OFFICE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY, LOCAL INTELLIGENCE TEAM (LIT) NORTH WEST UPDATE MAY 2012

FOR INFORMATION ONLY - Please see below updates which you may find of interest:

1) **Government cuts volunteering red tape** – more information at - <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/boost-volunteering-government-cuts-red-tape>
A raft of measures designed to encourage more people to volunteer and to make it easier for people to run charities have been published by Minister for Civil Society Nick Hurd.  The steps taken to make it easier for people to volunteer include:

* a “Volunteer Code of Good Practice” stating that volunteering is not a generally risky activity and setting out simple guidelines that will reduce any risk there might be;
* guidance from the Association of British Insurers on ‘How to run an event’ giving volunteers advice on how to arrange appropriate insurance;
* ABI’s “Volunteer Driving - The Motor Insurance Commitment” which has encouraged insurers not to charge additional premiums for volunteer drivers. 66 insurance companies have already signed up, covering over 90% of all drivers. Women’s Royal Voluntary Service has over 10,000 volunteer drivers alone; and
* new legislation the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 will radically improve the “portability” of CRB certificates so that people can volunteer using the same certificate as they do for employment. This change will lead to a big reduction in the need for repeat checks on the same individual reducing the time and costs incurred

The Civil Society Red Tape Challenge is open until 13 September, for more information see <http://www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/home/index> and <http://www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/themehome/civil-society>

2) **National Citizens Service Evaluation**- <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/new-figures-reveal-national-citizen-service-track-deliver-400-million-benefits-society-2014>

Evaluation on NCS 2011 published - New figures reveal National Citizen Service on track to deliver £400 million in benefits to society by 2014.  For every £1 spent on National Citizen Service (NCS) up to £2 is being returned to the  communities and young people who took part, according to new independent analysis published by a consortium led by NatCen Social Research. The benefits are calculated by taking into consideration the equivalent of over £600,000 in working-hours volunteered by participants, and projected increased earnings over a lifetime of those who took part, as a result of some of the positive impacts of the programme on young people.  The evaluation also found that participation in NCS resulted in more social mixing during the programme, and increased well-being and reduced anti-social behaviour afterwards, meaning the true returns are likely to be even higher. The evaluation can be found at - <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/study/national-citizen-service-evaluation>
This year 30,000 places are available and the long-term aim is for NCS to be available to every 16 and 17-year-old. There will be 90,000 places by 2014. There are still some places available for programmes running this summer – \*\*\* please sign-post this opportunity -  go to <https://nationalcitizenservice.direct.gov.uk/>  for more information \*\*\*

3) **National Citizens Service 2013** – Information about the tender for 2013 NCS providers - <http://ncsteam.sgv2.com/welcome> - The online community space for organisations interested in being part of delivering National Citizens Service (NCS) in 2013, more details about Information sessions on 30th (London) and 31st (Sheffield) May.  More information also at - <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/nationalcitizenservice/b0075357/national-citizen-service---prior-information-notice/invitation-to-tender-itt-for-national-citizen-service-2013> .
Tender documentation is available at - <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/nationalcitizenservice/b0075357/national-citizen-service---prior-information-notice/itt-ncs-2013>

4)      **Investment and Contract Readiness Fund** – <http://www.beinvestmentready.org.uk>
The Investment and Contract Readiness Fund is a £10 million fund, managed by The Social Investment Business, on behalf of the Office for Civil Society, that aims to ensure social ventures are better equipped to secure new forms of investment and compete for public service contracts. It is now accepting applications from social ventures enable social ventures to access new forms of investment and compete for public service contracts.  From Monday 21 May 2012, grants between £50,000 and £150,000 will be available on a rolling basis to ambitious social ventures who will go on to raise at least £500,000 investment, or who want to bid for contracts over £1 million.   For more information on Social Investment see the Cabinet Office website - <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/growing-social-investment-market-faqs>

5)      **Office of the Civil Society - Behavioural Insights Team Bulletin** – (see attached pdf) please find attached Behavioural Bulletin, information on the work of the OCS Behavioural Insights Team.  If you are interested in finding out more contact Simon Ruda – simon.ruda@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk

6)      **DCLG Community Right to Challenge** - The Localism Act provides the Right to Challenge, it will allow voluntary and community groups, charities, parish councils, and local authority staff to bid to run a local authority service where they believe they can do so differently and better. This may be a whole service or part of a service.
Relevant bodies will need to submit a written expression of interest. Local authorities will have to consider and respond to expressions of interest which, if accepted, will trigger a procurement exercise for that service. The challenging body can then participate, alongside others.
Commencement - The Community Right to Challenge (Fire and Rescue Authorities and Rejection of Expressions of Interest) Regulations 2012 and the Community Right to Challenge (Expressions of Interest and Excluded Services) Regulations 2012 have been laid in Parliament. DCLG expect the community right to challenge to come into force on 27 June 2012. The draft statutory instruments are available on legislation.gov.uk (see below).
DCLG have published draft statutory guidance on the Community Right to Challenge (link below). A final version of this guidance will be published when the Community Right to Challenge comes into force.  Draft Statutory Guidance:  <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/2148165.pdf>
Localism Act (Part 5, Chapter 2): <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>
The Community Right to Challenge (Fire and Rescue Authorities and Rejection of Expressions of Interest) (England) Regulations 2012 and explanatory memorandum: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2012/9780111523872/contents>
The Community Right to Challenge (Expressions of Interest and Excluded Services) (England) Regulations 2012 and explanatory memorandum: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/1313/contents/made>

7**)      A Year of Service** - is a programme where nine faith communities are leading a series of volunteering days throughout 2012, encouraging people of all faiths and people of non-religious beliefs to come together to help improve their local neighbourhoods.  It is supported by DCLG and OCS and involves through a Reference Group the major faith communities: Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Jain, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths.  For more information - <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/newsroom/2096316> and <http://ayearofservice.org.uk>

**8)      New fund for innovative community learning** - <http://www.niace.org.uk/news/new-fund-for-innovative-community-learning?src=fp1st-more>
The Skills Funding Agency has launched the Community Learning Innovation Fund (CLIF). Managed by NIACE, the fund will provide grants between £10,000 and £65,000, up to a combined total of £4 million, to groups and organisations from across England for new and imaginative community learning opportunities to encourage adults to take up, succeed and progress in learning.  Closing date for applications is 12 noon, Thursday June 28 for applications for £50,000 or more and 12 noon, Thursday July 5 for applications for less than £50,000 – more information - <http://www.niace.org.uk/current-work/clif/community-learning-innovation-fund>
The Community Learning Innovation Fund will support projects - which will run from September 2012 to July 2013 - to develop and offer creative learning opportunities that support the objectives set out in the recent policy reform document from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), New Challenges, New Chances.
Funding will be awarded to projects which best illustrate the development of creative community learning provision that will:
·         widen participation in learning and transform people's destinies;
·         promote social renewal and develop stronger communities;
·         maximise the impact of community learning on individuals, families and communities;
·         effectively sustain the impact of the learning; and
·         align the project with the work of emerging Community Learning Trusts, a distinct but complementary initiative recently announced by BIS.