

**Real Help for Communities:**  
Volunteers, Charities and  
Social Enterprises

**Real help now**



## Foreword by The Prime Minister



These are difficult and testing times, not only here in Britain but in every major economy in the world. In countries and communities right across the globe people are understandably worried

about their jobs, businesses are worried about their cash flow, families are worried about their bills, young people are worried about getting on the housing ladder and older people are worried about their savings.


So in these turbulent times it is more important than ever for the Government to provide real help for those who need it, when they need it. We have taken strong and decisive action to provide families and business with real help now, and we are committed to doing everything possible to help people fairly through the crisis, but we cannot do it alone.

As a nation, the way that we come through this downturn will depend not only on the actions of banks or politicians but on the efforts of people in communities the length and breadth of Britain – charities and voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises all working together to see us through the current crisis and to ensure we come out stronger and more resilient.

And let us be clear – Britain's third sector is stronger today than ever. We in Government have played our part, doubling spending since 1997 to a total of £11 billion a year and setting up the Office of the Third Sector in recognition of the increasingly important role played by charities, community groups and social enterprises in our society and our economy. This combination of record investment and greater recognition has created an environment where third sector organisations have become not only an integral part of community life but a major partner to Government in the delivery of public services, working with people at a local level in ways that are suited to their needs.

Quite simply, we know that strong communities are characterised by a strong and thriving third sector. So we must make the most of the skills and expertise the sector has to offer – helping people through times of challenge and change, finding new and more equitable ways of doing business through social enterprises, and empowering people to transform their lives and their communities.

The measures set out in this plan are designed to do that, stepping up once again our investment and support for the third sector at a time when demand for their services is rising at an unprecedented rate.

A decorative graphic at the top of the page consists of a horizontal bar with several colored squares. From left to right, there is a dark purple square, a light purple square, an orange square, a white square, and another orange square. Below the horizontal bar, there are two more squares: a light purple one on the left and a dark purple one on the right.

They have been developed in consultation over recent months with nearly a hundred third sector organisations, and we have listened closely to get a clear sense of where needs are greatest and what more the Government can do to help.

We are going to need the sense of purpose, energy and expertise of our third sector as we face the challenges ahead – and I am confident that this help will enable all of Britain’s third sector organisations not only to deliver real help now but to come out even stronger in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "Gordon Brown".

Gordon Brown

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## Executive summary

The international financial crisis and the recession it has caused around the world, and now in the UK, is having a real impact on individuals, families and communities. The Government has already taken extensive action to provide a range of new help for those who need it – help to boost people’s income with cuts to income tax and VAT and extra money for pensioners, and support for those facing debt problems; help for businesses with cashflow problems and support to help businesses adapt to change; help for homeowners having difficulty paying their mortgages or those hoping to afford to buy a home; and help for those looking for work or training or facing redundancies.

As well as getting help quickly to those who need it now, the Government is determined to ensure that the country will emerge stronger and more productive once the global economy starts to recover. So it is increasing and accelerating its long-term investment plans, investing in capital projects to boost infrastructure and creating jobs, and investing in key growth industries for the future, so that we emerge from the downturn stronger and prepared to thrive in the future.

As a vital part of the economy, a key deliverer of public and community services, and the glue which holds our communities together, the third sector is playing a vital role in delivering real help and support to people from all walks of life who are affected by the recession. The Government is committed to

helping the sector to offer more and better help to individuals and communities at these challenging times, and to improving the sector’s resilience to face time of economic change.

The third sector – encompassing voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, charities, faith groups, cooperatives and mutuals – is often ideally placed to support individuals and families during times of need, and to support communities facing social and economic change. Third sector organisations are often most able to offer the flexibility, responsiveness, understanding of local and complex needs, and ability to take a long-term and holistic approach, that are needed to help people through difficult times and empowering them to realise their aspirations. As such, they are an important and valued partner of Government in our effort to get Britain through the downturn fairly.

### The challenges and opportunities presented by the recession

The third sector faces the recession from a position of strength. Following **unprecedented Government investment** in the sector’s infrastructure and funding streams in recent years, and a greatly expanded role in delivering public service contracts, its income from Government has doubled over the last 11 years to a total of **£11 billion** a year. The result is a third sector better equipped than ever before to respond to the needs of

people and communities affected by the recession, but facing its own challenges of increasing demand for its services,

reductions in income and value of assets, and the widespread implications of a volatile economic environment.

### **Progress to Date: Creating an Environment for a Thriving Third Sector:**

The Office of the Third Sector, located in the Cabinet Office, was created in May 2006, in recognition of the increasingly important role that the third sector plays in both society and the economy. The Office of the Third Sector and dedicated Minister for the Third Sector, Kevin Brennan, are responsible for a £515 million investment in third sector programmes. Part of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review, this has resulted in a number of major initiatives that have strengthened the sector and created opportunities for it to contribute to society and the economy:

- Providing £130 million in small grants and endowments through the Grassroots Grants programme;
- Investing in the Futurebuilders Fund to assist frontline third sector organisations to build their capacity to increase the scale and scope of their public service delivery;
- Ensuring that organisations have access to high quality infrastructure support through Capacitybuilders' investment of £88.5m for 2008 – 2011;
- Creating 875,000 new volunteering opportunities so far for young people through v, the youth volunteering charity, with £117 million investment;
- Establishing the Commission for the Compact as a Non-Departmental Public Body with a new chair, Sir Bert Massie, and a £6 million investment;
- Launching the National Programme for Third Sector Commissioning to support around 2,000 commissioners to increase awareness of the third sector's contribution and of how to work in partnership;
- Including the 'environment for a thriving third sector' (NI7) as part of the National Indicator Set against which all local areas are assessed;
- Building on a series of measures specifically for social enterprise business support, access to finance and awareness raising in the Social Enterprise Action Plan, *Scaling New Heights*<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Office of the Third Sector, Cabinet Office (2006).

The current economic context presents new challenges that make maintaining and building the third sector's health and high performance increasingly difficult. These challenges will affect the third sector now and in the future. They have the potential to have a considerable impact on the sector's ability to respond to the needs of individuals, families and communities and to realise its potential contribution to society and the economy during the recession.

In December 2008, the Office of the Third Sector invited individuals and organisations to provide evidence and ideas to inform the development of *Real Help for Communities: Volunteers, Charities & Social Enterprises*. This input has informed the Government's understanding of the emerging needs and untapped potential of the third sector. For example, key challenges include:

- Demand for services provided by third sector organisations is increasing<sup>2</sup>. Particular service areas are experiencing very high increases in demand – notably those relating to housing and debt, employment and mental health. Other services will need to act pre-emptively to maintain downward pressure on property crime, drugs and alcohol and domestic violence;

- Small and medium-sized community organisations that may be best placed to provide responsive advice and support services in deprived communities, are least able to secure funding<sup>3</sup>; and
- Despite a likely overall increase in volunteer numbers, where numbers decline, this is likely to be because people cannot afford to volunteer. As such, people who may benefit most are least able to participate.

While helping the third sector to develop and deliver frontline services is vital, the Government is also committed to supporting the sector to strengthen its infrastructure and access to sustainable funding and investment streams. This help will both enable the third sector to deliver real help now in more effective and efficient ways and support the sector to emerge from the recession stronger and more sustainable.

- Given the reported increase in demand for some third sector services, maintaining and increasing levels of sustainable income is crucial. However, many third sector organisations are reporting or anticipating reductions in income from a range of sources<sup>4</sup>;

<sup>2</sup> A survey by ACEVO/CAF (2008) found that demand for services provided by charities had increased by 72% in the last 12 months.

<sup>3</sup> Evidence submitted by local funders across England in response to an OTS survey (Dec 08/Jan 09).

<sup>4</sup> In September 2008, 88% of respondents to an ACEVO/CAF survey thought income to the sector would fall in real terms, and 17% had already seen income fall. According to financial services company State Street, UK charities' investments lost 19% of their value last year.



- Some parts of the sector predict<sup>5</sup> declines in many of the third sector's income sources. For example, a survey conducted by the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations and Charities Aid Foundation in September 2008 found that 88% of respondents thought voluntary income to the sector would fall in real terms and 17% had already seen their income fall; and
- In light of the above challenges, a number of third sector organisations, including the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), have suggested a growing need to support organisations to establish stronger collaborative arrangements in order to optimise performance and efficiency.

The challenges identified by the third sector and Government provide an early indication of the potential impact of the current economic climate. The Government is committed to developing a preventative framework of measures that is flexible and responsive to needs as they emerge. This will enable the sector to come out of the recession stronger and even more able to support people and communities across England.

Recession also presents the third sector with opportunities – for example, to secure assets at lower prices or take advantage of


the growing demand for more ethical and sustainable forms of business and investment, earning income that can be reinvested for social and environmental purposes.

Underpinning the Government's development of *Real Help for Communities: Volunteers, Charities & Social Enterprises*, the Office of the Third Sector has formulated a number of guiding principles. These principles emerged from the NCVO summit on the economic downturn, co-chaired by the Minister for the Third Sector, Kevin Brennan, in November 2008. They aim to guarantee that the measures implemented by Government are targeted at the right parts of the sector and ensure continued and strengthened delivery to deprived communities.

#### The Principles:

- Helps achieve **economic growth, equality** and **social mobility**
- Delivers real **help now and in the future** for individuals, families and communities
- Ensures as many **resources** as possible are directed into **frontline services**
- Encourages third sector organisations to **work together** to provide help now and in the future
- Provides a **rapid response** to current and emerging needs

<sup>5</sup> ACF/PWC (November 2008), Charity Commission (October 2008), Charity Market Monitor 2008 (July 2008), G2 Data Dynamics (October 2008), An Olive Branch (December 2008), State Street (January 2008), ACEVO/CAF survey (August 2008).

A decorative graphic at the top of the page consists of a horizontal line with several colored squares of varying sizes and colors (purple, orange, white) arranged along it.

This action plan covers England only as most third sector issues are devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government, Northern Ireland Assembly and Scottish Parliament<sup>6</sup>. However, the Office of the Third Sector and devolved administrations will work together closely to share learning and co-ordinate activities to support the third sector across the UK.

<sup>6</sup> HMT retains control of issues such as Gift Aid and taxation. The legal and regulatory frameworks of the Charity Commission cover England and Wales.

# 1 Real Help Now: Meeting Demand for Services and Tackling Unemployment

*“The third sector is extremely well-placed to support some of the most vulnerable people in our communities on their journey back to work – through their local roots, expertise and commitment – often helping those who are not reached by traditional or mainstream approaches. Their potential to inform the design and delivery of future policy through innovation and entrepreneurialism, bringing in new perspectives, should not be underestimated. This Action Plan sets out some important ideas for how this can be achieved”.*

The Rt Hon James Purnell MP,  
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

## Summary:

The Government will target £15 million of the action plan’s £42.5 million of measures at advice, employment, mental health, family breakdown, drug and/or alcohol use services and invest £16 million in local services in communities that are at greatest risk of deprivation. This will involve the following key actions:

- Up to £10 million investment in a **volunteer brokerage scheme for unemployed people** will create over 40,000 opportunities for people to learn new skills and give back to communities through volunteering;<sup>7</sup>
- A new pilot **accreditation process and independent ombudsman** for the Department for Work and Pension’s Code of Conduct will better protect the interests of smaller, specialist and third sector welfare to work providers; and
- A £15.5 million **Community Resilience Fund** will provide grant funding to small and medium providers in the local areas that are most at risk of deprivation.
- A national campaign to raise awareness of the Government’s commitment to pay invoices within 10 days.

<sup>7</sup> This scheme will cover England, Wales and Scotland.

## 1.1 Real Help Now through Third Sector Services

Since the publication of *Partnership in public services: an action plan for third sector involvement* in 2006<sup>8</sup>, the Government has reinforced the third sector's role in the design and delivery of public services. However, the current economic climate presents new and increasing challenges to some third sector providers. This makes strengthening the Government's commitment to good commissioning and investing in public services even more important.

### 1.1.1 Increasing Demand

Evidence from the third sector suggests that demands on third sector organisations are increasing as a result of the recession. Third sector providers are finding it increasingly difficult to provide people with the real help that they need. A survey in August 2008 by the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO) and the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) found that demand for services provided by charities had increased by 72% in the last 12 months. Particular service areas are experiencing very

high increases in demand – notably those relating to housing and debt, employment<sup>9</sup>, and mental health – and other services will need to act pre-emptively to maintain downward pressure on property crime, drugs and alcohol<sup>10</sup> and domestic family breakdown. For example, Citizens Advice Bureaux across England and Wales received 35% more requests for advice on mortgage and secured loan arrears over the last 12 months to September 08, and 51% more between July and September 08 than the same period in 2007<sup>11</sup>.

*"I was in the family business but because of the recession I was made redundant. Now I'm in a lower paid part-time job with mounting debts. Without the help of Citizens Advice, I'd be in a much worse position."*

Beneficiary of advice services provided by  
Citizens Advice Bournemouth

The Office of the Third Sector surveyed its national network of local funders<sup>12</sup> to identify the key needs in their communities and the challenges faced by local third sector providers of services that respond

<sup>8</sup> Office of the Third Sector, Cabinet Office (2006).

<sup>9</sup> The Citizens Advice Bureau report a 125 per cent increase in the number of people seeking help about redundancy in the last seven months according to figures published in December 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Two drug and alcohol charities, DrugScope and Addaction are both predicting increased demand on their services as a result of the economic climate, albeit with a time-lag. The recession is expected to increase the prevalence of various risk factors associated with increased alcohol and drug use, notably job loss and family breakdown.

<sup>11</sup> Samaritans' central London branch reported a 25% increase in calls to their support helplines in August and September 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Covering the 149 Top Tier Local Authorities in England.

to these needs. Despite the diversity of local contexts, the needs and challenges identified were consistent across all areas. They found that there are four key services that are experiencing a significant increase in demand: (1) employment; (2) legal and financial advice; (3) mental health support; and (4) support through family breakdown. Almost 70% of local funders claim that small/small-medium third sector organisations<sup>13</sup> face an increasing demand for these services, but are facing the greatest challenges in securing sustainable funding in the current economic climate<sup>14</sup>. This information highlights particular vulnerability of vital community services during the recession.

In order to enable small organisations to meet the immediate local need and to address the longer-term sustainability issues of their local funding relationships, the Office of the Third Sector, Department of Communities and Local Government, Department of Health, the Department of Children, Schools and Families, Department of Work and Pensions and third sector partners will work together to develop and launch the **£15.5 million Community Resilience Fund**. This fund will have two elements and will be targeted at the local

authority areas that are considered most at risk of increasing levels of deprivation, particularly as a result of the recession:

- **A grants programme for small/medium service providers in the local authority areas** that are considered most at risk of increasing levels of deprivation as a result of the recession. Organisations that are offering services that specifically relate to needs resulting from the recession will be prioritised (e.g. debt advice, family breakdown services and skills development programmes); and
- **The development of stronger commissioner engagement with small/medium providers** in these local areas. The programme will be delivered as an extension of the Office of the Third Sector's existing National Programme for Third Sector Commissioning.

As part of the development and delivery of this Fund, the Office of the Third Sector will work closely with the Home Office to ensure that there is a coherent approach to the support being offered across Government to third sector organisations working with communities during the economic downturn.

<sup>13</sup> With a turnover between £30-100K.

<sup>14</sup> Local Funders felt these are: (i) more national funding being delivered through Local Authorities; (ii) moves within Government to commissioning and contracts rather than grant funding; (iii) tendency for more 1 year funding as the norm still at the local level; and (iv) less Lottery funding available.

### 1.1.2 Good Commissioning

While investment directly in frontline service delivery is important, input from the sector and the findings of the recent Public Administration Select Committee report, *Public Services and the Third Sector: Rhetoric and Reality*<sup>15</sup>, suggest that supporting the third sector to deliver effective public services also requires investment in **good commissioning practice**. The Government has strengthened the commissioning environment considerably in order to facilitate more effective third sector involvement in public services. These measures have included:

- Establishing the **National Programme for Third Sector Commissioning**, with capacity, during the first phase, to support around 2,000 commissioners to work in partnership with the third sector;
- Investing in the **Futurebuilders Fund** to assist frontline third sector organisations to build their capacity, and thereby increase the scale and scope of their public service delivery; and
- Including the **'environment for a thriving third sector'** (NI7) as part of the **National Indicator Set** against which all local areas are assessed<sup>16</sup>.

Ensuring fair and transparent commissioning relationships is fundamental to good commissioning and enables the sector to focus on its primary task – providing high quality, effective and user-focused services to people in need.

While the **Compact's Code of Good Practice on Funding and Procurement** contains a range of undertakings by Government to improve funding practice, it is not explicitly a "commissioning" code of good practice. The Office of the Third Sector and its third sector partner, Compact Voice, have asked the Commission for the Compact to lead a **refresh of the Compact**. The refresh will make explicit the role of the Compact in improving commissioning practice. In addition, in 2009, the **Joint Compact Action Plan** will focus on promoting and reinforcing those commitments and undertakings that will provide fairness and transparency. These include undertakings on:

- Prompt decisions about funding, prompt payment and payments in advance where appropriate, so third sector organisations can better manage their cash flow;
- The importance of longer term grants and contracts, which can give third sector organisations greater stability and which can represent better value for money; and

<sup>15</sup> Eleventh Report of Session 2007–08, (June 2008).

<sup>16</sup> Sixty one local areas (out of 150) chose to prioritise this indicator in their Local Area Agreement, and 16 chose to include it as an additional local indicator.

- Recognising the distinctive role of volunteers, including that funding for services should not be cut on the basis that volunteers can replace paid staff.

The Compact's commitment to fairness and transparency in commissioning relationships is reflected across Government procurement practices. In October 2008, the Government committed to **ensuring invoices are paid within 10 days**. This commitment applies to the payment of invoices to third sector organisations. To ensure that this commitment is fulfilled and the full benefit is felt by third sector public service providers, the Government will undertake a **national awareness raising campaign across public sector finance professionals** of the importance of this commitment.

Evidence from the third sector highlights the inaccessibility and complexity of identifying opportunities to tender for public service contracts as a considerable inefficiency. This lack of transparency requires providers to draw resources away from frontline service provision and into the identification of tender opportunities. Given the increasing demand for third sector services, minimising this inefficiency is particularly important. The Office of the Third Sector has commissioned a **new funding information web service** which will launch in late Spring 2009. The website will contain information on

both grants and contracts from central Government departments and agencies, and over time will signpost to opportunities at a local and regional level.

The **Department of Health** has made good progress in increasing transparency and allowing third sector service providers to identify opportunities to tender for public service contracts. The Department of Health has made progress by introducing **Supply2Health**. This online resource advertises opportunities to provide healthcare<sup>17</sup> and jointly commissioned social care services. Its use became mandatory for all NHS commissioners in England from October 2008. This will be a key resource for providers in all sectors, significant enough to acknowledge within this action plan, and important enough to be signposted by the planned new funding information web service in due course.

### 1.1.3 Commissioner Understanding of the third sector

Secondly, good commissioning requires a strong **understanding among public sector professionals** of the strengths and contributions of third sector organisations and an **understanding within the third sector** of public sector commissioning structures and processes.

<sup>17</sup> Only part B healthcare as defined by EU procurement laws.

Established in 2007, the **National Programme for Third Sector Commissioning** has made considerable progress towards this goal. In its first phase, the Programme has improved the practice of around two thousand public sector commissioners. The Office of the Third Sector is currently tendering for **Phase 2** of the National Programme and will require the selected provider to design and deliver a programme that addresses the particular challenges of commissioning public services in the current economic climate. Phase 2 of the programme will focus on support for those service areas that will have increased demands from service users during this time.

The **Third Sector Indicators' Community of Practice** has been established by Office of the Third Sector and the Improvement & Development Agency. This is a member-led online forum that enables local practitioners to discuss issues and share what has worked in their area around developing an environment for a thriving third sector and participation in volunteering. The Office of the Third Sector will use the Community of Practice to develop a recession-specific programme of work.

## 1.2 Real Help Now through Volunteering

If we are to respond to the challenges of the current economic climate, it is vital that Government creates opportunities for people to get new skills. Volunteering plays an important role in enabling people to develop new skills and improve their employment prospects<sup>18</sup>. For example, the **London 2012 Games** will provide routes to employment through a variety of pathways, including the **Personal Best programme**, which gives the hardest to reach groups in society the chance to get into work through a volunteering programme.

*"Volunteering is a valuable activity for people who are looking for work, as it helps them build up new skills, stay close to the labour market, and feel as if they are still making a contribution. Organisations that involve and support volunteers will need continued and even greater help to make it possible for them to perform this role well."*

Baroness Julia Neuberger, Prime Minister's  
Champion for Volunteering

<sup>18</sup> The 2007 National Survey of Volunteering and Charitable Giving found that 46 per cent of 16-24 year olds volunteered to learn new skills. 23% of volunteers thought an important benefit of volunteering was to give them the chance to improve their employment prospects. More than 60% thought an important benefit was learning new skills. 65% felt a benefit was increasing their confidence. A study of registered job seekers in Camden and Bedford found 81% of respondents said volunteering gave them a chance to learn new skills and 49% said it might give them the opportunity to gain a recognised qualification. 88% of individuals to one survey who were looking for work said they believed volunteering would help them get a job, while 41% in employment said their volunteering had helped them get their current job (Hirst, 2000).



Evidence from the last recession in the UK in the early 1990s suggests that more charities experienced an increase in volunteers than a decrease<sup>19</sup>. However, one of the main reasons people may stop volunteering in a more difficult economic climate is that they find it harder to absorb their own costs related to volunteering, even when the costs are reimbursed at a later date<sup>20</sup>. As such, some of society's poorest people, who may benefit most from participating, could be the least able to volunteer. In these circumstances, it is more important than ever that the Government supports the creation of appropriately funded and structured volunteering opportunities.

In recognition of this, the Department for Work and Pensions has already made specific provision within the **benefit entitlement conditions for Jobseekers Allowance to individuals who volunteer**, as outlined in the White Paper, *Raising expectations and increasing support: reforming welfare for the future*<sup>21</sup>. In addition, as part of the 6 month jobs package, announced by the Prime Minister on 12 January, the Department for Work and Pensions, working closely with the Office of the Third Sector will invest up to **£10 million** in a new initiative to give **around 40,000**

### **jobseekers access to work-focused volunteering opportunities as part of their job search**, starting in April 2009<sup>22</sup>.

The scheme will allow jobseekers who have been unemployed for at least six months, and feel that volunteering will help them get back to work, to access suitable, work-focused placements without their benefits being affected.

The Prince's Trust anticipates that a disproportionate number of jobs have been and will be lost by young people during the recession<sup>23</sup>. As such, building the skills and employability of young people is a priority for Government. **v**, the youth volunteering charity, has created **875,000 opportunities for young people to volunteer** and has raised approximately **£35 million** from the private sector to support youth volunteering. This is being matched pound-for-pound by the Government. This has been further supported by a £117 million investment in the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review period.

In addition, **v** is delivering a range of volunteering programmes that all seek to boost the skills and employment prospects of young people. This includes the **£10.5 million full-time volunteering programme**

<sup>19</sup> 21% compared to 8% (Taylor Gooby, 1994).

<sup>20</sup> Volunteering England.

<sup>21</sup> Department for Work and Pensions, (December, 2008).

<sup>22</sup> This scheme covers England, Wales and Scotland.

<sup>23</sup> 45% of people who became unemployed between September and November 2008 were under 25, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/7841349.stm>.

**'vTalent Year'** within 33 Local Authority Children and Young Peoples Services. This programme targets a diverse group of up to 1,000 young people volunteering for 44 weeks, including at least 40% who are not in education, employment or training.

### 1.3 Real Help Now Through Welfare to Work Services

The third sector plays an important and increasing role in the provision of employment services, including those commissioned by the public sector. For example, 44 per cent of sub-contracts in the first commissioning phase and 45 per cent in the second of the Department of Work and Pensions' flagship 'Pathways to Work' programme were awarded to third sector organisations, enabling people on Incapacity Benefit to become independent and earn a living. Given recent increases in the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance<sup>24</sup>, the third sector's contribution to the delivery of employment services is increasingly important.

Since 2005, **Women Like Us** has supported almost 1,200 women with children, including single mothers and women from minority ethnic communities, into flexible or part-time work. Karen Mattison, Director of *Women Like Us*, highlights that, in the current climate, "employers are beginning to understand the business benefits of flexible working which attracts experienced and talented staff, boosts staff retention and can help employers to keep growing in difficult times. *Women Like Us* is experiencing an 34 per cent increase in enquiries from employers looking for part-time or flexible staff."

The Department of Work and Pensions is working closely with the Office of the Third Sector to improve the commissioning arrangements for welfare to work services. In February 2008, the Department of Work and Pensions published its Commissioning Strategy and adopted a prime contractor model. The Strategy includes a Code of Conduct which aims to protect the interests of smaller, specialist and third sector providers. All providers of major welfare to work contracts have to adhere to the **Code of Conduct**. To strengthen the application of the Code, The Department of Work and Pensions will pilot an **accreditation process** against its principles and criteria. As part of this process, an **independent ombudsman** will intervene if providers break the Code.

<sup>24</sup> The latest figures show that 1,100,000 people are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, an increase of more than 200,000 over the previous 3 months.

## 2 Strengthening the sector now and in the future

### Summary:

The Government will target £8.5 million of the action plan's £42.5 million of measures at new and expanding social enterprises and £23.5 million at small and medium third sector service providers. This will involve the following key actions:

- A £16.5 million **modernisation fund** to support viable third sector organisations to access specialist services in order to restructure and become more resilient and efficient in the recession
- A £0.5 million investment in the **School for Social Entrepreneurs** to expand its 'action-learning' programme to support social entrepreneurs
- An **independent review of the incentives for investment in social enterprise**
- Information **specifically for third sector organisations** about the impact of the recession on pension schemes

The third sector has a vital role to play in both providing real help now to people and communities affected by the recession and in building stronger and more environmentally sustainable communities for the future. The Government is committed to directly supporting these activities. However, the third sector also needs to be able to help itself, strengthen its own structures and improve its immediate and longer-term efficiencies. Optimising the health of the third sector's finances, skills and structures ensures that as much of the sector's income as possible is directed into the delivery of services to the individuals, families and communities.

*"If the third sector is to meet the needs of as many people as possible during these difficult times and to emerge from the recession stronger and more efficient, the Government needs to support the sector to develop sustainable income streams, access to investment and efficient and streamlined structures."*

Kevin Brennan, Minister for the Third Sector, Cabinet Office

## 2.1 Strengthening the Sector through Collaboration

Although the Government's unprecedented investment in the capacity and skills of the third sector means that the sector is in a stronger position than ever before to respond to the challenges of the recession, refining the sector's efficiency and performance has never been more important. This will enable third sector organisations to direct the maximum possible proportion of their resources into service provision for people who need real help now. It will also enable the sector to invest in the services and opportunities that individuals and communities will need in the future. Stronger collaborative arrangements between organisations are a key means of achieving this, boosting economies of scale and enhancing efficiency. Such arrangements range from sharing resources (staff, premises, human resources services) to consortia and mergers. Many third sector organisations are looking to develop and shift their approach and emerge from the recession stronger and more sustainable.

The effectiveness of collaborative approaches in strengthening the sector is supported by research undertaken by the Charity Commission<sup>25</sup>, which suggests that "almost half the charities with collaborations on

service delivery noted an improvement, whereas only one per cent said it had worsened." In the case of mergers, in particular, the Commission found that the most common drivers were to improve efficiency (54 per cent) and to improve or prevent duplication in service delivery (42 per cent). While the third sector has identified a clear need to develop stronger collaborative arrangements in order to improve performance<sup>26</sup>, their potential is yet to be fully realised by the sector. The Charity Commission found that "despite a sizeable amount of collaborative activity, 78 per cent of respondents do not currently collaborate and over half of these had never considered it".

While mergers and other formal collaborative arrangements such as consortia-building may save money in the longer-term, making the transition often requires specialist legal, financial and employment advice and guidance. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) suggests that the external costs of a merger between two organisations are an estimated average of between £20k and £30k. However, this figure may vary widely depending on the size and complexity of the organisations and issues involved, and there will be significant internal costs to consider. Collaborative

<sup>25</sup> The Charity Commission report 'RS4 – Collaborative Working and Mergers', 2003.

<sup>26</sup> In a survey conducted in November 2008, 84% of charities stated that they would consider collaboration or partnership working, 11% reported that they are to consider mergers in their planning process and 26% were considering outsourcing. Association of Charitable Foundations, CFDG, Institute of Fundraising & Price Waterhouse Coopers "Managing in a Downturn: November 2008 survey results analysis and key messages".

working requires a one off investment, the entirety of which many small and medium-sized third sector organisations are unable to make.

Many organisations see the recession as a crucial point in the third sector's development and an opportunity to modernise and strengthen the sector's approach. However, making this transition often requires specialist advice and guidance. The Office of the Third Sector will launch a £16.5 million **modernisation fund**, which will support viable third sector organisations to access specialist services in order to restructure and become more resilient and efficient in the recession. Following a web-based diagnostic and assessment process, organisations will be signposted to a range of existing support services and, where further financial support is required, offered either grant or loan funding. The funding will purchase the specialist legal, financial and employment advice and guidance that organisations require to merge or collaborate.

*"This modernisation package is a vital part of the help and support for the charity sector. It is crucial that this set of proposals ensures that voluntary and community organisations can function effectively, especially with the increasing demand for frontline services. With the plans we as a sector are putting into place, it will help us face the current financial climate in a much stronger position."*

Stuart Etherington, Chief Executive  
of the National Council for  
Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)

Further to the Government's additional investment through the modernisation fund, existing support provided to the third sector through **Capacitybuilders'** programmes will be adapted in recognition of the particular challenges facing the third sector during the recession. Capacitybuilders is distributing approximately £1 million to local support agencies for recession-proofing measures. Over the coming period Capacitybuilders will work with the partners delivering its programmes to ensure that they adapt to help third sector organisations provide the best possible support to communities throughout the recession. This will include the **nine**

**National Support Service** workstreams, **local Consortia** working across England and the **Improving Reach** programme; which supports over 70 organisations working with deprived communities.

## 2.2 Strengthening the Sector's Access to Income

Third sector organisations have a range of income sources, including charitable giving, income from their investments, grants and earned income. Emerging evidence<sup>27</sup> predicts declines in much of the third sector's income. Those with the most diverse income streams may be most resilient in the current economic climate.

### 2.2.1 Charitable Giving

Charitable giving remains a vital income stream for many third sector organisations. Giving accounts for 15 per cent of the third sector's overall income, and **Gift Aid** alone was worth over **£888 million** to charities in 2007/08<sup>28</sup>. However, a survey conducted by ACEVO and CAF in September 2008 found that 88% of respondents thought income to the sector would fall in real terms and 17% had already seen their income fall. This is a particular issue for third sector organisations who are currently experiencing an increase

in demand for their services. While evidence from previous recessions is not conclusive about the impact on charitable giving<sup>29</sup>, a survey conducted by the Charity Commission in October 2008 found that one in four charities that collect monetary donations was already experiencing a decrease in donations.

*"While the need for services in many charities is increasing, now is not the time to cut back on fundraising. Fundraising allows causes to raise the vital unrestricted income that is so necessary when faced with contraction. It is vital we all talk up giving and do make giving the norm during difficult times."*

Lindsay Boswell, Chief Executive of the Institute of Fundraising

Given the predicted potential impact of the economic downturn on charitable giving, the Government is even more committed to promoting the importance of corporate giving and philanthropy and enabling tax effective giving. The Government will host a **Corporate Giving and Philanthropy Summit**. At the summit, the Government will appoint a **Giving and Philanthropy Ambassador**, who will support Ministers and the Office of the Third Sector in

<sup>27</sup> ACF/PWC (November 2008), Charity Commission (October 2008), Charity Market Monitor 2008 (July 2008), G2 Data Dynamics (October 2008), An Olive Branch (December 2008), State Street (January 2008), ACEVO/CAF survey (August 2008)

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/charities/menu.htm>

<sup>29</sup> Writing in January 2009, one of the Directors of the Centre for Charitable Giving and Philanthropy stated that "evidence of any collapse in donations remains thin, and there are signs that the philanthropic impulse remains robust".

championing giving and philanthropy. The Ambassador will work in partnership with the Office of the Third Sector's private and third sector taskforce (see 2.4) and Julia Neuberger, the Prime Minister's Champion for Volunteering. The Office of the Third Sector will also work to develop channels of communication between the **Association of Charitable Foundations** and Government departments to encourage shared information that further supports informed and efficient funding by trusts and foundations and best meets the needs of specific client groups.

In addition, HM Revenue and Customs, on behalf of HM Treasury, are currently exploring potential research around the likely behavioural effects on donors of redirecting the **higher rate element of Gift Aid** from donors to charities. This aims to examine the possible impacts of different methods of achieving this, and is expected in autumn 2009.

### 2.2.2 Earned Income and Social Enterprise

In 2005/06 over half<sup>30</sup> of the sector's income was earned through trading, compared to under a quarter<sup>31</sup> in 2000/01. Enabling organisations to develop sustainable earned income streams is crucial to the sector's longer-term strength and contribution to the economy.

Social enterprises are businesses with social and environmental goals at their heart, but they are not often well understood. Recent research<sup>32</sup> shows that even people who could be expected to understand social enterprise on the whole do not. The Government will support the sector to create **a clear, workable way for social enterprises to explain what they offer that is widely taken up and is self-funding in the longer term**. It will enable social enterprises to market themselves more successfully to consumers, the public and potential investors – and will boost the ability of social enterprises to contribute to the recovery of the economy, and to establish wider social and environmental benefits.

<sup>30</sup> 50.3%, NCVO Almanac.

<sup>31</sup> 23.3%, NCVO Almanac.

<sup>32</sup> For the Office of the Third Sector, conducted by COI, September 2008.

## 2.3 Strengthening the Sector's Access to Investment

*"Increasingly entrepreneurs are looking beyond the balance sheet and establishing enterprises with a conscience that directly benefit their communities. In the current economic climate, it is more important than ever those social enterprises have the support they need to survive. That is why we are providing real help for all businesses, including the third sector. They too can benefit from our working capital and loan guarantees to secure more than £20 billion in bank lending, along with a range of other government support".*

The Rt Hon Lord Mandelson, Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform

As social enterprise grows, and as third sector organisations increasingly face a commercial environment, investment for growth and development becomes more important. However, third sector organisations cannot always access the finance they need. Research shows that some social enterprises need help to understand what it means to be 'investment ready'<sup>33</sup>

and rarely consider issuing equity (shares)<sup>34</sup>. Furthermore, third sector organisations may not be able to, or simply not be aware that they can, benefit from the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) support to help businesses. Together, these barriers to investment can compromise third sector organisations' potential to become sustainable, to grow and to replicate their work to benefit more people and communities.

The Government welcomes this opportunity to make clear that **its support for business is for all businesses regardless of their mission**. This includes Real Help with Finance<sup>35</sup>, the recent package of measures launched in January that are designed to address the cash flow, credit and investment needs of small and medium sized businesses. The Government is ensuring the package reaches out to all types of business and that the third sector benefits from this support in practice. This will be established by evaluating and monitoring the reported impact and take-up amongst social enterprises.

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/84357/social\\_investment\\_pilots.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/84357/social_investment_pilots.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/third\\_sector/assets/finance\\_access\\_report.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/third_sector/assets/finance_access_report.pdf).

<sup>35</sup> [www.businesslink.gov.uk/realhelp](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/realhelp).



### Business Support:

- Specialist social enterprise lenders are able to apply to Capital for Enterprise Limited with regard to the **Enterprise Finance Guarantee Scheme**<sup>36</sup>;
- The **Working Capital Scheme**<sup>37</sup> will secure £20 billion of working capital credit for companies and the third sector; and
- The **£75m Capital for Enterprise Fund** (£50m from Government augmented by £25m from the banks) will invest in small businesses which need equity and that have exhausted traditional forms of finance. Social Enterprise will be able to access this fund.
- In order to help businesses identify their financial needs, the Government launched a new **“one stop shop” easy-to-use web portal**. The portal directs companies to the most appropriate form of support and helps them ascertain their eligibility for a range of government support.
- A free **business healthcheck** via Business Link

The Government’s existing support for business is not always appropriate for third sector organisations (e.g. when only a small percentage of their income is generated through trading). The Office of the Third Sector and others have invested in a number of social investment funds for the third sector, including the Futurebuilders Fund, the CommunityBuilders Fund and the Department of Health’s Social Enterprise Investment Fund.

Social enterprises and social investors often report that they are at a disadvantage when seeking to make use of existing incentives to invest in small and growing businesses. To minimise these barriers and ensure a stronger social enterprise sector emerges from the recession, the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (**NESTA**) will undertake an **independent review on the incentives for investment in social enterprises**. The review will aim to bring greater clarity, understanding and awareness of the existing framework, including the impact on investment in deprived areas and Community Interest Companies (CICs). In addition, the CIC regulator will undertake a **review of the limits on distributions by CICs**.

<sup>36</sup> This secures up to £1.3bn of additional bank loans to small firms with a turnover of up to £25m.

<sup>37</sup> This secures up to £20bn worth of lending for working capital.

Evidence shows that social enterprises may need help to become investment ready. To help address this, the Office of the Third Sector will establish a **programme of specialist financial skills and investment readiness training.**

## 2.4 Strengthening the Sector's Skills

*"The third sector has a vital role to play in helping the country through the difficult and challenging times it faces. Your work is crucial in helping people get back into work, and in supporting families and communities. We want to help you ensure your organisations not only survive but thrive, by making sure you have the right skills. And we want to help you reach out to the disadvantaged to give them the skills they need to fulfil their potential."*

The Rt Hon John Denham MP,  
Secretary of State for Innovation,  
Universities and Skills

To maximise the third sector's ability to support people through the recession and in the future, the staff and volunteers working in the sector need the right skills. The Government has already made considerable investment in the skills of the third sector workforce. In October 2008,

the Government launched a **new skills body for the third sector.** The body will open up learning opportunities for third sector paid and voluntary staff and address skills gaps for third sector organisations. Through **Train to Gain** – the Government's flagship programme for employers looking to develop the skills of their workforce – the Government is providing £925m in 2009/10. This support is open to both third sector paid staff and volunteers. In addition, it was announced in November 2008 that small and medium-sized enterprises will be the top priority for Train to Gain funds including the £350m growth over the next two years.

With an increasing demand for services and the potential of the third sector to contribute to the country's future economic growth, the Government has a role to play in helping third sector organisations ensure trustees, staff and volunteers have the skills to respond to the needs of people and communities in the recession and thereafter. Building on existing investments in Train to Gain and the new skills body for the third sector, the Government will implement a package of measures to support third sector employees and volunteers:

- The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) will publish a **Third Sector Strategy**, based on consultation during Summer 2009, to

strengthen this commitment across all areas of its work. The Strategy will set out how the new Skills Funding Agency arrangements will build on the *Working Together* agenda, which the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has undertaken with third sector providers;

- DIUS will produce a **Skills Prospectus for the Third Sector** which signposts third sector organisations to Government funded training programmes in March 2009. Building on this, a long term strategy for the Third Sector will be produced by the new Third Sector skills body on behalf of the sector;
- In *Enterprise: Unlocking the UK's Talent*, the Government announced the setting up of a **National Enterprise Academy (NEA)** to contribute to creating a more enterprising culture. The National Enterprise Academy will be a centre of excellence for enterprise learning, equipping young people with the skills and the confidence they need to become enterprising employees or entrepreneurs in their own right. Over 11,000 learners will be supported in the first three years of the Academy's operation. The NEA will include **social enterprise** within its enterprise landscape;
- The **School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE)** provides a year-long 'action-learning' programme to support social entrepreneurs to establish sustainable community-based organisations that create social change, start new businesses and create jobs. Over 400 students have taken part in SSE programmes across the UK. With **£0.5 million** of new Government investment, the School for Social Entrepreneurs will expand its network to double the number of social entrepreneurs supported. Places for social entrepreneurs, operating in deprived communities where individuals and families are affected by the recession, will be prioritised; and
- The Minister for the Cabinet Office will establish a three month **taskforce to explore ways in which the private and third sectors can work together** to help those most affected by the current economic climate, including through sharing skills and expertise.

## 2.5 Strengthening the Sector's Pension Schemes

Following discussions at the NCVO 'recession' summit in November 2008, many third sector organisations<sup>38</sup> have expressed concerns about the impact of falling asset prices and the short term affordability issues some will face because of the resulting increase in their pension deficits<sup>39</sup>. The Pensions Regulator recognises that this will be of concern to many employers, and is keen to ensure that their scheme specific approach to assessing reasonable affordability for scheme sponsors in repairing these deficits, is well understood.

The Pensions Regulator has already issued **a statement about the impact of the recession on pension schemes**. It will work with the Office of the Third Sector

and the Charity Commission to target information to **third sector organisations**. The information will explain some of the flexibilities available in developing robust but affordable recovery plans, whilst stressing the importance that trustees ensure the pension scheme receives appropriate protection. The Government is also considering the issues that employers, including some charities with defined benefit schemes in deficit, face when trying to merge or restructure. In addition, the Office of the Third Sector and the Pensions Regulator will meet regularly throughout 2009/10 to **discuss the impact of the recession on third sector pension schemes and recovery plans** where schemes are in deficit.

<sup>38</sup> Most notably the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations and the Charity Finance Directors Group.

<sup>39</sup> A survey by the Association of Charitable Foundation and PriceWaterhouseCoopers found that 44% of respondents operate defined benefit pension schemes and 54% of those expect an increase in funding requirements over the next 12 months.

## 3 Final Word

*“ I am in no doubt of the particularly valuable role that the third sector has to play in the current climate and I am pleased to endorse this Third Sector Action Plan. In these challenging times, it’s important that we continue to offer people more support to find work and I am pleased that the Department for Work and Pensions and the Office of the Third Sector will be collaborating to ensure our shared ambitions of getting people back into work and utilising the unique expertise that the third sector can offer are realised.*

*The Department recognises the important role that volunteering can play in helping people to develop and maintain skills for work. That’s why we’ve included increased access to work-focussed volunteering opportunities as part of our package of extra support for jobseekers who have been unemployed for six months.*


*We also recognise the important and increasing role that the third sector plays in the provision of employment services. I am pleased to be working with the Office of the Third Sector on the Code of Conduct to protect the interests of third sector providers. ”*

### **The Rt Hon James Purnell MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions**

*“ The third sector has key roles that are critical and integral to improvement and reform to deliver world-class health and social care services; finding innovative ways of creating personalised services and supporting engagement between commissioners and providers of health and care services, and the people they serve. The Department of Health has a long track record of investment in development of the sector, to help improve health and well-being for all parts of the population.*

*I welcome this additional investment to those parts of the sector responding to increasing demand for services in these difficult times. This plan is vital to ensuring the services and support delivered by the third sector continue to be available to the people and communities who need them most. ”*

### **The Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP, Secretary of State for Health**



*“ I fully support this document. The third sector has a key role to play in helping to drive innovation in the design and delivery of services – an agenda that my Department has contributed to since last year’s White Paper ‘Innovation Nation’. It also has an important role in ensuring people have the skills they need to find jobs and fulfil their potential.*

*I know that third sector organisations need support from us as well, especially as expectations of professionalism rise. The help my department can offer in upskilling the third sector workforce will be key in the sector fulfilling its potential. Now more than ever is the time to increase, not reduce, investment in skills and training and to this end we have made Train to Gain and other DIUS skills programmes available to third sector employers and individuals.*

*My department is increasing spending on skills, for example an additional £350 million for small and medium size organisations in Train to Gain funding over the next two years. In addition DIUS is working with the Learning and Skills Council to make contracts to provide learning and training more accessible for third sector organisations. This investment in the skills of people working in the third sector will better enable them to respond to the needs of communities and businesses. ”*

**Rt Hon John Denham, Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills**

*“ At the heart of the Good Society we want to create a vibrant voluntary and charity sector. Charities and voluntary groups are the manifestation of all that is great about Britain; they are living proof that we are a generous, altruistic and decent people. Some, but by no means all, voluntary groups are driven by faith. The world’s great religions place a responsibility on their adherents to behave charitably. Others donate their time and money because of a shared sense of humanity, or as the expression of their desire to care.*

*But the third sector is about more than care for others - it provides a welcome challenge to the system, gives a platform for advocacy for those without a voice, and*

*generates new ideas to drive progress forward. From my own involvement in my local CVS in Salford I have always tried to put the third sector at the heart of policy-making and practical action. As a Government we place the third sector centre-stage, working in partnership across the public services, to provide ever-improving services to local people. This Action Plan is a further step on the journey – one we will take together through the tough times ahead. 9*

### **The Rt Hon Hazel Blears MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**

*6 Increasingly entrepreneurs are looking beyond the balance sheet and establishing enterprises with a conscience that directly benefit their communities. In the current economic climate, it is more important than ever those social enterprises have the support they need to survive. That is why we are providing real help for all businesses, including the third sector. They too can benefit from our working capital and loan guarantees to secure more than £20 billion in bank lending, along with a range of other government support. 9*

### **The Rt Hon Lord Mandelson, Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform**

*6 I meet and talk to people working in the third sector every day and I am constantly impressed by their determination to make a difference to the lives of children and young people. The third sector plays a central role in delivering our Children's Plan providing vital services in our children's centres, schools and youth clubs. They help us to develop policy and represent the views of the people they work with. In particular, it is often voluntary organisations who work directly with the most disadvantaged families helping us to reach out to communities who are less inclined to engage with the statutory services.*

*We want to support third sector organisations in their work with vulnerable families which is why we have set up a new Safeguarding Unit. This unit will provide advice, information and training to help voluntary organisations keep children safe from harm.*

*Local Authorities and Children's Trusts deliver many of our services, and we are committed to working with them to promote better involvement of the third sector through improved commissioning. Our new Apprenticeships, Children, Skills and Learning Bill proposes that third sector organisations should be directly represented on local Children's Trust Boards. To back this up we have committed £20m to help Children's Trusts improve commissioning of services for children and families from their local voluntary sector. It is only by working together with the third sector that we can achieve our goal to improve outcomes for all children and young people in this country. 9*


#### **The Rt Hon Ed Balls MP, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families**

*6 The Ministry of Defence has a long and valued history of working with the third sector to support service personnel, their families and veterans. The advice of the different individual charities and voluntary organisations has been of tremendous use to us in recent years. While our forces have been working courageously overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan, and their families have waited for them to come home, these groups have provided them all with help and support. They have also provided the Ministry of Defence and the Services with constructive criticism and information about what more we could do more to look after our service personnel. We welcome this whole-heartedly.*

*The Government's Service Personnel Command Paper, published in 2008, set out our commitment to ensure that our people have the best welfare and support possible, and that their families are not disadvantaged in accessing good quality public services like health, education and skills. It also sets out our aim to improve the quality of housing and support for families and veterans provided. To deliver this commitment we are engaging with other government departments and voluntary organisations up and down the country. We will take into account the current economic conditions as we develop the Ministry of Defence's Third Sector Strategy this year. 9*

#### **The Rt Hon John Hutton MP, Secretary of State for Defence**





“ When I was Minister for the Third Sector, I saw for myself how organisations around the country can change lives, bring communities together and campaign for social change.

*In my work at the Department of Energy and Climate Change, I am seeing again how voluntary and community groups have a vital role to play – and the current downturn makes their contribution even more important.*


*It is important because when incomes are squeezed it becomes more important to have an energy policy that is both sustainable and also fair for people, helping families to cut bills and act on CO<sub>2</sub>. The third sector plays a crucial role in reaching those who are most in need.*

*My Department is funding the Energy Best Deal campaign to train frontline workers in Citizen’s Advice Bureaux, housing associations and other voluntary and community organisations to deliver face-to-face advice.*

*And the third sector is important, too, because in the long term the great moral challenge of responding to climate change cannot be solved by governments alone. It will take a global deal and leadership from government, but it will also take pressure from citizens, communities and all sections of society. The costs of not acting on climate change are higher than the costs of acting, and the costs rise the longer we wait.*

*This action plan will help the third sector weather the storm and enable them to continue to lead the way in creating a fairer, more sustainable Britain. ”*

**The Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change**



*London will host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012. The Games have already generated intense excitement, with hundreds of thousands of people responding to the call from the London Olympic Games Organising Committee (LOCOG) for Games-time volunteers. And further this offers opportunities across London, and the whole of the UK. Many third sector organisations are developing plans to use the excitement generated by the Games to provide rewarding experiences participating in programmes inspired by London 2012 including in sport, culture and conservation. Volunteering can help people, including people in some of our most deprived communities, gain skills, confidence and self-esteem and hugely improve their prospects of finding employment.*

*We recognise that the London 2012 Games provide routes to employment through a variety of pathways, including the Personal Best programme, which gives the hardest to reach groups in society the chance to get into work through a volunteering programme. So far Personal Best has been piloted in 11 boroughs with 875 Londoners taking part. 14.5% have already moved into employment and 23.5% into further learning. LOCOG will ensure that 10% of volunteers working on the Games themselves will be graduates from the Personal Best programme. We are announcing simultaneously with this action plan that Personal Best is being rolled out to the North East and South East of England.*

**Rt Hon Tessa Jowell MP, Minister for the Olympics and Paymaster General**

## 4 Submissions

The Office of the Third Sector would like to thank the following organisations and individuals for their contributions to the development of this action plan:

### A

Access Space Network Ltd  
 ACEVO  
 Action for Children  
 Age Concern  
 Alzheimer's Society  
 Association of Charitable Foundations  
 Association of Charity Shops  
 Association of Volunteer Managers  
 Avon and Somerset Constabulary

### B

Big Issue Invest  
 Big Lottery Fund  
 Bradford Community & Voluntary Service  
 Brian Todd  
 British Heart Foundation

### C

CAF  
 Cancer Research UK  
 Capacitybuilders  
 Caroline Diehl Media Trust  
 Central Surrey CVS  
 Changemakers  
 Charities Advisory Trust  
 Charity Commission  
 Charity Finance Directors' Group  
 Charlotte Galsworthy  
 Chelmsford CHESS Night Shelter  
 Cheltenham Volunteer Centre  
 Children England  
 Churches' Legislation Advisory Service  
 Citylife – The Community Investment Society  
 Commission for the Compact  
 Community Development Finance Association  
 Community Development Foundation  
 Community Matters  
 Co-operative and Community Finance  
 COUI:UK  
 CSV  
 Cumbria Youth Alliance



**D**

David Seviour

Diocese of Chichester

Directory of Social Change

DISLIB

**E**

East Riding (council for) Voluntary Youth Services

Eastbourne Association of Voluntary Services

**F**

Flicks in the Sticks and Arts Alive

Futurebuilders England

**G**

GO East

Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisations

Groundwork UK

**H**

Halton Autistic Family Support Group

Herefordshire Community Foundation

**I**

Institute of Fundraising

**J**

James O'Rourke

**L**

Lindsey Stone

Lorraine Walker

**M**

Marsh Farm Outreach

Mencap

MS Society

**N**

NAVCA

NCVO

**P**

Paul Dunn

Pro-Contact

Progressive Educational Tools Ltd

**R**

RAISE

Royal National Institute of Blind People

Russell Moseley

**S**

School for Social Entrepreneurs

Scope

Service by Emergency Rider Volunteers

SOFA PROJECT

South West Forum

**T**

Thames Reach

The Big Opportunity

The Cranfield Trust

The Diocese of Portsmouth

The National Federation of Self-Help  
Partnerships

The Social Enterprise Loan Fund

The Wise Group

Third Sector European Network

Tris Dyson

**U**

Unite the Union

**V**

v

Vaughan Thomas

Voice4Change England

Voluntary Action Elmbridge

Voluntary Organisations' Network North East

Voluntary Sector North West

Volunteering England

**W**

West Devon Environmental Network

West Sussex County Council

White Box Digital

**Y**

Yorkshire & Humber Regional Forum

## Key milestones

Real Help Now: Meeting Demand for Services and Tackling Unemployment		
Action	Lead Department/ Agency	Key milestones
Community Resilience Fund programme	Office of the Third Sector (OTS)	Grants available from April 2009
Community Resilience Fund-commissioner engagement	OTS National Training Programme for Third Sector Commissioning	The National Programme is currently out for tender. The new programme will run from June 2009
Refresh of the Compact	Commission for the Compact, OTS, Compact Voice	The Commission for the Compact will consult from summer 2009, with a new Compact in autumn 2009
Awareness raising campaign across public sector finance professionals	OTS	Delivery throughout 2009
New funding information web service	OTS	A new information web service will launch in late spring 2009
Third Sector Indicators Community of Practice recession – specific programme of work	OTS, Third Sector Indicators Community of Practice	Delivery throughout 2009
Work-focussed volunteering opportunities	Department for Work and Pensions, OTS	Available from April 2009
vTalent Year	v	Young people will attend the first residentials as part of the programme in March 2009

<b>Strengthening the Sector Now and in the Future</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Department/ Agency</b>	<b>Key milestones</b>
Establishment of a modernisation fund	OTS	Diagnostic support available from April 2009. Funding for organisations available from summer 2009
Corporate Giving and Philanthropy Summit	OTS	The Summit will be held in summer 2009
Develop channels of communication between the Association of Charitable Foundations and Government Departments	OTS, Association of Charitable Foundations	Cross-Government round table summer 2009
Research on redirection of the higher rate of Gift Aid from donors to charities	HM Revenue and Customs, HM Treasury	Research available in autumn 2009
Promotion of social enterprise	OTS	Development work underway. Consensus with sector on a way forward reached summer 2009. Sector begins roll out in November 2009
Support for businesses open to social enterprise	Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, OTS	Ongoing
Review of incentives for investment in social enterprise	National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts	The review will start in spring 2009

Strengthening the Sector Now and in the Future		
Action	Lead Department/ Agency	Key milestones
Review of limits on distributions by Community Interest Companies	Community Interest Company Regulator	Review from spring 2009
Programme of specialist financial skills and investment training	OTS	From March 2009
Building skills in the third sector	Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS)/OTS	<p>DIUS will publish a Skills Prospectus for the Third Sector in March 2009</p> <p>DIUS will consult over the summer 2009 on a third sector strategy</p> <p>New investment in the School for Social Entrepreneurs from April 2009</p> <p>A 3 month taskforce to explore ways in which the private sector and the third sector can work together from March 2009, reporting in summer 2009</p>
Strengthening the sector's pension schemes	Pensions Regulator, Charity Commission, OTS	Information for the third sector will be published by May 2009









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