



Changes, challenges and opportunities:

Helping voluntary youth organisations make the most of tough times



**Wednesday 16th February 2011
At Queen's Walk Community Centre, Nottingham**

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Overview

This report summarises the EMVY Forum event that took place in Nottingham on 16th February 2011. This event brought together 37 delegates representing over 30 organisations from across the East Midlands to explore some of the current challenges and opportunities for the voluntary youth sector. Organisations represented included YMCA England, Action for Blind People, The Prince's Trust, Derbyshire County Council, the East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association and Barnardos.

Lisa Capell from the Prince's Trust said:

"I've been to a lot of similar events to this in the last few weeks but this one was the best I had been to. It was really positive and looked at the opportunities that the Big Society and future changes will bring, not just the potential threats. I was really glad I came and learnt a huge amount from some great quality speakers."

At the close of the day 21 feedback forms were completed. Asked to rate the event overall on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was very poor and 5 excellent, the average score was 4.

All presentations from the day can be found on the EMVY website here:

http://www.emvy.org.uk/default.asp?id=reports_32s

Welcome

Vice Chair of EMVY, Colonel (Retd) John Ludlam (pictured right) welcomed delegates and set out the aims for the day. These were to:

- To give delegates a chance to reflect on the Big Society and what it means for voluntary youth
- Explore opportunities for working in partnership, and to
- Offer an opportunity for networking and information exchange.





Young people and the Big Society

The first speaker of the day was Rachel Quinn (left), the Chief Executive of [One East Midlands](#) who spoke to the forum on the hot topic of the Big Society following its re-launch by the Prime Minister the previous weekend.

The Big Society is a Conservative concept which emerged in the run up to the General Election in 2010. The vision is to give citizens and local government the power and information they need to come together, solve the problems they face and build the Britain they want. The project is led by Nick Hurd MP, the Minister for Civil Society, who on the same day was the guest speaker at 'The Big Society In Practice' event in London.

What are the aims of the Big Society?

- Give communities more power
- Encouraging people to take an active role in their communities
- Transfer power from central to local Government
- Supporting the development of co-operatives, mutual, charities and social enterprise
- Publish Government data

What opportunities will the Big Society offer? Well it will allow greater citizen involvement in their communities. Opportunities for the voluntary and community sector lie in enabling communities to have a voice and participate, and in being providers of services.

However, there are threats too. The youth sector has been hard hit over the last three years with the continual withdrawal of funding and this is not set to change. Those communities who traditionally do not have a voice may continue to be excluded. The Big Society will only work if other government policies support this agenda.

One East Midlands has responded by publishing "Our Big Society" which considers the role voluntary and community organisations can play in delivering the Big Society and its principles. This document contains ten case studies covering a range of themes. You can find the report here:

http://www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk/viewpage.php?page_id=33

They are also working to engage MPs and have published a guide to MPs in the East Midlands which you can find here:

<http://www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk/news.php?readmore=1353>

How NCVYS can help you through the Big Society

The second speaker of the day was Beth Parker (right), the Director of Service Development at [NCVYS](#). Beth's role was developed in response to the Big Society and she spoke about how NCVYS can help organisations in responding to this new Government policy.

NCVYS (National Council for Voluntary Youth Services) has over 180 member organisations representing 500,000 volunteers and approximately 5 million young people.



NCVYS are helping members to adopt the Big Society by providing:

- **Big society blueprint projects:** These pilots will help highlight the need for infrastructure support with funding, governance and day to day management issues.
- **Big Society placement scheme:** Aims to get MPs to volunteer to work on projects and help young people understand the political system.
- **Community Interest Company – Yeah:** To inspire an enterprise culture across the sector, involve young people in business networks and open up alternative funding streams

Beth's parting message was to go "Beyond the comfort zone" – particularly when raising funds.



National Citizen Service

The third speaker was from Peter Cross (left), the Chief Executive of [SkillForce](#).

Peter began by showing The Challenge promotional video. You can watch it here: <http://www.the-challenge.org/gallery-2/video/>

Peter then went on to outline the key elements of the National Citizen Service pilots.

- **Week one is the personal challenge:** A residential week, this must be physically and emotionally challenging and is often the main attraction for signing up.
- **Week two is the team challenge:** Another residential week, young people use their interests such as sports or music to develop a project. They present to parents and mentors. It may be the first time they have been away for two weeks at a time, living independently
- **Week three is a community based project:** Young people have to find their own projects in and around their own communities. Projects to date have included campaigns relating to sexual health, alcohol misuse and environmental issues.

511 young people participated in the pilots in 2010. The target for 2011 is 11,000, with eventually 400,000 participating by 2014/15.

The local organisation running the pilot is Catch 22. Peter encouraged groups to get in touch to find out more and see the pilots in action.

Peter's presentation was followed by a lively discussion around capacity, demand and funding for the pilots, how they would complement existing, similar programmes, such as Duke of Edinburgh and how the participation of disabled and disadvantaged young people would be ensured.

Big Lottery Fund current opportunities

The fourth speaker was Kelly Hart (left), the Regional Development Manager for the East Midlands from the [Big Lottery Fund](#). Big Lottery funds projects in three ways – open, community and targeted.

- **Open Funding**

Projects must meet one of the programme outcomes: healthier, more active people;



improved life skills; stronger communities; and improved environments.

Awards for All is their small grants programme. The grants are for £300 to £12,000. The application criteria are available here: <http://www.awardsforall.org.uk/england/apply.html>

Reaching Communities covers larger grants from £10,000 up to £500,000 and has two strands, the first for revenue projects and the second for building/capital projects. Funding is available for up to five years and existing projects as well as new ones can be supported.

More information on the application process can be found here: http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_reaching_communities?tab=1®ioncode=-uk&

- **Community funding (soon to be known as The Big Local Trust)** Selected neighbourhood areas in the UK each get £1m to spend on what they want in their area. East Midlands areas selected are Allenton in Derby, Warsop in Mansfield, Lumbertubs in Northampton and Mablethorpe, East Lindsey.
- **Targeted funding:** Targets those areas that have not received funding in the past.

Local Federations

The fourth speaker was David Wright (right), Chief Executive of the [Confederation of Heads of Young People's Services \(CHYPS\)](#).

David began by highlighting some of the challenges facing youth work at the present. There will be over £100m removed by March 2011 from local authority operational budgets for youth services. The current youth work force will roughly halve. Funding for the voluntary and community sector will be particularly hard hit by cuts.



At the same time the Government is developing its new youth policy. This centres on raising aspiration, improving attainment, and developing a sense of purpose, belonging and responsibility. At the heart of this is the National Citizen Service. There is also a shift in delivery toward the voluntary and private sectors.

David suggested that instead of services being provided by *either* statutory or voluntary sector, there should be a mixed economy. Now was the time for local authorities and voluntary sector to work together to form local federations. This could provide the benefits of local control, young people's involvement, sufficient critical local mass and quality outcomes.

Enthusiasm and the 10 Commandments – 10 commandments of community engagement



The final speaker was Joe Russo (left) the Chief Executive of the [Enthusiasm Trust](#) who is also a qualified carpenter! He spoke about his personal background and what inspired him to set up a local youth club in Derby. The majority of their staff are young people who have come through their programme and in some cases were special case referrals.

Joe spoke about his 'ten commandments' of dos and don'ts:

DO:

- put young people first
- work together
- be revolutionary
- be business savvy
- tune into agendas

DON'T:

- chase money for the sake of chasing money
- back stab
- sell out
- forget your history
- be a jack of all trades.

Information stands

The following organisations had information stands at the event:

Army Cadet Force <http://www.armycadets.com>

Big Lottery Fund <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/>

East Midlands Empowerment Partnership <http://www.emep.org.uk/>

Eastern Area Sea Cadets <http://easternarea.ms-sc.org/>

GRANTFinder <http://www.grantfinder.co.uk/>

Playworks <http://www.playworks.org.uk/>

The Prince's Trust <http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/>



Sponsors

EMVY is grateful to the following organisations which helped ensure the day went ahead by funding the venue and catering.



A free programme of practical learning for community groups and activists

<http://www.emep.org.uk/>



East Midlands Regional
Youth Work Unit

www.emrywu.org.uk



East Midlands
Improvement and
Efficiency Partnership

www.eastmidlandsiiep.gov.uk

Join EMVY

EMVY was formed in 2000 by voluntary youth groups and networks across the region. EMVY aims to be an inclusive and diverse network for the voluntary youth sector, providing strategic support, influence and advocacy at a regional level. EMVY is a registered charity.

It is currently **free** to join EMVY. As a member we will send you our monthly Regional Roundup newsletter summarising local, regional and national news, events and opportunities for voluntary youth organisations. You will also be invited to our popular EMVY Forum networking events. Visit the EMVY website to download a membership form and find out more:

http://www.emvy.org.uk/default.asp?id=membership_1

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