



Welcome to the first in a series of monthly bulletins that will provide updates on our work at the Office for Civil Society (OCS). We hope you will find it interesting, but you can click here to [unsubscribe from future updates](#).

We've structured the bulletin around our areas of focus: **supporting the sector, encouraging social action, growing social investment and supporting young people.**



Cabinet Office

Nick Hurd
Minister for Civil Society

Supporting the Sector

We want to make it easier for charities and social enterprises to help us deliver better public services.

Transforming Rehabilitation

The biggest commissioning programme underway is Transforming Rehabilitation. There are about 1500 voluntary organisations working with offenders in England and it's vital that we tap into their experience and expertise if we're going to succeed in driving down reoffending. That's why we have been working alongside MOJ to ensure that the Transforming Rehabilitation Programme creates the conditions for a diverse provider market and sustainable supply chains. This involves ensuring that procurement documentation doesn't unintentionally exclude VCSEs or consortia from qualifying. VCSE organisations are also being supported by the:

- Investment and Contract Readiness Fund, which is providing more than £1m of grant funding to support 10 VCSEs that work with offenders, as they seek to secure social investment and to win contracts;
- £3.5m Rehabilitation Social Action Fund which is supporting VCSE organisations working with offenders to scale up;
- Tools to enable the formation of sustainable supply chains such as the Partnership Finder. This will match larger prime providers with subcontractors and has seen 367 organisations sign up so far.
- Mutuals Team which is working closely with the leaders and staff of potential mutuals currently delivering services as part of probation trusts, to maximise opportunities for finding innovative ways to deliver services.

I was pleased to hear that 399 VCSEs have registered to bid in the competition with around 80 of these expressing an interest in becoming primes. We'll be continuing to work with MOJ throughout 2014 to support these organisations with their bids and I hope that if you work in this field, you've already been able to benefit from this.

Transparency of lobbying bill

I'm aware that some charities remain concerned about the potential impact of the Transparency of Lobbying bill on their campaigning. We continue to believe that charities should not be affected by this bill as long as their campaign could not reasonably be regarded as seeking to procure or promote the success of a party or candidate at an election. However, concessions have already been made which address some of the concerns raised by charities and constructive discussions are continuing. We are also working closely with the bill team who are keen to better understand charities' specific concerns.



Encouraging Social Action

We have been working with a wide range of partners to encourage more social action. In the [update](#) we have just published you can see what we have done and what we are committed to. For me, it paints a very positive picture of British generosity in difficult times and growing levels of community activism. Given its economic and social value, I hope we can all celebrate the fact that volunteering is growing again after years of decline. The [Centre for Social Action](#), in collaboration with NESTA, will be at the heart of what we do. We are investing £40m over the next two years and its ambition is to show how social action has a critical role in tackling some key public service challenges. The most recent call out is to support organisations that use social action to help the most vulnerable young people in our society. Specifically, the Fund will support projects which aim to reduce



Growing Social Investment

We want to make it easier for social entrepreneurs to access capital. That is why [growing the social investment market](#) is important to us. It is encouraging to see that the market grew by [over 20% last year](#). Everyone involved in the UK can take pride in our world leadership but we know that there are still many challenges to unpick.

One of those challenges is making it easier for charitable foundations to invest. That is the context of our recent work on co mingled funds which combine philanthropic and commercial capital to achieve social outcomes. We have [showcased](#) the potential of co-mingling funds to generate social impact at scale and we have now [published](#) a package of information and guidance to help those considering setting them up.

A major milestone will be the arrival of a new tax break to encourage social investment. We have been working

reoffending, improve health outcomes, improve academic performance or support vulnerable young people to secure jobs. You will find further details and information on how to apply [here](#).

We continue to believe in the power of match funding to encourage people across the UK to give. This month we are especially excited about our new partnership with [The Big Give](#) through which we are supporting 47 community organisations and charities.

Feedback

Please let us know what you think of this bulletin. If you have any comments, or know anyone who would like to subscribe, you can [contact us here](#).

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A monthly newsletter from the Office for Civil Society

closely with our colleagues in HMT to make sure that this new incentive is as effective as possible.



Supporting Young People

Earlier this summer I took over responsibility for youth policy. We will focus on giving teenagers more opportunities to find voice and develop skills for life and work. One of the highlights of my year was sitting in the recent Youth Parliament debate which we support through British Youth Council. It was outstanding and you can read the debates [here](#). The other key event has been the launch of the [Step up 2 Serve](#) campaign. This cross sector and cross party campaign aims to double the number of young people involved in social action by 2020. We have already [committed £11.5 million to support the campaign](#) over the next two years, in addition to our investment in National Citizen Service.