

Insight

The One East Midlands Magazine

Summer 2010 Issue 5



INSIDE:

Improving Sustainability
Sharing Learning
Illustrating Impact

Welcome

As I write this introduction the general election is looming and the political climate is one of uncertainty and anticipation. By the time you read this introduction some of that uncertainty will have been resolved by the election result. The question is what does the outcome mean for your organisation?

In many other ways uncertainty will remain the order of the day over the next year. With the proposed cuts in public spending by all parties and the loss of current funding streams in 2011 how should we focus our attentions during 2010-11?

In edition 5 of Insight we work with sector funders to look at the future and how current funding can pave a way for a more sustainable future. Survival will depend on what we have learnt on the journey and how we use this to demonstrate our value. We will therefore be focussing on three key issues:

- **Knowledge**
- **Impact and**
- **Success**

Welcome to the KIS edition!

Rachel Quinn,
Chief Executive



Members' Survey

It is really important that One East Midlands Members benefit from the services we provide. Our latest membership survey was sent in February to gather feedback on the information, policy and network services that we provide and to identify future areas of priority. The survey report is now available online: www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk

In brief, One EM's current services were highly rated with 65% of respondents rating all services as either useful or very useful. The policy areas that One EM is currently working on were well supported and almost all respondents felt that One EM membership was beneficial. Several respondents emphasised the need for One EM to better highlight the value that regional infrastructure adds to local organisations.

As part of our on-going commitment to showcasing good practice we have collaborated with EMRIC and EMISG to produce two video case studies which demonstrate the value of local and regional infrastructure and the real benefit it brings to people and communities. You can view the case studies on-line at: www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk/casestudies

Hannah Luck,
Communications Manager

In this issue

Insight

Summer 2010

Issue 5

1 Welcome

3 Policy Update

Update on the Election

4 Navcaboodle

5 Perspectives on

Sustainability

7 Sharing Learning

Four case studies

9 Shaping Policy
through Regional Work

Interview with Gordon Hunter

11 Spotlight on a Member

Community Matters

12 Spotlight on a Trustee

David Springett

13 Reportback

Health and Social Care



Credits:

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Artwork: Shout Design

Policy Update:

It's a Coalition Government

After a period of uncertainty about the direction of the government a coalition government was formed. The Coalition (Conservatives and Liberal Democrats) had pledged various policy changes in their separate election manifestos. With the merger of these policy pledges the role of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) remains uncertain. The two parties have published 11 key issues that will underpin the government and have also expanded their key pledges on policy changes, see the Election 2010 page on our website for full up-to-date information: www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk.

Of the priorities that One East Midlands publicised during the run-up to the election, funding is one of the key issues of concern for the sector. The VCS and the communities we work with will need continued support in this period that will be characterised by spending cuts. The coalition government has reasserted their ambition to build the Big Society. We hope, and will work to ensure, the views of the sector will be considered in this process.

The Big Society is expected to be resourced from spending cuts, trimming of regional and sub regional bodies and creation of a Big Society Bank from unclaimed assets. The VCS has always taken centre stage in working with communities and ensuring the vulnerable and disadvantaged can play an active and full role in civic life. Will the sector be immune from the government cuts in expenditure? The new government is determined to explore new ways of giving and Gift Aid. The sector needs support to become more sustainable and help communities through this process and to support the vulnerable sections of society through these difficult times.

The concept of the Big Society offers many opportunities for the sector. But it is essential in this period of change that the sector can provide evidence of the need of our services, the impact of our work and look to new ways of resourcing the work we do.

For more information please contact Henry Muchiyani, henrymuchiyani@one-em.org.uk.



Navcaboodle:

a new way
to share
information

Carolyn Ellis,
NAVCA



Being able to share information and knowledge has always been an essential part of working in the voluntary sector. In the past this could only be done by speaking to organisations locally, or through email based networks that were able to connect people doing the same or similar jobs throughout the country. These networks had a major drawback that if people were not part of the network at the very beginning they missed out on previous conversations and shared information and struggled to ever catch up. Early in 2009 NAVCA decided to find a solution to this which still allowed conversations and information sharing to take place. It was also vital that it remained specific to the voluntary sector, especially those working in local support and development organisations.

We decided to look at the advances in social media to find a solution. We wanted something similar to Facebook which let people talk to each other and share documents, photographs and videos. After looking at the possibility of using Facebook we decided that we wanted to use a programme that could be tailored to the needs of our members, that allowed us to format the way it looked and also gave us a chance to manage the content that was posted. We looked at various options and decided to use Ning to create our online space as it gave us the flexibility we, and our members, needed.

One of the great things about navcaboodle is that individuals can set up a group related to their job or area of work and can choose whether that group is open, so everyone can join and see content, or closed, which allows people to talk more frankly and membership of the group to be more selective.

In the beginning it felt quite lonely on navcaboodle with NAVCA staff posting all the information and conversations, but as word got out about the site more and more NAVCA members and people working in, or with, the voluntary sector joined and started to share information and documents and conversations took on a life of their own.

The best way to find out more is to join navcaboodle, to do this visit www.navcaboodle.org.uk.

(And in case you were wondering the name navcaboodle came from the idea that by joining, NAVCA were providing you the whole 'kit and caboodle' to do your work more efficiently and effectively!)



Perspectives on sustainability

LOCAL: Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group

Siobhan Spencer,
Chief Executive

Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group provides assistance and information to the Gypsy community and has received funding from BIG and Capacitybuilders. These projects have expanded our reach across the East and West Midlands.

This funding has enabled us to strengthen community members in the West Midlands region and there is now an office base in Walsall, where celebration and meetings took place for Romany Gypsy Traveller History Month. The funding has also supported the development of a business plan for Lincolnshire and ongoing support to groups in Leicestershire. We have been able to undertake training for PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations) and community members will receive certificates for the Training the Trainers course from Derby University.

Both these projects have enabled groups to come together to share good practice and knowledge. Some groups do not want to develop to the point of employing workers but are glad to have development assistance. The fact that we are a self-help group gives others the confidence to try and do it also.

We have also made some significant impact on planning departments to obtain planning permissions for gypsy and traveler sites that were not retrospective. One recent decision

proved that families will not necessarily be turned down because they are not actually living on the site i.e. showing that need. The aim to reduce retrospective planning was at the heart of our project. Sharing cases like this with groups gets the message out further afield.

The funding has created opportunities to develop our organisation and the groups we work with although sustainability will always be a difficult issue as it depends on a variety of factors.

We have found that it is very beneficial to work together as groups and this will probably be where the answer lies. Partnership working is happening more than before and two events have been arranged in the East and West Midlands which enables groups and individuals to work together not just with Gypsy and Traveller groups but with agencies such as the Police and the PCT.

For more information visit
www.dglg.org.

REGIONAL: Social Enterprise East Midlands (SEEM)

David Kelly,
Head of Services and Development

Despite growing support for social enterprise, some VCS leaders are still suspicious when the conversation turns to business ventures designed to meet social needs.

In many third sector organisations there lurks a fundamental distrust of the profit motive. Board members, staff, and stakeholders refer to it when they talk about sustainability, self-sufficiency, and social goals, but their comfort level dissipates in direct proportion to how profitable the venture becomes.

However, with the advent of a new policy direction under the coalition Government third sector organisations are going to be faced with an increased need to look at enterprise as a means to secure their ability to deliver their mission of achieving social justice and empowered communities. The world is changing and it appears that the state is less likely to be giving out money for organisations to 'do good things'. We may not agree with this but this is the reality in post-recession Britain.

The push to achieve a 'Big Society' places the third sector at the heart of the agenda, opening up increased opportunities for delivering public services against a backdrop of reduced public sector grant investment into the sector. This new drive raises a key challenge to the sector – the ability of our infrastructure bodies to be

better able to support front line organisations to manage change and to develop their understanding of markets, investment and business models, enabling them to develop and grow in response to increased business opportunities.

To support this SEEM has developed the Financial Awareness and Investment Readiness (FAIR) programme with support from BASIS. The programme aims to support cultural shift within the third sector moving organisations from a position of risk averseness to recognising and embracing opportunities to establish business ventures and undertake trading. SEEM will be delivering a programme to third sector infrastructure organisations to increase the quality and quantity of business support available to the third sector in the East Midlands. The programme will build the skills of advisers to provide quality assured advice, understand investment readiness and be able to advise clients on how to deploy appropriate financial products to support the development of trading.

This programme is an important additional resource available to the sector. By building the business support capability of infrastructure they can then offer services to help organisations to consider their full range of options and take those important practical steps towards sustainability.

For more information visit
www.seem.uk.net.

NATIONAL: Big Lottery key success factors for sustainable projects

The BIG Lottery Fund is always keen to work with and guide projects as they move towards sustainability. Some key areas that projects should consider as they progress towards sustainability are:

Early consideration –

Planning for sustainability from the outset allows sustainability considerations to influence decisions at every level including those on project structures, employment and training, financial management and the make-up of boards/steering groups.

Determining end of grant strategies

– Establishing end of grant strategies one or two years before the completion of the grant can guide project development and should ensure the regular review of progress towards sustainability.

Planning for mainstreaming –

It is important that both projects and funders are realistic about mainstreaming expectations, in terms of what could/should be sustained, levels of demand, and potential sources of support.

Capturing and using knowledge –

It is essential to robustly review, evaluate and reflect on achievements to identify 'what works' and is worth sustaining, and to communicate this effectively to convince potential funders/influencers.

Capacity building –

Developing capacity is essential during the project but has an impact beyond

the funding period in terms of future use and maintenance of skills.

Management and business planning –

The availability of appropriate skills to manage projects in a flexible way, including staff issues, and to attract additional funding is key to sustainability.

Performance management –

Collecting evidence of effectiveness is key and provides support when making the case for continuation funding.

Achieving a good fit with national and local strategies –

Identifying ways to fit into local plans, policies and agendas supports sustainability, as does pro-actively establishing links with potential funders/influencers to secure their interest.

Improving partnership working –

Working in partnership ensures that other organisations, including potential funders/influencers, and communities have some involvement in the project. It is important to recognise that sustainability should not simply be defined as the continuation of activities or services delivered by projects. It is also about the lasting benefits or changes brought about by grant funding. Some of the factors above are not only key factors in promoting sustainability but they can also represent the outcome, or route, through which sustainability can be achieved. For example, improved partnership working, while crucial to project delivery, is likely to extend into the post funding environment. The same is true of capacity building and management and business planning, where skills are used after the grant has ended.

For more information visit
www.biglotteryfund.org.uk.

Sharing Learning:

Training For All



Meeting the training needs of the BME VCS social care sector

ARC 'Training for All'

Many Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations encounter inequality in access to resources, information and training. BME VCS social care organisations often have limited or no access to culturally appropriate training, which in turn can impact their ability to provide quality services to their clients.

ARC (Association for Real Change) is working with BME VCS social care organisations and training organisations to develop protocols. The project aims to encourage commissioners, training providers, qualification developers and awarding bodies to review their practice and ensure that training can be accessed by people from a range of ethnic backgrounds. This will ensure such organisations are able to maximise their potential and increase their day-to-day focus on the services they deliver to BME service users including people with learning disabilities. The protocols bring together a range of stakeholders which encourage people to work together and discuss their specific needs.

The first year of the project involved working with BME VCS social care organisations and training providers based in the East Midlands to develop the protocols. The following year saw the project expand to include the North West and the West Midlands.

The next stage of the project is to encourage training and BME VCS social care organisations to 'sign up' to the protocols and emphasise the potential benefits of them not only to the organisations themselves but also to service users. In the final year the project will be promoted nationally through events and the website.

For more information
contact David Grundy,
bmetraining@arcuk.org.uk
or visit www.bmetrainingforall.co.uk.



East Midlands Funding Advice Network

It is an unfortunate truth that securing funding always has to be a high priority for voluntary and community groups. So advice and information on funding from skilled and knowledgeable folks from across all sectors is a resource that many groups can't do without, and even for the biggest voluntary organisations time spent with a specialist advisor is usually worth it.

One EM is developing the East Midlands Funding Advice Network as a cross-sector mechanism for improving the effectiveness of funding advice services across the region. Building on the success of earlier regional funding advice networking EMFAN will deliver regular network events, low cost funding advice training, online funding advice signposting for groups, and improved statistics about advice delivered and grants awarded. It is a package that should deliver more useful advice to meet the voluntary sector's changing funding needs and ultimately attract more sustainable income for the region's VCS groups.

Responding to change

Personalisation; diminishing grant funding; public sector cuts; the growing role of the Internet in funding information and application processes; more focus on earned income and loans – all key trends which will impact on voluntary and community groups in the next few years, and which funding advice workers need to understand and respond to.

In this changing environment standard funding advice training won't be enough to ensure that groups and organisations get the best possible advice about the right direction for their fundraising. EMFAN will be organising regional networking events, workshops and master classes to discuss trends and bring big picture news to grassroots funding advice workers.

For further information
contact Jonny Gutteridge,
jgutteridge@one-em.org.uk.

case studies

ICT Champion

East Midlands

Promoting ICT in the 3rd Sector

Regional ICT initiatives

A number of regional ICT initiatives are working together to support the third sector make better use of information and communications technology (ICT).

Connecting these initiatives is Steve Webster, the Regional ICT Champion for the East Midlands, who helps to ensure that ICT plays a positive role in sustaining a strong and effective third sector.

Steve facilitates the Regional ICT Network (ITEM3) which takes a lead on third sector ICT development at a regional level. It supports the sharing of key information and good practice, the development of new initiatives, and fosters practical collaboration between organisations.

Partnership in action

An exciting development for third sector in the East Midlands has been the success in establishing the Regional ICT Project. With funding from the Big Lottery Fund, this three year project is providing ICT support and advice to third sector infrastructure organisations throughout the region, including ICT health-checks and ICT workshops for development workers.

The project was developed jointly by the regional ICT Champion and key partners from the regional ICT network and is being delivered by a partnership of organisations: Purple Zebra (project lead), High Peak CVS, Voluntary Action Leicestershire, Northampton Volunteering Centre, InvolvingLincs and Leicestershire Centre for Integrated Living.

A partnership approach has been vital to both developing the Regional ICT

Project and in sustaining the Regional ICT network. All of this work is helping to build the sustainability of ICT support initiatives in the region. A key factor in the willingness of partners to work together is a shared commitment to third sector ICT development, together with a shared understanding of the significant differences that ICT can make to organisations.

Sharing knowledge and learning is an ongoing feature of the work of the regional ICT network and has been built into the regional project. The project has an evaluation process built into the work, with feedback routinely sought from participants – facilitating analysis and reflection on the approaches being used and developed.

For more information contact Steve Webster, steve@highpeakcvs.org.uk or visit www.item3.org.uk.



Regional Equality and Diversity Partnership

The Regional Equality and Diversity Partnership (REDP) was created to provide a collective voice for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in the East Midlands on equality, diversity and human rights. REDP aims to provide information, training, research, and support or appropriate challenge in areas of policy development. One of its first events will be a major regional conference on the Equality Act 2010 in Leicester on 10 June. REDP is building an inclusive partnership to raise the profile of equality, diversity and human rights as a means of securing a positive image of the region, greater sustainability, growth and fair access to employment and services.

The founding partner organisations are steering the early stages of development but having now held a series of regional events REDP is creating its core reference group. This will reflect the regional make-up of the VCS and will act as a channel for sharing knowledge and learning, good practice and experience. It will also be responsible for supporting REDP's aims and objectives, measuring its impact and assuring sustainability.

REDP will work to ensure that equality, diversity and human rights are embedded in the decision-making of regional and national institutions and agencies.

For further information visit www.redp.org.uk.

Shaping Policy

Ric

East Midlands
Regional Infrastructure
Consortium

What is the Regional Infrastructure Consortium?

EMRIC is a network of regional infrastructure bodies, by which I mean charities and social enterprises that help front line service providers. They give advice and support to grass root groups on a regional basis, in the six counties that make up the East Midlands.

So what do you think is the difference between RIC membership and EMISG membership?

EMISG is by county so each of the six counties has a body within it that covers a particular theme like volunteering, youth or older people, but they cover simply on a county basis whereas RIC covers the entire six counties of the region. It has all of those really important links to regional government, regional funding and joined up strategies so it is really helpful.

When did you first get involved in RIC?

About a year ago. I was recruited as the independent Chair. It's been really rewarding and the membership is particularly good.

What do you see as the value of RIC?

It's amazing the amount of knowledge you can get around a table. It's amazing how fortuitously, opportunistically, you can come across somebody with a similar interest, a new way to develop a product or collaborate on a bid, and come up with a solution. The more people you have in one room, the more of that brain power you can get involved and the more lateral thinking you can do. I find that apart from the basic agenda of the meeting when you get to the end of our meeting and we start sharing information, you can learn much more and come up with action plans. It is really important, sharing knowledge, not just for the sector and for the organisations around the table. A network that meets frequently and swaps ideas and creativity is a good one and regionally the group brings together a diverse range of individuals and organisations.

Today's meeting has been a good example. We have been talking about what is going to happen after the election, everybody is confused and is waiting to see what is going to happen. Generally speaking we do know that there has been a change towards local authorities contracting with larger groups that can handle large contracts. The Social Investment Business, who were here today, are currently forming advisory and consultancy groups that help organisations become bidders within regions and counties, which supports what we do as infrastructure bodies.

What do you think are some of RIC's achievements in the last year?

It has influenced how local authorities look at the commissioning process and it's working with the Office of the Third Sector and its seconded advisor from PricewaterhouseCoopers. It is influencing the commissioning process strategically which can offer practical solutions. By our knowledge of the sector and our involvement with grass roots groups we can help influence government policy at a regional and a county level.

Our biggest achievements are influencing strategy. But actually demonstrating on-the-ground impact is much more difficult. We've done a couple of case studies in the past few months that show how infrastructure links all the way down to the grass roots groups.

Some current things that the group are doing?

We are looking at the core funding of infrastructure and publicising the achievements of infrastructure. We are also looking at intelligent commissioning, in other words local authorities doing their best to deliver public services fairly and give everyone a chance to bid to deliver those services. We are looking at how we can influence government locally and regionally through MPs, elected members, people who work for councils, quangos and other government bodies. So mainly I guess representing our membership, influencing decision making in government and having some input via representation and consultation to strategy making.

through regional work



Interview with Gordon Hunter,
Chair of East Midlands
Regional Infrastructure Consortium

How can RIC be made sustainable?

There are two things you need to do. One is to ensure the future of One East Midlands, to do that you have to prove that your networks are viable and relevant, and above all else you need to have core funding for at least four staff to run things because without the secretariat nothing is going to happen. So One EM is a key point, well backed and well funded. Ideally it should be funded in a sustainable way which would mean regional government, before it is abolished, setting aside a large amount of money which will be invested in an endowment, from which the interest will pay for the work of One EM, just as it has done in Essex. They've invested £3.8 million simply to fund infrastructure.

The only other prospect is to become a self-sustaining social enterprise, through a combination of the groups, so RIC infrastructure members could form their own consortium which can become a social enterprise and deliver training and other services and then you would hive off some of that to fund the work of RIC and One EM.

It has to be self-sustaining because it may be that there isn't going to be any more funding from government.



SPOTLIGHT

Member: Community Matters



Interview with **Al Bell**, Regional Co-ordinator

1. Briefly describe your organisation

Community Matters is the National Federation for Community Organisations. As regional co-ordinator I work across both East and West Midlands where we have c180 members.

Community Matters stands for the collective action of ordinary people within their neighbourhood through inclusive, locally-rooted and accountable community organisations. These local community groups and their volunteers are the backbone of civil society; and are essential to the welfare of the neighbourhoods in which they operate and the individuals that live there.

2. What are the organisation's aims?

We aim to be the principal membership organisation for community groups. Our work promotes:

- Stronger bonds between neighbours, where inclusive relationships build trust and mutual support and create communities in which everyone is valued.
- Stronger bonds between all communities, where diverse relationships are strengthened and fear, mistrust and social breakdown are prevented.
- Active and enterprising neighbourhoods, where local people come together to participate and work in partnership to contribute to a vibrant community life.
- Self help, where people can work with business, government and others to find their own solutions to local problems.
- Space for open debate, where local people's voices can be heard and their opinions valued.
- Community identity, where local people have a sense of belonging and pride in their neighbourhood.

3. What work are you involved in at a regional level?

Community Matters works in a formal partnership nationally and regionally with Development Trusts Association and BASSAC, this partnership is known as the "Community Alliance" and it promotes and supports community anchors. Our most well known work is in the field of Community Asset Transfer in which ourselves and DTA have facilitated over 70 transfers and worked with 50 local authorities in England many of which have been in the East Midlands – see atu.org.uk for more information.

Many community centers are completely volunteer led so I am now chairing the England Volunteering Development Council that networks those working with volunteers across the region and we hope to increase the number of volunteers and the quality of volunteering across the region.

I am also involved with the Regional Infrastructure Consortia and link up with other stakeholders such as GOEM, Big Lottery, Social Investment Business, Rural Community Councils.

4. What benefits of membership to One EM do you see?

Access to information, individuals, networks and events. These provide opportunities to collaborate, work more effectively and provide better support to community organisations across the region.

5. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

We have recently launched a free online tool called 'pre-visible' that helps community organisations to become legally compliant www.visiblecommunities.org.uk/

SPOTLIGHT

Trustee: Dave Springett

1. How did you get involved in One East Midlands?

I was elected Chair for the East Midlands Voluntary Youth (EMVY) in November 2009 and subsequently elected on to the One EM Board. I have worked for four years for Clubs for Young People as the Head of Young People Services for the Central Area which covers East Midlands. Previous to that for 17 years I was the County Director for Leicestershire Clubs for Young People. I am also the Chair of the Youth East Midlands Partnership between the local authority youth services, training agencies and EMVY.

2. What role do you have within the Board?

As a newly elected member of the board I have no portfolio but feel that my links with the youth services are valuable to the development of One EM. I also bring my 20 years of experiences of working in the East Midlands.

3. What skills do you bring to this role?

As the CEO of a voluntary youth organisation you become skilled in managing people, financial control, negotiating contracts, liaising with various agencies, government departments, local authorities as well as customer care dealing with issues and challenges. My 20 years of experience can be summed up as “a jack of all trades and master of none!”

4. What do you see are the benefits of One EM and how can it support the VCS in the region?

The real benefit I recognise is being the strategic lead for the voluntary sector, championing the work of the VCS and bringing together partners who can deliver and develop the sector based on sound research, effective communication and identifying best practice.

Supporting the VCS through engaging with funding agencies, Trusts, Compacts, local area agreements, Regional Government Office, East Midlands Development Agency and other relevant organisations is essentially a role One EM can perform on behalf its members.

5. How would you like to see One EM grow and change in the future?

It is difficult to express in a few words but in the ideal world of change where we know that funding is becoming very difficult to obtain and sustain I would like One EM to ensure it has a well thought out future plan that recognises the strengths and weaknesses of its membership. One EM is in a difficult position of sustaining strategic funding whilst its members are finding it very difficult to raise funds for core costs and for their developing programmes.

Report ba on health a

Supporting health & social care work

Over the last 12 months One EM has focused on health and social care as a key priority. Significant strides have been taken towards a stronger relationship between Department for Health (DH), the Strategic Health Authority (SHA) and the VCS.

Work undertaken over the last year culminated in a cross sector conference in February 2010. The conference brought together a network of VCS organisations working in the health and social care field with statutory partners to address the following issues:

'In a climate of world class commissioning and drive for improved efficiency performance and reach, how can the third sector and health sector work together to address deep health inequality?'

The conference report was sent to all delegates and One EM members and is available on-line:

www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk

The Network

Since autumn 2009, the Health & Social Care Network has been established and developed and now has over 150 members. Network members are VCS organisations working in health and social care services and support. There are also members from the statutory sector (NHS, Local Authority) working in health and social care. One EM co-ordinates the network and sends out monthly health and social care-themed policy bulletins.

The Steering Group

Established in January 2010, the Steering Group has 12 members drawn from a range of third sector organisations providing Health & Social Care services and support. The group has identified specialist gaps in the membership: BME support and services; disability support and services; children and young people's support and services and is in the process of recruiting several new members. The group meets bi-monthly and reports back directly to the wider network.

For further information and to get involved, contact **Hannah Luck** on 0115 934 9535 or email hannahluck@one-em.org.uk



ck nd social care



Activities

Festival of Ideas

For one day, commissioners of public services and social investors gathered to learn about twelve third sector innovations in order to help them to develop and strengthen their work. One East Midlands put out a call for innovative projects and attended along with two members who were selected to present their project:

1. Peer to Peer Connect (Self Help Nottingham)
2. Personalised Arts for Well-being (High Peak Community Arts)

You can see details of the event and view a video clip of the presentations on the Innovation Exchange website:

<http://innovation-exchange.org/blog/2010/03/festival-of-ideas-in-derby-2/>

Regional Workshop: Contracting for Personalised Outcomes

One East Midlands attended this workshop along with Local Authority commissioners from each county in the East Midlands and several local providers from the VCS and private sector. The workshop was an effective opportunity to learn from good practice across the country and in the region.

JIP (Joint Improvement Partnership) Commissioning & Development Board

The Health & Social Care Network is a member of this Board in order to ensure VCS/third sector representation. Currently the Board is looking at a project brief for a regional programme based on the national 'Working Together for Change' Guidance. The project 'Person-centred Commissioning and Market Development' will be sent to all Local Authorities in the East Midlands working in partnership with local providers.

Regional Platform on Food, Physical Activity and Health

The 'Platform' is an innovative project drawing together a wide range of organisations from different sectors to take action to reduce obesity and increase health and wellbeing. This unique regional approach to coordinating the actions of many in order to achieve impact is being supported by the European Union. Rachel Quinn has been invited to join the platform's Scrutiny Panel and One EM will be working with the Health and Social Care network to identify what commitments the VCS can make to help combat obesity.

For information on the work of the Regional Platform, visit the website:

www.emphasisnetwork.org.uk/regionalplatform.htm

East Midlands SHA Panel Visit

On the 12th April a national DH team visited One East Midlands as part of their assurance visit to the East Midlands SHA. The Assurance Panel came to assess how well the SHA engages with the third sector. One East Midlands is the first regional network to have been visited by an assurance panel. The report should be available on the DH website soon; we will link it to the One EM website as soon as it is available.

East Midlands Staying Healthy and Health Inequalities Group

One East Midlands has been approached by David Walker, Regional Director of Public Health for the East Midlands, as this new group is seeking VCS/third sector representatives. This will be promoted at the next Health & Social Care Steering Group taking place later this month.

One East Midlands is a registered charity, working with the voluntary and community sector.

One East Midlands brings together organisations that support voluntary and community groups across the region to influence and shape policy, improve services and provide a single point of contact for all stakeholders at a regional and national level.

One East Midlands is accountable to its members: voluntary and community organisations, frontline groups, public and private sector agencies. Through its membership, the sector is able to influence One East Midlands' work and ensure that the organisation does what it sets out to do.

For more information on our membership scheme visit the website: www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk



Nottingham Voluntary Action Centre
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Registered Charity Number 1094733
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