY:</b> Quality Pack in production</p> <p>Quality Input to Sector arranged capacity building events on Self Assessment and Inspection</p> <p><b>SKILLS DEVT:</b> Brokerage, single interface between LSC &amp; sector is responsible for the delivery of skills and learning activities identified as priorities. Round 4 ESF funding available for PQASSO (through brokerage model) and IIP specifically targeted at the VCS and Faith sectors. IIP/skills development case studies for the sectors (part of the marketing strategy to promote IIP to the VCS &amp; Faith sector). IIP Support Club open to all recognised organisations inc the Sector – support includes quality improvement network events and review subsidy. Co-financing R5 will continue to fund the Brokerage Model to carry out TNA's and signpost organisations to core funded provision, where core funded provision is not available anticipate funding grant process.</p>
<p>Work with the sector to support complementary training and development materials to improve funding application and financial planning skills in small and medium-size VCS organisations.</p>	<p><b>QUALITY:</b> See Quality Pack</p> <p><b>DEVELOPMENT:</b> To be addressed</p> <p><b>SKILLS DEVT:</b> ESF Round 4 PQASSO and IIP funded programmes includes the development of leaders' and managers' capability to introduce improved operational practices to support improved organisational performance through consultancy and training support.</p>

Commission any capacity development activities for LSC staff from VCS organisations or secondees, where appropriate.	<b>DEVELOPMENT:</b> To be addressed
Explore, with the sector, common standards for local consortia and develop 'fit for purpose' support.	<b>DEVELOPMENT:</b> To be addressed

**Section 3: The voluntary and community sector as an employer.**

<b>LSC National Action</b>	<b>LSC West Yorkshire Supporting Activity</b>
Ensure that local workforce development plans support the agreed needs of the voluntary and community sector in their area and are set in the context of the VSNTO national skills strategy.	<b>SKILLS DEVT:</b> Round 4 ESF (Capacity building, sustainability and succession planning for the V & C, not for profit and faith sectors) has been based on both local and national research; delivery of free support for PQASSO, Train the Trainer, Assessor/Internal Verifier Awards and IIP. VCS organisations working towards Investors in People receive advice and guidance through Generic IIP workshops and Investor in People advisor associate support. All are delivered free of charge. VCS was identified as a priority sector for LSC West Yorkshire support to address skills gaps and needs within the sector. As part of the round 3 co-financing broker project comprehensive research was carried out on the VCS within West Yorkshire and included reference to national research and the VSNTO national skills strategy. This research has informed the priority training needs and interventions to be delivered to the sector.
Frame and agree the sector's workforce development priorities in the context of capacity building for organisations delivering and supporting learning and skills objectives.	<b>SKILLS DEVT:</b> Brokerage, single interface between LSC & sector is responsible for the delivery of skills and learning activities identified as priorities. The broker has communicated local VCS skills priorities to both VCS and private and public funded providers within West Yorkshire through an invitation to tender for delivery of the identified priorities. ESF Round 4 projects include capacity building activities including PQASSO and IIP. Co-financing R5 will continue the Brokerage Model to carry out TNA's and signpost organisations to core funded provision, where core funded provision is not available anticipate funding grant process. BME Assessor Professional Development available through National Office BME fund. SME including VCS organisations have access to Management and Leadership programme aimed at supervisory and first line managers.
Continue to work with the VSNTO at national level on the implementation of its skills strategy, ensuring it meets the needs of the learning and skills sector.	<b>DEVELOPMENT:</b> National Office activity with LLSC to be informed

**Section 4: The voluntary and community sector as a source of expertise and intelligence.**

LSC National Action	LSC West Yorkshire Supporting Activity
<p>Take into account the views of voluntary and community sector organisations at local and national level in implementation and evaluation of Strategic Area Reviews.</p>	<p><b>DEVELOPMENT:</b> STAR action  <b>PLANNING:</b> 1 representative on the main steering group and 2 on each of our 5 advisory groups. Also, we have made direct contact with a further 180 different organisations to inform them of the process. A few have asked for further details, which we have provided them with. It's too early to gauge the level of input they will provide to the process.</p>
<p>Include in its national and local planning processes specific approaches for maximising the contribution of smaller sector organisations working with the most marginalized/reluctant learners that the LSC targets.</p>	<p><b>SKILLS DEVT:</b> Brokerage, single interface between LSC &amp; sector is responsible for the delivery of skills and learning activities identified as priorities – local. Although not a specific approach to maximise the contribution of smaller sector organisations working with the most marginalized/reluctant learners. Priority beneficiaries have been identified from this target group.  <b>PROGRAMMES - Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC)</b>                      The budget is contracted via a combination of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and Learning Partnership in each area – to tie in with other physical regeneration activities. However, it is used to support a range of activities via and on behalf of the voluntary sector (e. g. training for community leaders etc)  <b>PROGRAMMES – ACL:</b> Significant sums of money are currently being disbursed via ESF – funded Theme Chests and Flagships to support ACL and to develop “first rung” provision to hook the disengaged into learning. Theme Chest money in particular is being used to commission activity in communities, to be undertaken by voluntary sector groups  <b>PROGRAMMES - Bite Size:</b> A significant part of the Bite Size budget was allocated to the voluntary and community sector (15 providers) these include ethnic/minority groups, community groups and women’s groups from across West Yorkshire. These organisations are attracting high numbers of non-learners have offered advice on further learning opportunities available to them.</p>
<p>Explore and promote the application to the LSC of Active Communities Unit conclusions on the cost benefits of working with voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisations at national, regional and local level.</p>	<p><b>DEVELOPMENT:</b> ACU action</p>

**Section 5: The voluntary and community sector as a channel of networking and communication.**

<b>LSC National Action</b>	<b>LSC West Yorkshire Supporting Activity</b>
Identify a named person in each local office to act as a primary contact for engagement with the sector in all its forms of engagement with the LSC. Their role will be clearly communicated to the sector and to LSC staff.	<b>QUALITY:</b> Within the Equality Development Team – Shafqat Rahim (Equality specialist – Community and Voluntary Sector role) <b>DEVELOPMENT:</b> Mapping exercise underway
Promote ‘compact’ principles, codes of practice and support arrangements, and encourage agreement of local ‘compacts’ by all local offices.	<b>DEVELOPMENT:</b> To be addressed
Establish arrangements to share existing good practice on communication with the voluntary and community sector between national and local offices.	<b>DEVELOPMENT:</b> Recognition of need that activity initiated at sub-regional brokerage level should feed back good practice examples
Work with sector representatives to review local and national communication channels to ensure responsiveness and transparency for all organisations in the sector.	<b>DEVELOPMENT:</b> To be addressed

**Working Together – Charities Information Bureau**

Close links have been formed with the Charities Information Bureau (CIB) through the Technical Assistance fund. This has enabled the LSC West Yorkshire to contract with the CIB for an ‘Events Manager’ to help promote co-financing and disseminate good practice. Although this is targeted at all the organisations throughout West Yorkshire who have shown an interest in co-financing there are obvious links already in place with the voluntary and community sector. These linkages, more often than not, have broken down any barriers that may have existed and have encouraged voluntary and community organisations to explore the co-financing route, which ultimately brings them into contact with the LSC. Although this is specific contracted activity it does allow and often leads to dialogue regarding the voluntary and community sector whether connected to technical assistance or not, it also opens up avenues for further discussion and communication over other issues.

**WEST YORKSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE MAP**

6.9 The following table provides details of the key infrastructure elements of the sector and associated/linked organisations and tools and networks supporting the sector in West Yorkshire

<b>Key VCS Organisations &amp; Infrastructure</b>	<b>VCS Networks</b>	<b>Tools</b>
<b>Sub-Regional Level</b>		
WYLDA WYLC WYCAS CWTC CIB Asian Trade Links QED-UK CEMVO West Yorkshire Grants Pay and Employment Rights Service	WY Steering Group for Working Together and BME Capacity Building.	CIB web-site and bulletins ATL database of BME organisations CWTC newsletters
<b>District Level - Bradford</b>		
5 CVSS 22 ISOs C-net Investing in Community Based Learning APG Learning Forum COEMO, ABCD, ATL, QED, ABL Building Communities Partnership JTB	ISO network BME network VYON	DIVA database Bradford Briefing (CVS publication) Bradford Resource Centre Community Statistics Project Learning Partnership web-site and emails LP database CWTC's learning resource library b-funded
<b>District Level - Calderdale</b>		
VAC Calderdale Voice Groundfloor Project Calderdale Community Foundation	VYONIC	Learning Fund Learning Partnership web-site
<b>District Level - Kirklees</b>		
VA-K VAN TAGLAB Afro-Caribbean Trust Pakistani Community Alliance Indian Muslim Welfare Society 20 ISOs	Neighbourhood Learning Networks	e-mail groups
<b>District Level - Leeds</b>		
Voluntary Action Leeds Leeds Voice		VAL portal On-line directory of VCS organisations
<b>District Level - Wakefield</b>		
Voluntary Action Wakefield VOX	Community training group Wakefield Learning Network	

Wakefield Learning Forum 7 ISOs		
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### ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6.12 The scope of this report is to focus on channels of communication and areas of expertise between the LSC and VCS. The following conclusions and recommendations therefore concentrate on actions which support these themes, particularly at strategic (sub-regional) level, and how these link to local working arrangements.

6.13 In evaluating the findings of this report and looking at conclusions, the Consultants have endeavoured to take an impartial approach i.e.:

- the VCS is one of a number of sectors with whom the LSC works and VCS organisations need to recognise that in many respects they are on a ‘level playing field’
- the LSC needs to recognise that the VCS may have particular characteristics and to clarify their impact in terms, particularly in terms of culture (e.g. flexible ways of working, high proportion of unpaid workers) and capacity to interact at a strategic level.

6.14 A structure for communication between the LSC and VCS already exists in West Yorkshire which has developed along ‘straight-line’ principles:



Locally, much of LSC West Yorkshire’s engagement is undertaken via the Learning Partnerships, which receive funding from the LSC to support this activity. The VCS has, for its part, sought to establish Learning Forums in each district with links to both the Learning Partnerships and other local networks such as the Community Empowerment teams. The Learning Forums link into West Yorkshire Learning Consortium, which was established by the sector specifically to interface with LSC West Yorkshire and which comprises a wide membership of local ISO organisations and sub-regional training providers.

6.15 It is the opinion of the Consultants that in many ways, with the appropriate support and recognition, the above structure has the potential to work well both as a channel of communication between the LSC and VCS and as a means of accessing the considerable expertise within the sector. However a number of issues appear to have so far prevented this from occurring, including:

- The WY Learning Consortium as the primary vehicle for strategic working between the LSC and VCS has suffered from an increasingly operational focus and confusion about its remit, apparently as a result of its contracted role as sector broker. (NB Although in other sub-regions e.g. Humberside, the Learning Consortium acts as a lead provider, we would suggest that, given the effectiveness of local arrangements via the Learning Partnerships in West Yorkshire and the fact that several training providers span the sub-region, this is not necessarily appropriate).

- VCS organisations, even those operating strategically at local level, often have problems with capacity and being able to access the necessary strategic skills to interface with public sector professionals, particularly where this involves making multiple linkages between the various agencies, initiatives and funding streams operating at local, sub-regional and regional level. Mechanisms for ‘feeding back’ to the grass-roots also need to be improved.
- Learning Forums in some districts have suffered from a lack of funding and support affecting their ability to represent the sector locally and feedback centrally.
- LSC West Yorkshire has not found it easy to determine the most representative channels for communication within the sector from a multitude of local and sub-regional organisations. This applies particularly to specialist areas such as BME networks. Confidence in WYLC as a strategic body has decreased and other key sector organisations may not cover learning and skills as a priority.
- This last point is however exacerbated by poor internal co-ordination by LSC West Yorkshire in working with the sector, resulting in a lack of coherent internal management information and ad hoc ways of working with the sector leading in some cases to duplication.

## **Recommendations**

- 6.16 This report has provided some mapping (within the time constraints allowed) of current LSC and VCS structures and also refers to other pieces of work in which the VCS is currently involved e.g. ChangeUp. It is hoped that this has highlighted the strengths and developments of current VCS infrastructure and strategic networks in West Yorkshire. However, a more detailed ‘de-jargonised’ mapping, including specialist networks, would be helpful, to be disseminated to partners on the WT Steering Group.
- 6.17 LSC West Yorkshire is clearly keen to engage in the widest possible sense with the VCS and there would appear to be the structures in place to make this achievable, although the degree of co-ordination needs to be explored, particularly in relation to other sources of funding and the parallel activities being undertaken through ChangeUp and Investment Planning. A review setting out principles of future working and taking into account the learning points above now needs to be undertaken. It is recommended that this be progressed through the WT Steering Group.
- 6.18 Whilst we recommend consideration is given to ‘new’ ways of working, it might be helpful to recognise the effectiveness of current local arrangements, supported by a greater level of strategic working at sub-regional level.
- 6.19 Any model is likely to involve a high proportion of infrastructure organisations as channels of communication; however, in keeping with the learning agenda consideration will also need to be given to the involvement of ‘specialist’ expertise e.g. sub-regional training providers, BME networks etc.

- 6.20 It is recommended that a joint VCS/LSC structure should include the following base requirements:
- Clear strategic terms of reference for the primary joint LSC/VCS group, with a commitment from all involved, including the LSC to maintain representation at a senior level.
  - Formalised mechanisms for linkages with work taking place elsewhere either locally, sub-regionally or regionally e.g. a standing item for VCS/LSC representative to report/explain information gained in other arenas; production of regular de-jargonised joint 'briefing' to be widely circulated to all partners.
  - Development of a mechanism whereby the structures/VCS networks with whom the LSC works are periodically 'benchmarked' for representativeness, i.e. in terms of dissemination of information, particularly 'hard to reach' and grass-roots groups etc. This is particularly important where the LSC allocates resources to support these structures.
  - A similar system of co-ordinated management information to be developed by the LSC regarding its working arrangements with the sector, including the nomination of a clear lead officer, which is known throughout the organisation; and a single database of contacts and communications with organisations in the sector. In particular, the LSC needs to take on board the need for joined-up working with other public sector departments / organisations to add value and prevent duplication of effort / overloading the sector with consultative work.
  - It is recommended that, aligned to its workforce development agenda, the LSC allocate specific resources to the development of strategic and partnership skills within the sector, starting with the primary strategic group. Any skills development needs to take into account the existing expertise of representatives. (NB It is important that this work links in with discussions on a Sector Skills Agreement reportedly being taken forward by the Y&H Regional Forum).
- 6.21 Consideration needs to be given to a robust system of local engagement by and with the VCS. A number of comments were received, regarding the need for the LSC to provide sustainable resourcing if the sector is to engage effectively. The LSC already provides support to local Learning Partnerships. Consideration needs to be given as to whether it is appropriate for the LSC to offer further support to local VCS structures, particularly taking into account the 'level playing field' highlighted at 6.13. Furthermore, resources are being sought by key sector organisations from other sources such as ChangeUp and Investment Planning and it is unclear to what extent this need is already covered in these bids. It is likely to be covered to some degree and it may be more appropriate for the sector to consider activities to improve coordination to "join-up" these different strands to make the most of resources being allocated to the key organisations for various development activities.
- 6.22 The principles of Working Together need to be promoted more effectively internally within the LSC, to ensure that they become embedded in all activities with the sector, rather than potentially a cosmetic approach simply to "tick the boxes".

- 6.23 The attachment / secondment scheme(s) between LSC and VCS should be rolled out further to increase understanding on both sides of cultural differences / working constraints. Persistent issues around e.g. contracting processes between VCS organisations and the LSC (highlighted within WT local consultations) could be explored in depth. This should involve all LSC Departments and outcomes fed back to the sub-regional joint LSC / VCS strategic body.
- 6.24 Good practice / ways of working between the LSC and VCS both within West Yorkshire and in other areas e.g. South Yorkshire (see recommendation within Regional Plan) need to be explored. In particular the case studies collected during this report may be helpful:
- VCS as source of expertise: organisations such as Bradford Resource and ‘communities of interest’ networks such as VYON provide a valuable source of expertise. These need to be identified by the sector and utilised, rather than commissioning work to external consultants (see recommendation within the Working Together toolkit). This would in turn encourage ownership by the sector of the various initiatives / consultations
  - VCS as channel of communication: Knowing who to engage with, and how, is a key issue. The Leeds Voice / VA-L experience clearly demonstrates how local structures can be defined to provide clarity about the role of different ISOs. This needs to be encouraged and supported by the public sector.
  - VCS as a provider: what needs to be in place, how the required systems can be developed, what the LSC is looking for in terms of expertise and market engagement. The College of Chinese Physical Culture is a good example of how a VCS provider can effectively meet the LSC objectives and add value to the provision infrastructure.

**ANNEX A**

**“WORKING TOGETHER”  
A STRATEGY FOR THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR  
AND THE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL**

WEST YORKSHIRE LSC INTERNAL MAPPING AND BENCHMARKING

**Q U E S T I O N N A I R E**

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NAME .....

POSITION .....

DIRECTORATE .....

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1. How many voluntary and community organisations has your Directorate worked with over the past 12 months (including through sub-contracting arrangements)?

- 0 .....
- 1-50 .....
- 51-100 .....
- 101-200 .....
- 201+ .....

Please provide a list of these organisations and attach it to this questionnaire.

2. Of the organisations above, what proportion fall into each of the following categories?

- |                              | %     |
|------------------------------|-------|
| Social Care                  | ..... |
| Health                       | ..... |
| Housing                      | ..... |
| Sports and Recreation        | ..... |
| Land based and environmental | ..... |
| Creative and Cultural        | ..... |
-

Education .....  
 Justice .....  
 Local government .....

3. What proportion of these organisations were BME-led (i.e. 50%+ BME representation on Management Committee)

%

BME-led organisations .....

4. How many learners do you estimate are engaged through the LSC's work with these voluntary and community organisations? (if possible, please state how many)

1-100 .....  
 101-500 .....  
 501-1,000 .....  
 1,000+ .....

5. What proportion of the LSC's engagement with the voluntary and community sector falls into each of the types of provision listed below? (approximate percentages are fine)

%

Outreach and community-based projects .....  
 Adult and community learning .....  
 Work-based learning (including workforce development) .....  
 FE provision .....  
 Basic skills provision .....  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6. How much LSC funding do you estimate is allocated to the voluntary and community sector from the funding streams given below?

£

FE .....  
 Work-based learning .....  
 Adult and community learning .....  
 ESF Co-financing .....  
 LIDF .....  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7. What feedback, if any, have you received from voluntary and community sector organisations, regarding the effectiveness of working arrangements with the LSC?

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8. What proportion of your work with voluntary and community organisations falls into each of the key roles defined in Working Together (approximate percentages are fine)

	%
As providers	.....
As employers	.....
As a source of intelligence and expertise	.....
As a channel of communication	.....
“Non-provider” roles (e.g. information, advice and guidance, learner support, outreach)	.....

9. How much does your work with the voluntary and community sector contribute to the achievement of direct and indirect targets in the areas given below (approximate percentages are fine)

	%
Level 2	.....
Level 3	.....
Employer engagement	.....
Widening participation	.....
Neighbourhood renewal	.....
Basic skills	.....
Other (please specify)	.....

10. Which mechanisms have you used to communicate with voluntary and community sector organisations in the past 18 months? How effective were they? (rate 1-5 where 1=very good; 2=good; 3=don't know; 4= not very good; 5=not good at all)

	Tick all those that apply	Effectiveness
Large-scale LSC events (100+ attendees)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LSC Workshops / seminars	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint LSC/VSC Steering / Working Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Letter / mailshots to individual organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letter / mailshots via VCS networks or consortia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LSC website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VCS websites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (please specify) _____		<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Please identify the VCS primary contact at LSC West Yorkshire (if not known, please give your suggestion as to who would be the most appropriate person)

.....

12. What actions have you taken to support workforce development activity and skills development within the voluntary and community sector?

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13. Are voluntary and community sector organisations represented on cross-sectoral Steering Groups and partnerships that you are involved with? If so, please list these here.

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14. What specific actions have your Department undertaken with voluntary and community sector organisations to support capacity-building in the sector; and which groups have you worked with?

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15. Have you used voluntary and community sector-based expertise to support your activities? If so, describe these here.

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16. List any capacity-building activities and resources that you believe are needed to help local LSC or voluntary and community sector staff implement Working Together.

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Signed ..... Dated .....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION WITH THIS SURVEY

## **ANNEX B**

**“WORKING TOGETHER”**  
*A STRATEGY FOR THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR*  
*AND THE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL*  
**SURVEY OF VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS IN WEST YORKSHIRE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### ***What is the Learning and Skills Council (LSC)?***

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is a national government organisation, which exists to improve the skills of England's young people and adults. The LSC is responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone aged 16 or over. Its vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England will have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and be part of a truly competitive workforce.

The Learning and Skills Council operates through sub-regions. In Yorkshire and Humberside there are four sub-regional or 'local' LSCs – North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Humberside and West Yorkshire. LSC West Yorkshire (LSC WY) is responsible for learning in Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. It is the second largest LSC in the country managing a budget of nearly £300 million.

#### ***What is “Working Together”?***

There are many different types of community-based or voluntary organisations - from large nationals to very small community groups, from those engaged in training and learning to those undertaking environmental projects or providing accommodation for homeless people. Collectively, the LSC recognises the significance of all these groups, which together make up the “voluntary and community sector (VCS)” as

- a major group of employers of workers both paid and unpaid (i.e. including volunteers)
- including a large number of providers of education and training services
- a source of expertise and communication about how to plan and improve public services.

The LSC needs to work proactively, effectively and productively with organisations in the voluntary and community sector (VCS) if it is to increase the numbers of those participating in learning and achieve a better skilled workforce. “Working Together” is the national strategy that the LSC has produced to achieve this. The strategy is intended to help national, regional and local government in their relationships with voluntary and community sector organisations. This will be achieved by:

- Creating a change in the LSC's relationship with VCS organisations to maximise their contribution to the accessibility, range and quality of education and training for individuals, employers and the wider community;
- Establishing a principle of partnership and mutual benefits between VCS and the LSC;
- Extending best practice throughout the LSC and the sector;
- Opening up access to LSC funding for more VCS organisations; and
- Creating a framework of minimum expectations and useful ideas to be interpreted and implemented jointly by the LSC and the voluntary and community sector regionally and locally.

“Working Together” outlines specific actions that the LSC will undertake at national, regional and local levels. In West Yorkshire, Implementation Plans are currently being produced in each district, in consultation with voluntary and community sector organisations. To support this work the LSC has commissioned Tokos Solutions to undertake a survey across Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. **The aim is to identify how effectively the LSC is currently working with the voluntary and community sector and obtain a profile of VCS infrastructure, expertise and communication networks in West Yorkshire. LSC West Yorkshire welcomes your help with this survey.**

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NAME OF ORGANISATION / GROUP.....

ADDRESS .....

NAME OF PERSON COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.....

POSITION .....

TELEPHONE NUMBER / EMAIL

---

**1) ABOUT YOUR ORGANISATION / GROUP**

a) What type of group are you (tick as appropriate)?

Local voluntary organisation or community group

Local registered charity

VCS umbrella / infrastructure organisation

Branch of regional, sub-regional or national organisation

Other (please describe) .....

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

b) What is your organisation’s purpose?

.....

c) In which locality does your organisation operate?

.....

d) Which group(s) does your organisation serve?

.....

e) Where are your activities located (e.g. community centres, outreach, church, school)

.....

f) What percentage of people on your Management Committee are:  
%

- Black / minority ethnic
- Disabled
- From the group with which  
are primarily working

g) What proportion of your organisation's income comes from the following sources:  
%

- Public Funding
- Lottery Funding
- Charitable Trusts
- Individual donations
- Corporate giving

## **2) ABOUT YOUR PEOPLE**

a) How many employees / volunteers are in your organisation?

- No of workers
- Paid:
- Unpaid:

b) Give a brief description of the expertise and specialist skills available in your organisation

.....

c) Do you support other people or organisations with this expertise e.g. working with other voluntary or community or public sector organisations to better target their services?  
If so, please describe this work.

d) Have you provided any training for your staff?

.....Yes / No

e) How was this funded (please indicate the proportion of total funding spent by your organisation on training / workforce development)

%

- Public Funding
- Lottery Funding
- Charitable Trusts

Individual donations

Corporate giving

Other

- f) What do you consider to be the main barriers to developing your staff? (e.g. lack of appropriate courses, no time / money, training courses not flexible enough)

.....

**3) YOUR COMMUNICATION NETWORKS**

- a) Does your organisation have a communications strategy?

.....Yes / No

- b) Please give details of any networks / forums / Working Groups to which your organisation belongs (formal or informal). Please let us know whether these are local, sub-regional (i.e. West Yorkshire), regional or national.

.....

- c) How do you receive information about funding or training opportunities, local community initiatives / projects etc (please give specific details of newsletters, email groups or websites)?

.....

- d) Which of these are most useful to your organisation and why?

.....

- e) Have you been involved in, or are aware of any specific pieces of work (reports, mapping exercises etc) which might help the Learning and Skills Council West Yorkshire to work better with the voluntary and community sector in West Yorkshire? Please list these here

.....

- f) Where do you think there are gaps / need for more information?

.....

**4) INVOLVEMENT WITH THE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL**

- a) Has your organisation ever had any involvement with the Learning and Skills Council, or one of its funded projects?

.....Yes / No

**If the answer is “No” please proceed to Question (d)**

b) Please indicate below the nature of this contact:

Tick all that apply

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Applying for Funding   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Contracting / sub-contracting  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Staff Training / workforce development   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Assisting the LSC e.g. with surveys / research / attending consultation events | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Assistance from the LSC with organisational development e.g. quality assurance | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

c) Please describe this involvement and let us have your feedback on it:

.....  
.....

d) Would you be interested in receiving further information about “Working Together”?

.....Yes / No

e) Would you be willing to participate in a further interview to discuss Working Together?

.....Yes / No

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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