

# Annex A: Summary of DCSF Third Sector Strategy and Action Plan

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## Introduction

On 30<sup>th</sup> July 2009 the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) launched its Third Sector Strategy and Action Plan. The action plan outlines how local, regional and national third sector organisations can engage with the DCSF under its priorities as well as how the department can better support the sector.

This briefing sets out the main themes of the action plan and has been produced to inform third sector organisations, especially those taking part in the DCSF consultation on the Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) Grants Programme. For the full plan visit <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/voluntaryandcommunity/voluntaryandcommunity/>

## Overview

The Government is committed to ensuring a positive relationship with the third sector that takes into account the various need and potential of different sized organisations.

Recognising the impact of the recession on services and service users, and that wider changes to the DCSF programme present both challenges and opportunities for the third sector, their strategy sets out a vision for the third sector to:

- Advise, inform and challenge
- Bring new perspectives and experience
- Offer creative solutions
- Provide direct services and support

They aim to achieve this by working with third sector to:

- Respect and value the sector
- Champion and promote third sector best practice
- Work in accordance with the Compact
- Consult and listen to the sector
- Be fair, inclusive and un-bureaucratic
- Work across government departments
- Take a sustainable approach

DCSF pledge to achieve the above by: improving standards of commissioning, reducing bureaucracy, compact-proofing all new policies, identifying productive communication and working with their Third Sector Group to assess their performance.

## DCSF Outcomes

The DCSF Children's Plan and the Government's Every Child Matters outcomes underpin the department's future plans. The strategy outlines how, within this framework, third sector engagement will be taken forward.

### **Be Healthy** (Covers physical, mental, emotional and sexual health)

- The Aiming High for Disabled Children Programme (AHDC) invests in a number of areas including short breaks for families and parents forums. There is also third sector membership on the Ministerial Implementation Group.
- Encourage Commissioning of third sector providers for the Targeted Mental Health in Schools Programme (TaMHS).

### **Stay Safe**

- Protection of Children; the third sector will be involved in taking forward 'The Protection of children in England: action plan' and in preparing the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' core statutory guidance.
- The Government will be inviting third sector representation onto a new partnership network to work with the National Safeguarding Delivery Unit and Chief Advisory on the Safety of Children.

### **Enjoy and Achieve**

- The Department aim to work with a range of educational charities and third sector partners, including faith providers and alternative provision for children and young people.
- The DCSF White Paper, 'Your child, your schools, our future' sets out future partnerships between schools and other sectors, and the DCSF will be working with the third sector in areas including offering support to families, the provision of early years and childcare services, and work with children in care.

### **Make a Positive Contribution**

- The Department is investing in the creation of a National Body for Youth Leadership which will be led by third sector partners, providing opportunities for young people to lead change in their communities.
- DCSF guidance on promoting community cohesion in schools will highlight the role that the third sector can play in community engagement.
- DCSF aims to work with the third sector and schools to develop volunteering and mentoring opportunities that look at issues of equality and support communities.

### **Achieve Economic Well-Being**

- The Department's 'Targeted Youth Support: Next Steps' highlighted the role of the third sector in delivering prevention and intervention strategies for at risk young people.
- The Department will publish guidance for commissioning of education provision to prepare the sector for the raising of participation age to 18 by 2015.
- The Child Poverty Bill provides an opportunity for the third sector to share their expertise with local and national government.

## Engagement, Partnership, Commissioning and Capacity

### Partnerships and Engagement

- The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill is currently before Parliament and it places Children's Trusts at the centre of delivering children's services reforms. The DCSF wants the third sector to be involved at all levels of commissioning from strategic planning to monitoring delivery.
- In Spring 2010 the department plans to publish guidance on Children's Trust Boards, stating expectations that these will have third sector representation.
- Third sector membership of the DCSF's Children's Trust and Commissioning Advisory Group will be reviewed when the above takes place.

### Commissioning

- The DCSF want Children's Trusts Commissioners to develop a more diverse base of providers in order to meet local need. They also aim to promote ways of commissioning which also include grant funding.
- DCSF aim to publish survey results of children's service providers, including service user perceptions and commissioning experiences.
- DCSF aim to produce a set of quality standards to increase 'clarity and consistency' in the way that services for young people are commissioned locally.
- Using the 'Your Child, Your Schools, Our future' White Paper the DCSF will set out how support to schools, in future, should be offered from a range of service providers, including the third sector.
- DCSF plan to transfer responsibility for commissioning learning opportunities for 16-19 year olds to local authorities. In April 2010 they will issue statutory guidance, the National Commissioning Framework, which outlines how local authorities should commission these services, and recognise the work of the third sector with young people.

### Capacity

- DCSF want to continue to build the capacity of third sector service delivery as well as support third sector infrastructure.
- At present they are working with BAME and faith VCS networks to support grass roots groups to compete for grants and contracts.
- *The department are currently consulting on their Children, Young People and Families Grant programme which will support the sector and the department to deliver on its key priorities outlined above.*
- DCSF also want to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and will use the principles of appropriate monitoring and reporting that the Office of the Third Sector recently published.
- All DCSF funding opportunities will appear on the Funding Central website [www.fundingcentral.org.uk](http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk)