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Working together: five years on

How the LSC is engaging with the third sector

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March 2009

Of interest to people and organisations involved in learning and skills

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Further information

For further information, please contact the appropriate Learning and Skills Council office. Contact details for each office can be found on the LSC's third sector website:
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Throughout this document, we write financial years as 2008–09 and academic years as 2008/09.

 For information

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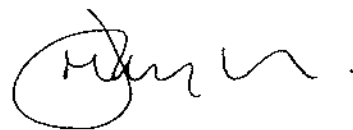
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Foreword from the Chief Executive of the Learning and Skills Council

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In times of economic difficulty, it is more important than ever that every individual is supported to develop the knowledge and skills they need to get, and keep, a job. As we look forward to the establishment of two new agencies to fund learning and skills, it is imperative that we record the good practice that has resulted from the implementation of the *Working Together* strategy, so that we can learn from it. This document represents an excellent first step.

I hope that you will find it an enjoyable and interesting read and that we can continue to work together, building on the good work done to date and ensuring a smooth transition to the new agencies in 2010.



Mark Haysom
Chief Executive
Learning and Skills Council

When I wrote the foreword to the *Working Together* strategy in 2004, I knew that there was a great deal of work to be done to remove barriers to third sector engagement with the LSC and embed good practice in our everyday business.

Over the last five years, I have watched the relationship between the third sector and the LSC evolve to an impressive degree. That evolution has required tenacity of vision and mature debate. It has not always been easy, but it has been extremely worthwhile, as is shown by the examples set out in this document.

Both the LSC and the third sector are striving to put the individual at the heart of what they do and to deliver the highest quality of service to the people they work with. The LSC's key aim is to open up new ways to enhance the services we provide to learners and potential learners at all levels by working in partnership with those who know best how to reach diverse groups. Through good communication, and by challenging each other's thinking, I believe we are succeeding.

Working Together revisited

'Voluntary and community organisations make a major and literally incalculable contribution to the development of society and to the social, cultural, economic and political life of the nation. They act as pathfinders for the involvement of users in the design and delivery of services and often act as advocates for those who otherwise have no voice. In doing so they promote both equality and diversity. They help to alleviate poverty, improve the quality of life and involve the socially excluded. The voluntary and community sector also makes an important direct economic contribution to the nation.'

Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England, Home Office Active Community Unit (1998)

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1 In *Working Together* (2004), the Learning and Skills Council set out its strategy for working with the voluntary and community sector (now known as the third sector). The strategy's key aims were to:

- bring about a step-change in the LSC's relations with the third sector with the aim of maximising the contribution third sector organisations make to the accessibility, range and quality of education and training provision for individuals, employers and the wider community;
- open up access to mainstream LSC funding for more third sector organisations;
- establish principles of partnership and mutual benefit;
- extend best practice working arrangements across the LSC;
- create a framework of minimum expectations; and
- make clear the LSC's commitment to implementing the principles set out in the 1998 Compact.

2 In the five years since the publication of *Working Together*, the landscape has changed considerably, although the LSC has remained committed to these principles. One of the biggest changes has been the redefinition of 'voluntary and community sector', which now forms part of a wider entity known as the third sector.

What do we mean by 'third sector'?

3 The third sector (previously known as the voluntary and community sector) is defined by HM Treasury in its publication *Exploring the Role of the Third Sector in Public Service Delivery and Reform* (2005) as comprising non-governmental organisations which are primarily motivated by social, environmental or cultural objectives rather than profit, and which generally reinvest any surpluses in furthering those objectives. The third sector includes charities of all sizes, voluntary organisations, social enterprises, co-operatives, community interest groups and mutuals.

4 Another key change in the landscape is a result of the Machinery of Government change agenda announced in June 2007, under which, from 2010, the LSC will be replaced by two new agencies, the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA), that will address the needs of adults and young people respectively. This document forms part of the LSC's legacy with regard to the *Working Together* strategy.

Why work together?

5 The third sector's 'unique selling point' is often described as 'the Heineken effect' – its ability to reach the parts or people that other providers can't reach. Individualised learning record (ILR) data for 2006/07 shows that over 45 per cent of people learning through the third sector were living in the most deprived 20 per cent of communities in England, compared with 27 per cent of those learning with non-third sector providers. This is in part due to the fact that many third sector organisations operate at local level, building strong links with and having an excellent understanding of the needs of their communities.

6 Third sector organisations are already contributing to the needs of many of the learners the LSC serves and seeks to serve, making them natural partners at local, regional and national levels. Equally, given the importance of learning to individual and community development and well-being, there is obvious scope for the LSC to help the third sector achieve its own broad aims of promoting social inclusion and enhancing life chances, including by developing appropriate learning opportunities for its own workforce, both paid and unpaid.

Measuring progress

7 Section 6 of *Working Together* set out a clear implementation plan which provides a starting point for assessing the success of the strategy. The LSC has undertaken two studies to measure the impact of *Working Together* at national level, and each region has commissioned reports into their local and regional work. Where available, these studies and reports are online at <http://thirdsector.lsc.gov.uk>.

About this document

8 This document is designed to provide a snapshot of how the LSC is working with third sector organisations at national, regional and local levels, five years on from the publication of *Working Together*. It starts by looking at what is being done to implement the strategy, then gives an overview of regional and local work in the following areas:

- learning and skills provision;
- workforce development;
- communication and sharing expertise;
- bringing the Compact to life; and
- planning and consultation.

Finally, the 'Next steps' section explains how the LSC is gearing up for the transition to the SFA and the YPLA.

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Working together at national level

'To achieve the desired step-change in relations between the LSC and the [third sector], it is important that everyone understands how work within the [third sector] contributes to the LSC's objectives. The LSC acknowledges the need to address its own capacity to work effectively with the [third sector], building confidence to let organisations get on with the job and being receptive to the new ideas the [third sector] can bring.'

Working Together, LSC (2004)

9 *Working Together* emphasises the need to build relationships and target initiatives at local and regional levels. However, it is also essential that the LSC supports this work by collaborating with the third sector at national level. This section provides an overview of the work being done by the LSC's national office to deliver the key actions set out in the strategy.

Building capacity within the LSC

10 The LSC is developing its own capacity to work with the third sector in a number of ways. Each region now has a third sector lead and local liaison officers. The nine regional leads meet three times a year to share views and ideas. Margaret Coleman, Regional Director for LSC Yorkshire and the Humber and a member of the LSC management group, has been appointed third sector champion for the LSC.

11 Since October 2006, the former implementation group has been functioning as a third sector advisory group to the LSC's national council. Members have been recruited specifically for their knowledge and experience of the third sector, and the agenda is based on the *Working Together* implementation plan. Over the past 12 months, the group has been focusing on two areas: adapting contract tendering processes to ensure fair and equal access for the third sector; and ensuring that the LSC is capturing robust, comprehensive data about the third sector.

12 In some regions, LSC staff are being seconded to work with third sector partners and vice versa (see examples on page 20). Regular 'lunch and learn' sessions and a staff document, *Working together with the third sector* (November 2008), provide information about the third sector and its work, and explain how it can contribute to LSC targets. Staff can also access an e-toolkit and an intranet sub-site that draws together all third sector-related sources.

Collaborative planning

13 The LSC recognises the need to ensure that national policy decisions are made in collaboration with and with the full support of the third sector. The third sector advisory group provides an ideal forum for checking policies and plans before they are implemented. For example, the group has been closely involved in developing a process for the commissioning of new LSC provision.

14 Ad hoc groups of third sector representatives have been set up to discuss specific issues: finance and funding (2007), the Train to Gain service and its offer to the third sector (2008), and the LSC's adoption of Compact principles (2008).

15 Each LSC regional council now includes a member with strong links to the third sector, and at least two members of the LSC national council have worked for third sector organisations. The importance of involving the third sector in planning is reflected in the LSC's national Statement of Priorities and its regional commissioning plans.

Evaluating impact

16 The first step towards robust impact evaluation is to establish a clear picture of which third sector organisations the LSC is contracting with and the value of those contracts. This information will form the basis for an assessment of the impact of third sector provision between 2005 and 2008, which we hope will report in May 2009.

17 Following the launch of the *Working Together* strategy, a benchmarking process was agreed for each local office. The first engagement update report was published in 2006 and a further review in July 2008. Both of these reports are available online at <http://thirdsector.lsc.gov.uk>. All the issues raised in the latest report are dealt with in this document.

Communication

18 The LSC's new dedicated third sector microsite was launched in February 2009. A focus group of third sector individuals supported LSC staff in its design. Since the site's launch, the sector response has been very positive.

19 The national marketing team produces leaflets on specific initiatives and topics such as Train to Gain and the new teacher training qualifications. These leaflets, along with tailormade exhibition materials, are available at third sector conferences held around the country, including the national conferences of the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO), the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). A monthly bulletin targeted at LSC regional third sector leads and the national advisory group provides detailed, up-to-date project information.

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Working together across the regions

'[The LSC will] work with providers and employers to help them adopt relevant standards, promote equality of opportunity and take systematic steps, including positive action, to widen participation and improve retention, to encourage people from under-represented groups to participate in and benefit from LSC programmes and initiatives.'

National Equality and Diversity Strategy 2001–2004, LSC (2002)

Supporting learning and skills provision

20 To achieve true partnership and make real progress towards shared objectives, the LSC must make a long-term commitment to helping third sector organisations develop their capacity as learning providers and to tackling the barriers that may make it difficult for them to access funding. Capacity-building has been a top priority, with local LSCs drawing on the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Neighbourhood Learning for Deprived Communities (NLDC) fund to support this work. Examples of LSC support include capacity-building funding for networks of third sector organisations to come together to form consortia as well as support for curriculum development for third sector-specific qualifications. Some LSCs have also paid for staff to broker relationships between the LSC and the sector, especially in accessing the Train to Gain service and the safeguarded adult learning funds.

Improving access to funding

21 Perhaps the most important single contribution the LSC can make to supporting third sector learning providers is to make the process of applying for funding as open and transparent as possible. A series of regional roadshows have been held to publicise the opportunities available, raise awareness among potential partners and create networking opportunities. Each region has then looked at how best to support the sector and maximise its access to funding.

In practice: procurement training

'As commissioners, we need to ensure that the third sector is properly represented among the broad range of potential suppliers,' says Angela Berry, Regional Lead at LSC London. She has asked London councils to develop a training programme that will equip third sector organisations to make successful funding bids, both from the LSC and elsewhere.

The programme, which was developed in partnership with a steering group of third sector organisations, and is being delivered by Greater London Enterprise, clearly explains the policy drivers that are shaping the new commissioning landscape and sets out the LSC's priorities. There is a strong focus on establishing robust systems and on working in consortia. The programme runs for three days, and is made up of two workshop sessions followed by a day's expert consultancy delivered on delegates' own premises.

'It's highly interactive,' says Angela. 'There are plenty of opportunities for delegates to identify their own priorities so workshops can be tailored to their needs.' Angela believes that the involvement of Greater London Enterprise, itself a third sector organisation, is an important factor. 'Participants feel as if they're working with someone who truly understands their needs.'

The course was run for the first time in East London in September 2008, and further sessions are planned. Feedback was extremely positive, with delegates stating that the programme had demystified the commissioning process and helped them to identify the skills they already had.

22 Following the roadshows, consultations with a range of third sector providers showed a clear need for specifications that would better reflect the needs of those furthest away from education or employment, the third sector's traditional constituency and an increasingly important target audience for the LSC. Specifications must also reflect third sector organisations' unique strengths, for example by recognising the value of informal learning rather than requiring the delivery of a set number of formal qualifications.

In practice: tailored specifications

LSC West Midlands is tapping into third sector expertise to help it build new partnerships with the sector. The West Midlands European Network, itself a not-for-profit organisation, has a contract with the LSC to provide training and support to third sector organisations putting together ESF bids.

'We asked the Network to help us design a tender specification for community grants that would open up access and encourage applications from third sector organisations,' explains Regional Lead Jerry Conway. 'One of the key points that emerged was the need to set broad targets. So, for example, we're looking to third sector organisations to encourage disadvantaged groups to take the first steps towards learning rather than to provide formal, accredited learning. That way we're building on their strengths, not focusing on their weaknesses.'

23 At the same time, the LSC has switched from a paper-based to an online tendering system, which is quicker and simpler to use. The rules on LSC capital funds have also changed to allow third sector organisations to bid for funds to develop employer-responsive provision. This means that, for the first time, third sector organisations can ask for money to pay for any new buildings they need in order to expand their provision.

24 Figures suggest that these initiatives are having a considerable impact on the amount of funding secured by third sector organisations. In the first year of the new national system of contracting (2007–08), the LSC awarded 43 contracts with a total value of £7.61 million to third sector organisations. Of these, 16 were first-time contracts. This is in addition to the £177 million the LSC invested in post-16 further education and skills provision in 2006–07 through 800 voluntary organisations with which it was already directly contracted.

In practice: supporting successful bids

Figures from the first round of procurement for the ESF 2007–2013 programme show the third sector securing 40 per cent of contracts awards, twice as many as at the last evaluation. 'We're delighted with this result,' says Julie Hobbins, LSC's ESF Lead. 'We know that the third sector is remarkably good at delivering learning and skills provision that extends employment opportunities for those people who are traditionally the hardest to reach. It's vital that we reach these learners, and engage with them in the best way for them, which we know is often through the third sector.'

In practice: significant investment

To date, the LSC has invested around £31.6 million in supporting third sector organisations in Yorkshire and the Humber. Of this, more than a quarter (28 per cent) goes to support the young people's agenda. It is estimated that the total funding available is potentially in excess of £50 million, while the region's Train to Gain enhancement fund offers access to a further £48 million to support workforce training and staff development that would not otherwise be eligible for Train to Gain funding.

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Reaching out to diverse groups

25 The third sector has an excellent track record in building relationships with isolated and vulnerable groups, developing provision that reflects local needs and offering it in ways and settings that make people feel confident and secure. It may also offer people ways into learning via informal learning opportunities that build their confidence as well as developing their knowledge and skills.

In practice: the Personal Best programme

LSC North East has awarded contracts to support volunteering in each of its four sub-regions, with a focus on engaging the most disadvantaged groups. The Personal Best programme is using the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games as a hook to encourage people from hard-to-reach groups into training and volunteering, with the aim of developing their skills and boosting their confidence and self-esteem. The total value of the four contracts is £1 million.

In practice: tackling learning difficulties and disabilities

Third sector providers in the South West are at the forefront of developments for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Robert Owen Communities (ROC), a charitable care provider based in Torbay, is working with the local authority and primary care trust to pilot the Foundation Learning Tier, part of the NVQ reform programme. ROC is the only third sector provider involved in the national pilot. The organisation is also part of the region's Getting a Life project, which aims to bring together support services for people with learning difficulties and overcome barriers to independent living.

'We knew ROC was doing an excellent job in helping people to live more independent lives and even get into paid employment,' says John Brookham, LSC South West's Regional Lead. 'So we wanted to help them keep up to date with the rapid changes in qualifications and funding.'

ROC is now working with a range of partners and, through its own networks, keeping other third sector providers informed and aware of new opportunities. 'It's a great example of how a small, specialist third sector provider can work with others to really make a difference to people's lives,' says John.

In practice: supporting the hardest to reach

In Bedfordshire and Luton, the Learning Partnership manages a portfolio of NLDC-funded projects aimed at building the capacity of third sector organisations to help hard-to-reach learners. The Partnership's 2007–08 report includes the following example showing how its work with New Age Training helped one client back into work:

F is a 49-year-old male who lost his job 18 months ago through illness. Suffering a severe eye condition and diabetes had left him with low self-esteem, withdrawn, lacking confidence and, as he saw it, with no future.

His confidence was so low that he had his 80-year-old father drop him off for lessons and pick him up straight after class with little or no contact with other members of the group. By the end of the course this had all changed. F started finding his own way to class by public transport, making sure to get there early so he had time to catch up with class members for a chat before lessons began. F was now going home from class and using his new skills learned in the classroom and passing them on to other family members.

F never missed a class, and his sense of humour and commitment to the course were commendable. He was a valued and well-liked member of the class. This paid off as he achieved all his assessment modules to receive a Level 1 OCR New Certificate/Diploma for IT Users qualification.

Through the job search sessions, F's confidence and self-esteem returned, and he realised he had more skills than he thought. Added to the new skills recently gained, he now felt he had something to offer prospective employers.

F is now looking to the future. He wants to carry on learning and progress to a higher qualification within ICT. Approaching his local football club where he is a supporter is the first step on the ladder of employment. F has volunteered to help out in the club's offices doing general administration work. This offer has been taken up by the football club and he will be starting in the near future.

LSC East of England is now in the process of contracting with organisations to run a further tranche of projects up until summer 2009. Plans are also under way to support a series of projects aimed at supporting 16- to 18-year-olds, particularly those who are at risk, for example because they are not in education, employment or training.

26 The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) report *Neighbourhood learning for regeneration: lessons and case studies from the NLDC fund (2005)* includes further excellent examples of projects that have helped hard-to-reach learners back into education and employment.

Building consortia

27 In many areas, local LSCs are encouraging third sector organisations to form consortia, with the aim of simplifying bidding and funding processes and facilitating the sharing of information, ideas and skills. Joining a consortium will also help give third sector organisations a voice locally, regionally and nationally. For the LSC, consortia offer a single point for contracting and reporting, a vehicle for supporting capacity-building and a quick, targeted way of communicating with a large number of third sector organisations. The LSC has given some funding to every consortium arrangement, ranging from funds to explore this approach in a particular area, such as Northumberland, to setting up funding (examples include Derbyshire, Sussex, Lancashire and the Humber). Many consortia now also get contracts for work (examples include the Learning Curve, South London Learning Consortium and North Yorkshire Learning Consortium).

In practice: consortium-building in London

LSC London commissioned the South London Learning Consortium (SLLC) to run a series of consortium-building workshops for third sector organisations. The SLLC has helped organisations that expressed an interest in working together to develop action plans. The LSC has provided funding to take the plans forward, plus consultancy support.

Some groups used the funding to assess the financial feasibility of forming a consortium. Others, like East Tenders, had already started working together.

'The funding we provided put East Tenders in a position where they could apply for Capacity Builders infrastructure funds,' explains Regional Lead Angela Berry. 'They've now been awarded £350,000, which they're using to refine their business plan and prepare for incorporation.'

North London's fledgling consortium has also secured Capacity Builders infrastructure funds to help it work together to deliver a third sector workforce development project. The LSC continues to work closely with both consortia, offering support, guidance and expertise.

In practice: developing a new hub-based contracting model

LSC North East has run a series of events for consortia and other third sector organisations to discuss how best they could work together to get people back into learning. 'It was really about saying, here's how you can work with us,' says Regional Lead Hilary Porter. 'We wanted to be absolutely clear about what we needed from third sector organisations as well as what we could offer in return.'

Interested organisations were then invited to join a 'task and finish' group which has since come up with a new hub-based contracting model. 'The idea is that the hub – which could be a social enterprise – will be an organisation, or organisations, that meets all our quality standards,' explains Hilary.

'They'll then work with those organisations in the next tier – essentially, potential sub-contractors – giving them help and guidance to reach the required standards. When there's a procurement round under way, they'll pull together the organisations that are best placed to deliver it and help them write the bids.'

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In practice: co-ordination and collaboration

LSC East of England is funding the Suffolk Learning Consortium, which aims to co-ordinate learning activities within the sector and encourage third sector organisations to become involved in delivering funded learning programmes. The consortium now has over 90 members.

Key achievements to date include a county-wide sector skills needs analysis and research into practical ways of working with young people who are not in education, employment or training. In 2008/09, the consortium allocated funding from the LSC's NLDC funding pot to 29 local organisations and followed this up with practical support, for example with purchasing equipment and monitoring progress and impact.

Since June 2008, the consortium has taken on a number of additional projects, including working with Train to Gain brokers, running a Learning Champions project and working to bring more capital equipment into Suffolk's third sector learning projects. The consortium's chair is now chair of the Suffolk Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) Partnership and also has a place on the county's Learning and Skills Executive Group.

Suffolk Learning Consortium sees the support of the LSC as a major factor in its success. 'The LSC has made sure we're represented on all key county and regional bodies and promoted our work,' says Robin Hodgkinson, Training Manager and member of the Working Together Advisory Group. 'Its role as independent broker and partnership adviser has also been incredibly important to us, particularly on issues like allocating NLDC funding. We are delighted with the support we've had.'

In practice: peer-to-peer support

The LSC is funding a peer coaching programme, designed and run by NIACE, where third sector coaches help other third sector organisations learn more about how they can work with the LSC. Each LSC region now has a coach, and to date there have been 64 successful bids for coaching. Coaches maintain regular contact with the LSC and with each other to ensure that they are offering high-quality, consistent advice.

28 The LSC contributes financially to Consortia Plus, a NIACE-run membership organisation for all third sector consortia which helps them access practical support to win and deliver public service contracts, for example through

organisations such as Future Builders. The LSC also runs commissioning workshops where third sector organisations can find out how the LSC funding system works, and has published a set of guidelines to help its own staff work more effectively with consortia.

e-learning

29 Maximising the third sector's contribution to e-learning was one of the key priorities identified in *Working Together*. The LSC and NIACE have been working to involve third sector organisations in the LSC's e-learning programme since 2005. The programme comprises access to the e-Guides staff development programme, support to apply for e-learning grants, e-learning awareness-raising events and a one-to-one consultancy service.

30 In 2008, NIACE developed an online 'VCS Showcase' on its Moodle learning platform (moodle.niace.org.uk/moodle/) to publicise the achievements of the third sector organisations involved in the programme and to promote further engagement.

Championing the third sector

31 LSC staff have worked hard to increase the visibility of third sector organisations in the numerous partnerships established locally between statutory providers. In Suffolk, for example, the LSC is ensuring that the third sector is represented in PCDL partnerships and other local learning and skills boards.

Evaluating impact

32 Every LSC region has evaluated its work with the third sector at regular intervals, although not all have produced formal reports.

Evaluating impact in Yorkshire and the Humber

Between January 2006 and December 2007, LSC Yorkshire and the Humber co-financed up to £1 million of ESF funding for activities at district, sub-regional and regional levels in support of the *Working Together* strategy. Skills Strategy Research evaluated the impact of this investment.

Their findings, published in May 2008, have provided quantifiable evidence to support the next stage of engagement with and support of the third sector. Based on this and the sector's own evaluation of *Working Together*, Mandy Crawford-Lee, Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Lead, concludes that 'there is a strong view that relationships have developed well and are proving sustainable, although there is still much to do to bridge the gap between policy and implementation'.

Developing the workforce

'The effectiveness of the [third] sector is heavily dependent on it having paid and volunteer workers (including trustees) with the right skills to fulfil their responsibilities. There is a need for investment at a national, regional and local level to support existing good practice, build on what already exists and to extend the benefits more widely across the country.'

A Skills Strategy for the Voluntary and Community Sector, Voluntary Sector National Training Organisation (2004)

33 The third sector is a major employer, with around 600,000 paid workers and up to a further 11 million volunteers. Organisations depend for their effectiveness on the knowledge and skills of these workers, but the small size of many, combined with flexible employment patterns and lack of access to long-term funding, can make it difficult for them to prioritise workforce development.

34 The LSC and the third sector share many key objectives in the area of learning and skills. The LSC therefore has a strong interest in developing the capacity of third sector staff, including volunteers. The third sector workforce includes a high proportion of women, people from minority ethnic backgrounds and people with disabilities or long-term health problems, so workforce development also offers significant opportunities for widening participation, promoting equality and encouraging people to progress on to qualification-based programmes. Workforce development will also further boost the sector's ability to deliver high-quality learning.

In practice: gaining qualifications to teach

In the East of England, six sub-regional third sector development workers have come together to focus on workforce development. 'It has to be a priority,' says Regional Lead Steph Luke. 'If we're expecting third sector organisations to deliver high-quality learning, we have to make sure they're equipped to do so.'

Through their work with local organisations, the steering group has identified a need to help staff gain qualified teacher status. In 2007, the LSC paid to put around 80 third sector staff through PTLLS (Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector); in 2008, it allocated £50,000 to help them move on to the certificate and diploma in teaching lifelong learning.

In practice: Open Forum

A newly formed Open Forum made up of LSC, statutory and third sector partners from across Yorkshire and the Humber will meet bi-annually to discuss workforce development and delivery issues. Following the establishment of a third sector skills body, whose remit is to ensure that sector skills councils' plans reflect the sector's skills needs, the forum is fulfilling an increasingly important role as both an agent of change and a vehicle for promoting greater understanding of current skills policy and the challenging regional and national skills agenda.

Train to Gain

35 Train to Gain is a national service designed to support training and skills development opportunities in the workplace. It is open to the third sector as an employer of both paid staff and volunteers. The service includes support to create workforce development plans and to identify the right training for each staff member. Third sector organisations can also explore practical ways of reducing barriers to workforce development, such as 'backfilling' and using the **nextstep** service.

In practice: developing skills, building confidence

Warwickshire-based Take-a-Break provides short breaks for children and adults with disabilities or life-threatening illnesses. Director Kim Fathers worked with skills broker Jeff Dean and Skills Relationship Manager Jeff Guest from Business Link West Midlands to identify learning needs. 'They also helped me access funding for two of our managers,' says Kim, 'one of whom was studying for a Level 5 diploma in management and the other a Level 4 NVQ in health and social care.'

The analysis showed that the charity could also benefit from strengthening its strategic planning skills. As a result, Kim is attending a two-day planning course, funded through the Director Development Programme. 'We're developing our management team at very little cost to us as an organisation,' she says.

Janet Down, General Manager at Solihull Leisure Opportunities (soon to become Solihull Life Opportunities), is another advocate for training. 'It helps staff to do their jobs more effectively,' she says. 'But it also builds confidence and boosts morale by letting people know that they're really valued at work.'

Skills broker Linda Rodriguez gave Janet some useful insights into the kinds of management skills that could benefit her organisation. As a result, five managers have completed a qualification in adult learning, with sessions delivered on-site by a trainer from Bournville College. 'We chose a time that minimised disruption, and the trainer tailored the course material to suit our needs,' says Janet. 'The course has also been a great team-building exercise for the people involved.'

At Bradford Community Housing Trust Group, 14 staff are now studying for a Level 2 NVQ in care and a further 20 for a Level 2 NVQ in equality and diversity. 'Working with a skills broker helped us cut through the red tape and find funding and providers far quicker than if we were working alone,' says Group Chair Ian Stone. 'It's also a huge advantage to be able to train a large number of employees at the same time. Working together really boosts their confidence, and it sends out a strong signal that we as an employer are committed to their future.'

In practice: cutting the cost of training

Bath Area Drugs Advisory Service (BADAS) is a registered charity offering practical help to people with drug and alcohol issues. BADAS has worked with Train to Gain skills broker Stuart Veitch-Edwards to access training designed to enhance its staff's skills levels and boost their confidence.

'We had a fairly good idea what we wanted to achieve, but needed to find out what funding might be available and whether there were providers we could call on locally,' explains BADAS training co-ordinator Adrian Murphy. 'Stuart was able to help with both.'

Stuart linked BADAS to Norton Radstock College, where members of the charity's operations delivery team are now studying for NVQ Level 3 qualifications in health and social care, at a cost more than £700 per head lower than would have been charged elsewhere. BADAS also identified a training course for managers, and successfully applied to Train to Gain to cover 50 per cent of the costs.

36 While take-up is increasing, there is still a clear need to raise awareness of Train to Gain among third sector organisations. LSC regions have been finding innovative ways to promote and publicise the scheme and to improve access to it.

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In practice: peer promotion

LSC North West is using third sector intermediaries to promote the Train to Gain initiative to other third sector organisations. In October 2008, a partnership led by Voluntary Sector North West, and including representatives from the area's five sub-regional third sector learning consortia, signed a £120,000 contract committing it to engaging 400 third sector organisations with Train to Gain and getting 75 to sign up to the Skills Pledge.

'Our research into other projects around the country convinced us that getting third sector organisations talking to other third sector organisations was the way to go,' says Regional Lead Ian Ruff. 'They share a common language and an understanding of the barriers each other faces. This is very early days for the new partnership, but the signs are very positive.' At an event held in October, 12 organisations from one of the sub-regions, Cheshire and Warrington, signed up to the Skills Pledge.

In the East of England, the workforce development steering group has also focused on boosting engagement with Train to Gain. 'There was a perception among third sector employers that Train to Gain just wasn't reaching them. They just didn't understand how it was relevant to their needs,' says Regional Lead Steph Luke. 'So we've asked one of the development workers to act as our Train to Gain champion. Their role is to improve dialogue between the skills brokers and the third sector organisations by offering really practical support and training, and producing an information pack. It's working really well.'

The leadership and management offer

37 The leadership and management element of Train to Gain is designed to help third sector employees develop leadership and management skills through both informal learning – such as coaching and mentoring – and more formal study, leading to qualifications. As with the main Train to Gain offer, funding is allocated following a detailed analysis of skills needs.

In practice: managing for change

South Gloucestershire-based childcare provider Children's Playlink is a charity – but it is also a company employing 22 staff, and therefore faces the same challenges as any other small business. When Senior Manager Jane Spence decided she would benefit from some formal management training, Train to Gain skills broker Vicky Holford helped her access funding worth £1,000, a significant proportion of the total cost of her course.

Jane is now half way through a one-year BTEC advanced Level 7 professional management course, and is already putting her learning to good use. 'We've just done a module on change management,' she says. 'That's very timely as we're currently looking at restructuring and discussing how we can make sure we bring the staff along with us.'

Vicky is convinced of the benefits of this kind of training for third sector organisations. 'Jane's experience shows that management training is essential for all kinds of organisations,' she says. 'I'm so pleased that we could help with funding. She's already putting her learning to use at Children's Playlink, and I know she – and the organisation as a whole – will continue to benefit from it for a long time to come.'

Upskilling volunteers

38 For many people, volunteering represents a first step back into the world of work. The LSC recognises the role of the third sector in supporting this process. Through Train to Gain, some LSC regions are funding a range of approaches aimed at making volunteers' experiences as constructive and positive as possible.

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In practice: engaging with volunteers

LSC South East has awarded £170,000 to a team of advisers whose role will be to help Train to Gain brokers engage volunteers in training and development. The project's aims are to increase the number of economically inactive adults engaging in training and to get 1,000 volunteers on to Train to Gain-funded provision by spring 2009. Advisers will act as a bridge linking the LSC, skills brokers and the third sector, raising awareness and understanding and building strong relationships that will continue to deliver benefits beyond the life of the project.

The region is also working to secure £400,000 in funding for a Third Sector Learning Ambassadors programme. This will involve recruiting and developing at least six learning and development advisers in key third sector employers. Their role will be to promote training for both paid staff and volunteers, with a particular focus on Train to Gain.

In practice: securing long-term commitment

Chesterfield and North Derbyshire RSPCA is hoping to solve its volunteer crisis by making the Skills Pledge and using funding from Train to Gain.

The independent charity, which does not receive funding from the national RSPCA, plans to use Train to Gain to offer volunteers free NVQ courses in the hope of encouraging them to make a long-term commitment.

'Lots of people contact us to volunteer, but then fall away,' says Branch Manager Julie Ward. 'Through Train to Gain, we can offer training that will hopefully encourage them to stick around. We also hope that some will choose to build on their interest in animal welfare, maybe even turning their pastime into a career.'

The broker service

39 Train to Gain brokers across the country have been working to put in place the resources needed to maximise third sector involvement in Train to Gain. In some areas, this has meant taking on new staff, while in others existing staff have been offered specialist training to help them understand and respond to the sector's unique needs.

In practice: boosting uptake

In Yorkshire and the Humber, Lantra, the sector skills council for the environmental and land-based sector, is providing a Train to Gain brokerage service for the voluntary, community and faith sector. Lantra's appointment, combined with changes to the Train to Gain eligibility criteria, greater flexibility and an increase in the funding available, has had a significant impact on uptake. More than 40 third sector organisations have signed the Skills Pledge, and a further 130 are currently working with Lantra to explore their learning needs.

In practice: working with employer forums

In the North East, the LSC is working with Business Enterprise North East (BENE) to improve engagement with the third sector by recruiting two new employer forums, one focusing specifically on social enterprise and the other on the third sector as a whole, to advise BENE on issues facing the sector, act as a critical friend and be an advocate for business support.

All BENE's customer-facing staff, along with the senior management team and selected board members and executives, are taking part in staff training to learn more about the third sector. To date, the region's third sector organisations have accessed over £175,000 in support from the BENE Investment Centre.

Apprenticeships

40 Apprenticeships offer benefits to both individuals and organisations. The LSC is currently looking for ways to increase the number of Apprenticeships in the third sector and to attract more apprentices from diverse backgrounds.

In practice: targeted provision

In the East Midlands, a consortium led by Enable has won a £480,000 ESF contract to develop and deliver a framework and pathway for Apprenticeships that will be open to third sector organisations across the region. The aim is to offer targeted provision for adults aged 19 and over in paid or unpaid work within the third sector who either have no prior qualifications or whose first Level 2 qualification is obsolete. Enable is now working with the third sector to ensure that the pathway and framework reflect its needs – essentially, asking the third sector what it needs in order to build its own capacity.

Communication and sharing expertise

'[M]ore effective consultation with the [third sector], and enhanced communication with its client groups, can help to ensure that local LSC plans reflect the needs and preferences of a wider range of learners. Part of the step-change to which this strategy aspires means facilitating a more active role for the [third sector] in LSC strategic thinking and objective-setting.'

Working Together, LSC (2004)

41 Good working partnerships depend on good communication. *Working Together* calls on the LSC to formulate clear, relevant messages and make good, intelligent use of credible contacts to reach out to third sector partners. It also stresses the need to embed good communication into business practices, rather than relying on individuals to maintain relationships between organisations.

42 As a result, every LSC region now has a regional lead whose role is to champion the sector and ensure good two-way communication, and there are a number of local LSC office champions who are doing the same. In some areas, local and regional compacts are helping to establish agreed principles and consistent ways of working.

In practice: strategies for engagement and communication

LSC West Midlands has developed a strategy for engaging with the third sector that reflects the priority areas set out in *Working Together*: the third sector as provider of learning and skills; the third sector as employer; the third sector as a source of expertise and channel for communication; and communication and working relationships. The team now plans to go out to the third sector and ask for its input into the strategy.

A second strategy, this time focusing entirely on communication, is also under development. 'A group of staff are developing the strategy as part of their own learning and development,' says Regional Lead Jerry Conway. 'As a first step, they've developed a questionnaire for both third sector organisations and LSC colleagues. The aim is for it to be a totally consultative process. We want to show that we're really listening to the sector and taking what it tells us on board.'

In practice: the *Working Together* steering group

The Yorkshire and the Humber *Working Together* steering group was initially set up as a pragmatic response to the *Working Together* strategy. Jointly chaired by the LSC and the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Forum, the group shares information and promotes discussion of both policy and practice. LSC Regional Lead Mandy Crawford-Lee measures the success of the group by 'the fact that the Regional Forum takes every opportunity to publicly promote the close partnership arrangement and the robustness of the relationship between our organisations – at every level'.

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43 The LSC is making a significant commitment in terms of both money and time to ensuring effective communication with the third sector in every region. In the South East region, £2 million has been allocated to Laying the Foundations learning networks, which encourage organisations to work together to provide opportunities for adults to learn in the community. In the North West, £35,000 has been allocated to part-fund the appointment of a dedicated third sector co-ordinator, and other regions are doing the same.

In practice: developing partnerships

In Yorkshire and the Humber, Amanda Vickers has been appointed Development Officer for Workforce and Skills, with a remit to develop and promote partnerships between the local LSC and the third sector. The role was born out of the *Working Together* sub-regional project, set up in 2006 to assess the potential for the local LSC to engage with third sector learning and skills providers. Amanda then worked as District Co-ordinator for Wakefield.

Communication is at the heart of both roles. 'In Wakefield, my remit was to bring together potential providers with a view to forming a network,' Amanda explains. 'As part of that, I ran a series of learning events. For many local third sector organisations, this was the first time they'd heard of the LSC. By using LSC speakers at the events, we succeeded in giving the organisation a human face and in increasing understanding and encouraging dialogue on both sides.'

Today, Amanda's role is to continue to engage with potential partners and stakeholders, and to support established relationships. She is also charged with developing and delivering inclusive consultation and communication processes both within the third sector and between the sector and the LSC. This includes capturing input from learners and potential learners and populating the regional forum website with information and analysis about learning and skills, as well as organising regular conferences, seminars and meetings.

In practice: supporting two-way dialogue

LSC East of England set up its third sector advisory group in the wake of a third sector summit held in February 2007. 'We had three objectives,' says Regional Lead Steph Luke, 'to improve communication, to develop a *Working Together* action plan and to set up this group. We wanted a forum where we could monitor the action plan and that would support two-way dialogue.'

In fact, the group, which includes representatives from Jobcentre Plus as well as the LSC and the third sector, has ended up spending its first 18 months focusing mainly on capacity-building. As a result, the region now has six successful consortia or managed partnerships working together to put in joint bids for funding and collaborate on delivery. A series of events held as part of the latest ESF round has offered third sector organisations practical guidance on the tendering process.

Now, following an evaluation by NIACE, the advisory group is looking to refocus. 'We're planning an event for early 2009 which will give us a chance to look back at what we've achieved and forward at what we should do next,' says Steph. 'With the consortia in place, I think there's definitely scope for the group to focus on really getting third sector organisations involved at a more strategic level.' Two sub-groups have also been set up, one focusing on Skills for Life and the other on workforce development.

Working with intermediaries

44 Local LSCs are working to make contact and build relationships with third sector organisations through a range of intermediaries, including regional forums and advisory groups, local infrastructure organisations and consortia. Evidence suggests that this is an effective way of raising awareness and building relationships quickly.

In practice: two-way communication

In the North West region, Voluntary Sector North West has been awarded a contract to support and promote two-way communication between the LSC and the third sector. This includes part-funding for a regional co-ordinator whose overall remit, like that of their counterpart in Yorkshire and the Humber, is to maximise the third sector's contribution to the local economy. In the West Midlands, the approach has been to identify projects that are already including third sector organisations and give them the funding they need to further develop their work.

In practice: supporting shared objectives

Groundwork West Midlands works to support neighbourhoods in need, helping local people develop their skills and encouraging them to get involved in making decisions about where they live and how they can improve their quality of life. As part of the Lottery-funded Potential in People project, Groundwork is exploring ways of developing and strengthening learning consortia and tackling some of the barriers the third sector faces in bidding for contracts.

By sharing information and communicating effectively with each other, LSC West Midlands and Groundwork are supporting each other's objectives. 'We realised very quickly we had the same objectives,' says Regional Lead Jerry Conway. 'We invited the organiser, Janet Armstrong, to one of our third sector leads meetings and, as a result, she's now set up and run a series of workshops for other local third sector organisations, designed to help them tap into sources of funding.'

Groundwork has also carried out a piece of research, Ears to the Ground, in partnership with NIACE. In the light of the report's key recommendation, which called for barriers to contracts to be removed, LSC West Midlands is now looking at how its tender specifications are written, with a view to making them more third sector-friendly.

Direct contact

45 Establishing direct contact, particularly with smaller, community-based organisations that operate outside established networks, is enabling the LSC to tap into existing relationships with the hardest-to-reach audience groups. The regional teams are seeking advice and guidance from specialist third sector organisations, creating dedicated LSC liaison posts within the third sector, finding opportunities for LSC staff to sit on third sector boards and management committees (and vice versa) and setting up secondments.

In practice: sharing expertise through secondments

In 2005, Economic Development Adviser Beja Kumer was seconded from Birmingham and Solihull LSC to work as project co-ordinator for the ESF-funded EQUAL Aspire project. Beja's remit was to help the 30-plus partners involved in round 1 comply with ESF requirements and support them through the process of tendering for funding for round 2.

Having spent 20 years working in the third sector, Beja was well placed to understand partners' priorities and needs. Nevertheless, he describes the secondment as a learning experience. 'It really brought home to me the level of support third sector organisations need both to secure ESF funding and then to manage projects,' he says. 'The administrative burden is quite high.'

The secondment also helped bridge the cultural gap between the LSC and the third sector. 'We established really good working relationships both locally and more widely,' says Beja. 'The point of the EQUAL projects is that they involve organisations from across Europe. So the scope for sharing experiences and good practice is enormous.'

Maggie Pimley is currently working for LSC West Midlands, and has been on secondment from the Birmingham Voluntary Service Council for the past 18 months. 'I've been actively encouraged to share my knowledge and experience of the third sector with my LSC colleagues,' she says. 'I believe that's helping to shape our approach to commissioning and procurement.'

'Personally, I feel I've gained an in-depth understanding of how a public sector organisation operates and in particular how national policies impact on local delivery. As a result I'm more convinced of the value of involving the third sector in strategic planning and decision-making.'

Bringing the Compact to life locally, regionally and nationally

'The Compact, as a framework document, is a starting point not a conclusion. The Government and the voluntary and community sector are committed to working together to develop its application and effectiveness.'

Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England, Home Office Active Community Unit (1998)

46 The *Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England* was established in 1998 with the aim of strengthening links between the Government and the third sector and providing a practical framework for joint working towards shared objectives. A review of progress towards these aims carried out in 2008 found that, while the LSC had a clear strategy for working in partnership with the third sector, supported by strong leadership and significant investment, some aspects of the LSC's culture, systems and processes, particularly at local and regional level, were hampering progress towards full Compact compliance.

47 'Bringing the Compact to life' is therefore a priority for all local LSCs. Work in this area includes making the Compact a standing agenda item at all meetings, running Compact awareness sessions for all staff and even, as in the North West region, creating a dedicated Compact group.

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In practice: embedding the Compact

Since 2007, LSC North West has had a dedicated internal group charged with embedding the principles of the Compact across the organisation. The group, which is chaired by the regional third sector champion and includes colleagues with responsibility for Train to Gain and employability, planning, procurement, quality, contracting and ESF, has achieved some notable successes. Third sector representatives are now playing an active role in developing tender specifications and in the ongoing ESF programme, and procurement timetables have been adapted where possible to meet Compact requirements.

Indeed, Regional Lead Ian Ruff believes the group's success already points to the need for a change of focus. 'I think we've succeeded in raising awareness and embedding the Compact principles very quickly. Setting up the group has undoubtedly helped to concentrate people's minds. Looking ahead, we may well swap regular meetings for ad hoc get-togethers to discuss specific issues.'

In practice: creating a regional code

LSC North East is working with third sector partners to create a code of practice that will help establish new ways of working and set clear expectations on both sides. 'Essentially, what we're saying through the code is that we want to make it easier for third sector organisations to play a part in delivery in this region,' says Regional Lead Hilary Porter.

The draft code sets out the following principles:

- Funding is not necessarily about providing a service. So, for example, third sector organisations can attract funding for more general activities such as providing a voice for the sector or for their role as co-ordinator.
- The LSC will make timely decisions on grant approvals and contracts.
- The LSC will provide security of funding by making multi-year commitments, subject to performance against mutually agreed criteria.
- The LSC will provide fair and full funding, determined in the same way as for other sectors and agencies, with increases for inflation and growth built in.
- All grant schemes and contracts will include provision for advance payment of grants to third sector organisations where necessary.
- Grants or contracts must not be withdrawn or reduced without prior discussion and reasonable notice.

The code also calls for the LSC and the third sector to consider a joint approach to monitoring and evaluation. 'It's not designed to replace existing local Compacts,' says Hilary. 'We want it to contribute to a constructive dialogue about funding, commissioning and procurement and provide a flexible framework for how programmes should be designed and delivered.'

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Planning and consultation

'The [third] sector has a great deal to offer the LSC in terms of knowledge and expertise to inform local planning and funding decisions, and as a means of gathering and disseminating news and information amongst individuals and communities whom the LSC has found difficult to reach.'

Working Together, LSC (2004)

48 Delivering efficient public services depends on achieving a good fit between provision and user needs. Third sector organisations can offer valuable insights into the learning and other needs of specific groups, and into the barriers to accessing learning that they face. Local LSCs are therefore involving third sector partners and potential partners in planning and consultation at all levels and at every stage, from strategy to development to implementation.

49 In the North West, third sector organisations were invited to take part in a broad consultation on the region's ESF finance plan. As a result, the revised plan puts greater emphasis on the importance of black and minority ethnic groups. The minimum contract size has been reduced in the hope of attracting more bids from smaller organisations, and contract periods have been extended to up to three years.

In practice: Skills for Jobs

Through the Skills for Jobs programme, LSC London is creating new opportunities for partnership working with third sector organisations. Skills for Jobs is an innovative programme that focuses on moving disadvantaged people into work by giving them job-specific skills that match local vacancies.

'We've been working with the third sector to write tender specifications that put the emphasis firmly on outreach,' says Regional Lead Angela Berry. 'We want our partner organisations to have strong links with the target groups – that could mean ex-offenders, homeless people, people with learning difficulties – and with employers who are happy to take on people with relatively low levels of skills and in many cases no formal qualifications.'

Under the terms of their contract, the partner organisations must then provide appropriate, job-focused training, either directly or through their links with a suitable college or training provider. They must also commit to supporting new employees' training needs once they're in work.

Skills for Jobs is already having a positive impact on levels of engagement with the third sector. 'So far, third sector organisations have won contracts worth over £3 million in this region alone,' says Angela. 'That includes £900,000 awarded to Crisis and St Mungo's to help homeless people back into work. Another £1 million is going into training and development for offenders. Skills for Jobs is an excellent example of partnership working leading to really effective targeted provision.'

Next steps

'Our goal is a skills and FE system which targets support for individuals and employers where it is needed most, and allows colleges and providers to deliver the excellent service we must have as we move towards a sustainable vision of a high-skills, high-employment, high-productivity nation.'

Raising Expectations: Enabling the system to deliver, DCSF and DIUS (2008)

50 The Government's decision to abolish the LSC in 2010 means there is unlikely to be a further review of the LSC's engagement with the third sector. This document therefore represents an important record of good practice and lessons learned to date which can be passed on to the LSC's successors, the SFA and the YPLA.

51 Further consideration will be given to how the LSC and the third sector can work collaboratively with the two new agencies and their sponsor departments (the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)) to maximise the learning from the last five years, and to design systems and processes that have the third sector in mind from the start. Ideas are already starting to take shape, and the LSC regions are considering how best to involve and include the third sector in the new arrangements.

Sharing corporate intelligence

52 All nine regional LSCs are working to identify corporate intelligence that will need to be shared with the SFA and the YPLA. Thinking to date points to a clear need to maintain a focus on Compact compliance as well as a learning and engagement strategy with the third sector to support our reach to those people currently furthest away from learning and skills. This should be embedded in all levels of the new organisations. More specifically, there will also be a need to look at how third sector organisations whose remit straddles the 16 to 25 age range engage with both agencies.

53 With regard to the YPLA, the LSC offices are addressing the following questions:

- How can LSC third sector providers working in different parts of the country simplify their arrangements in a way that benefits the new agency, the local authorities, themselves and their learners?
- How will the YPLA ensure that the voice of the third sector is heard (and that the work of the LSC third sector advisory group is not lost in the transition)?
- How will third sector providers be supported to understand the new arrangements?
- How will the new arrangements ensure that local authorities fully include the third sector in their commissioning plans?
- Within local authorities, who will monitor third sector involvement?
- How will sub-contracting arrangements across local authorities be monitored for fairness and transparency?

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54 With regard to the SFA, the LSC offices are looking at the following priority areas:

- How will the SFA ensure that the voice of the third sector is heard (and that the work of the LSC third sector advisory group is not lost in the transition)?
- How will third sector providers be supported to understand the new arrangements?
- How will the SFA deal with third sector concerns that it is contracting at regional rather than local level?
- How will the SFA work to support the third sector in delivering to hard-to reach and disadvantaged communities?
- How will the success of the SFA in working with marginalised groups and the third sector be measured?
- How will sub-contracting arrangements be monitored for fairness and transparency?

55 Each LSC region has been charged with ensuring that any information that is being passed to providers and potential providers within the region is 'proofed' to make sure that it can be disseminated and understood by the third sector.

In practice: web updates

In the South East, the LSC has created a dedicated web page (lsc.gov.uk/regions/southeast/thirdsector) for disseminating information about its work to the third sector. The page is updated each month, and includes the latest information about the successor agencies. The page goes out to the third sector as well as partner agencies and LSC staff within the region.

Collaborative planning

56 Local LSC offices are also working with third sector partners to prepare for 2010. Communication is a high priority, with the transition to the new agencies flagged as a regular agenda item in all communication channels. In at least one LSC region, an individual has been given specific responsibility for ensuring that the third sector is incorporated into all planning and all new systems.

Consulting and engaging with the third sector

57 In December 2008, DIUS and DCSF were invited to speak at a meeting of third sector infrastructure organisations convened by the LSC. The meeting marked the first in a series of conversations between the departments (and, in time, the new agencies) and the third sector. For more information, go to <http://thirdsector.lsc.gov.uk>.

58 The second meeting will take place in London on 17 March 2009, at which Kevin Brennan, the Minister for the Third Sector, will launch this document as part of the legacy of the engagements between the LSC and the third sector.

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