

the  
VOLUNTARY  
& COMMUNITY SECTOR  
**MANIFESTO**  
for  
YORKSHIRE  
AND THE HUMBER



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regional forum 

## Yorkshire and the Humber: **Involved**

A region that encourages and enables all its residents to shape and influence decision-making

## Yorkshire and the Humber: **Equal**

A region that values the assets and potential of all its residents and makes sure that everyone can share in its success

## Yorkshire and the Humber: **Sustainable**

A region that improves society, the environment and the economy through its strategies and actions

# WHAT WILL ACHIEVE THE VISION?

## YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER: INVOLVED

- ✦ People are able to shape decisions that affect where they live and work
- ✦ Promotion and support for a strong, active and influential civil society
- ✦ Local and regional programmes involve public, voluntary and private partners
- ✦ Resources for partnership development are written into delivery programmes

### INVOLVED: HOW THE VCS CONTRIBUTES

- ✓ A unique track record in delivering real community development and practical solutions. → Groundwork Trusts who have pioneered citizens involvement in neighbourhood regeneration.
- ✓ Bringing people together to develop a shared vision for where they live. → Rural Action Yorkshire and the Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council who facilitate the Community-led Planning process in rural areas.
- ✓ Reflecting the views, needs, and concerns of VCS organisations and people they work with to policy makers and statutory agencies. → The Regional Forum in its engagement with the regional policy agenda and the promotion of civil society.
- ✓ The sector which can best engage with disadvantaged and disconnected groups. → West Bowling Training and Advice Centre, Bradford who work with young Muslim women.

## YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER: EQUAL

- ✦ The growing social and economic gap between people in the region is reduced
- ✦ Social capital is recognised and encouraged
- ✦ Untapped entrepreneurial potential is released in all communities
- ✦ All new programmes include specific inclusion targets and indicators

### EQUAL: HOW THE VCS CONTRIBUTES

- ✓ The development of community based enterprises that recognise the potential of all citizens to contribute. → Spot On, based in Harrogate, which provides paid employment to disabled people.
- ✓ The provision of practical support for communities in building community capacity. → The Courtyard, which serves as a focal point for community based charities in the Goole district.

## YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER: SUSTAINABLE

- ✦ Regional strategies give equal weight to economic, social and environmental issues
- ✦ Transport links connect people to services, leisure and housing as well as jobs
- ✦ People have incremental support into meaningful job opportunities
- ✦ Communities shape and share economic development
- ✦ Green energy, recycling and social housing are promoted to create jobs, training, social and environmental improvement.

### SUSTAINABLE: HOW THE VCS CONTRIBUTES

- ✓ Promoting a more joined up approach to economic development. → Kerbside Recycling in Calderdale: a social enterprise which provides employment for disadvantaged people, and collects and recycles waste.
- ✓ Working with communities to promote environmental improvements. → Brunswick Organic Nursery: a social enterprise where people with learning difficulties develop craft and organic horticultural skills.

# HOW CAN THE VCS HELP TO ACHIEVE THE VISION?

We are asking political parties to pledge to the following commitments to ensure a strong and thriving VCS in our region:

## **INVOLVED: VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS, COMMUNITY GROUPS AND SERVICE-USERS ARE INTEGRAL TO PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING**

- ✦ The VCS is formally included as essential partners in the design, management and delivery of programmes and partnerships
- ✦ Regional and local statutory agencies are required to have a corporate strategy for working with the VCS
- ✦ Local government monitors its level of engagement with the VCS
- ✦ Regional strategies and programmes prioritise activity that combines economic, environmental and social development.
- ✦ The government retains independent funding for VCS representation and advocacy work
- ✦ All regional and local strategies and services are underpinned by the core principle of inclusion

## **EQUAL: THE VCS REMAINS INDEPENDENT, AND DRIVEN BY COMMUNITIES, BENEFICIARIES AND USERS**

- ✦ Direct, long-term grant funding for community responses to community needs and opportunities
- ✦ Creation of a Regional Compact Scrutiny Board
- ✦ An induction in the VCS for public sector workers who are involved with the sector
- ✦ Commissioners use the 8 intelligent commissioning principles described by the Office of the Third Sector
- ✦ Government to continue the provision of publicly funded advice centres
- ✦ Local Authorities to take full opportunity of the government's asset transfer agenda

## **SUSTAINABLE: THE VCS IS SUPPORTED TO MODERNISE AND DEVELOP**

- ✦ Politicians support the 'Create' campaign for a Community Allowance
- ✦ Sector specific qualifications available to all staff and volunteers
- ✦ PQASSO is recognised and accepted by statutory agencies as an appropriate quality standard for voluntary sector organisations
- ✦ Consistent financial support for volunteer centres
- ✦ 100% of Lottery funding goes to the VCS
- ✦ Develop a "Community Programme" to create new jobs in the VCS for unemployed people doing work of social benefit.

## WHAT IS THE VCS MANIFESTO?

This document sets out the Voluntary and Community Sector's (VCS) vision for Yorkshire and the Humber. It explains the key commitments that would enable the sector to make an even greater contribution to our region. Its purpose is to influence and shape the manifestos of political parties for the next general election and to build relationships, understanding and support for the VCS amongst Councillors, MPs and Prospective Parliamentary Candidates in our region. The commitments in the Manifesto will create an environment for a thriving Third Sector, which is included as an indicator in many of this region's Local Area Agreements.

It was written after extensive consultation with Regional Forum members and VCS networks across Yorkshire and the Humber and will be reviewed in late Spring 2009 to check progress against the commitments and to ensure it still reflects the views of the sector.

## THE VCS IN YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

Throughout our region, there are more than 30,000 voluntary and community organisations. This diverse sector ranges from regional arms of national charities to small voluntary groups working in their local communities. Activities include major service delivery (e.g. care for the elderly and social housing); sports and social activities; job creation projects; campaigning; and 'user-led' groups that represent their members on everything from mental health needs to the rights of migrants.

In our region, voluntary and community organisations:

- \* Employ an estimated 45,000 paid employees
- \* Work with more than 500,000 volunteers and trustees
- \* Contribute over £500 million to the region's economy
- \* Employ 3-4% of the workforce
- \* Are a major provider of public services to marginalised people
- \* Bring together people around issues of common interest

## YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER REGIONAL FORUM

The Regional Forum is a strategic agency that promotes and supports the contribution of voluntary and community organisations in Yorkshire and the Humber. Our 160 members include district-wide and sub-regional VCS support agencies and also voluntary organisations working in specialist areas such as mental health, children's services, older people's services and advocacy. Through our members, we reach and represent thousands of voluntary organisations across the region.

## HOW TO READ THE MANIFESTO

The Manifesto starts with our vision for Yorkshire and the Humber (page 2). On the next page we outline our ideas about what changes in the way programmes and policies work would make this vision a reality. We also give some specific examples of how voluntary and community organisations are **already** contributing to the region. Page 4 lists the Manifesto Commitments. These are the changes we need to help the VCS do **more** to make our region a great place to live.



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