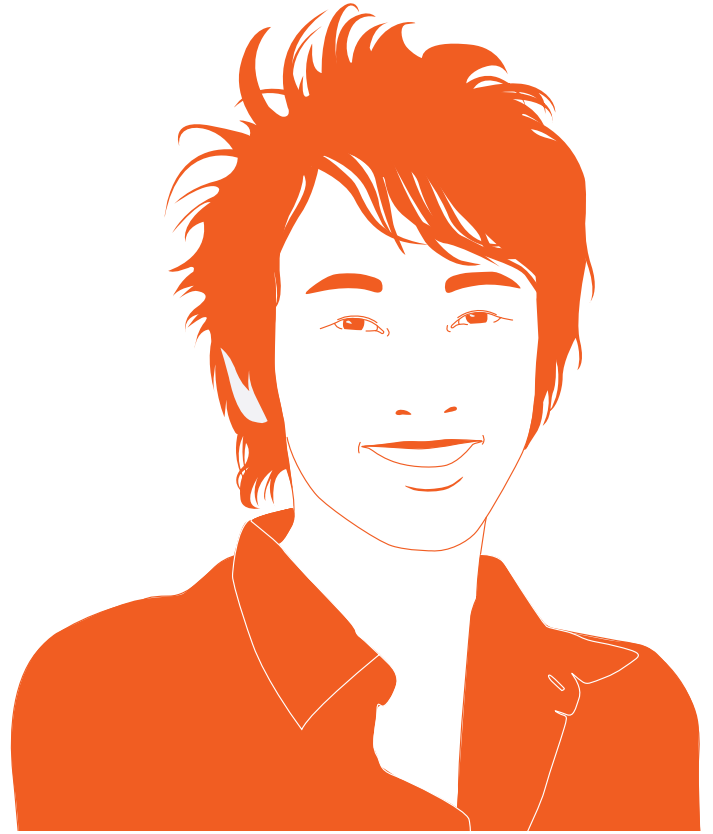


# Community Involvement in Children's Trusts – *Unlock your potential*

talking

trusts



## The partners

### The Community Sector Partnership for Children and Young People

The children and young people's services working group mainly consists of member organisations of the Community Sector Coalition<sup>1</sup>. This working group brings together some of the main national infrastructure organisations that support the development of local and community infrastructure.

The working group reviews children and young people's policy developments for their implications on community groups and organisations. The working group aims to influence the children and young people's policy and practice agendas, both nationally and through its members locally, to ensure that community sector organisations are able to play their full role in the local planning and delivery of services for children, young people and their families.

#### Member organisations are:

- Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)
- bassac
- Community Matters
- National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)
- National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS)
- National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations (NCVCCO)

(Most of the above organisations are members of the Community Sector Coalition.)



community  
sector  
coalition

### Community Sector Coalition

The Community Sector Coalition (CSC) is a UK umbrella network representing over 30 national membership organisations that are active within the community sector.

The aim of the CSC is to promote the interests and values of the community sector. The CSC brings together independent community sector organisations to share information and knowledge, influence policy, undertake joint initiatives and provide leadership for the sector. It promotes a community development perspective based on the experiences of its members. Members of the CSC are organisations that operate across England (or the UK) and that are involved in supporting, developing, representing and lobbying for the community sector at national level<sup>2</sup>.

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1. A full list of working group members is at the end of this document  
2. For contact details, see the end of this document

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## Foreword

For many years the community sector has played a key role in both advocacy and delivery of services for children and young people. Its involvement in new mechanisms for the development and delivery of services is crucial if children and young people are to remain at the heart of community-organised activities and the community's management of its own future.

In the last couple of years, the landscape for work with children and young people has changed dramatically. New initiatives and standards, and new local agencies, are creating a revolution in the way that services are delivered in our communities. Whether it's children's centres, extended schools or delivering the youth offer, community organisations are increasingly finding themselves on the outside of local arrangements.

Community groups and organisations are, by their nature, small in scale and big in number and many are simply off the radar of local statutory services. This has led many smaller community groups and organisations to fear that their informal youth service or children's service will be lost in the push to formalise arrangements. Larger groups fear the loss of funding as well as their knowledge of local needs and concerns.

This briefing is intended as a prompt for the community and voluntary sector to act now in order to retain its involvement in this important area. It gives groups the facts about the changes and the understanding they need to proceed. It also suggests practical routes into local plans, for example by working with a local Council for Voluntary Service, or Council for Voluntary Youth Service or entering a partnership with schools or colleges.

We urge all local voluntary and community sector organisations involved in this area of work to read and take action on this briefing to ensure that the vital connection between children, young people and the community is preserved.



**Susanne Rauprich**  
Chief Executive  
National Council for Voluntary Youth Services



**David Tyler**  
Chief Executive  
Community Matters  
Chair of the Community Sector Coalition

# Community involvement in children and young people's services – *unlock your potential*

If your organisation works with children or young people, whether formally or informally, whether funded or not, you need to know about children's trusts and their potential impact on your work.

Play schemes, mother and toddler groups, after-school clubs, youth groups and a whole variety of other community-level services provided by the voluntary and community sector need to be taken into account by the local children's trust and your organisation may need to act now if you wish to continue running these services in the future.



## Introduction

Children's trusts were developed in response to Lord Laming's inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié, and the resulting report published in 2003. Children's trusts were then underpinned by the 2004 Children's Act and the duty for services to cooperate. Laming had insisted that more effective partnership working and better communication was necessary across all service providers working with children and young people. 'We need to see and listen to children and respond to their needs, improve the way we communicate and work jointly across departments for the benefit of children and young people' (*Lord Laming, The Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report, 2003*).

Despite the name, children's trusts are not legal entities themselves but partnerships created to integrate services for children and young people. They build on good practice in multi-agency working that includes Sure Start, Connexions, Youth Offending Teams and the Children's Fund. The aim is to work in more effective partnership with traditional local government children's services such as education, social services and youth services, as well as better engagement with the voluntary and community sector.

Local authorities will take responsibility for the development and coordination of children's trusts, as they already hold the key statutory duties relating to children. The director of children's services will be accountable for the services provided by the children's trust and the lead elected member will be politically accountable for the same range of services as the director. The government has encouraged children's trusts to be innovative and flexible, to develop over time and to respond to local needs and demands.

By 2008, every local authority is expected to have developed children's trust arrangements for integrated working across all levels from planning through to delivery, with a clear focus on improving outcomes. These types of arrangement may not be referred to as children's trusts, but authorities must have established and be committed to this integrated approach. Children's trusts have already been established in 35 'pathfinder' local authorities which have been running since 2004 to help direct government policy and develop best practice. The final report of a national evaluation of these pathfinders, and arrangements in other areas, is due to be published in April 2007 ([www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/childrenstrustpathfinders](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/childrenstrustpathfinders)).

Local authority models for children's trusts will vary in order to take into account local circumstances. Children's trust partners are developing local delivery plans to decide the best way to deliver services to children and young people, and who is best placed to deliver them. Each local authority is expected to have a children and young people's plan. The children's trust partners may decide to provide these services themselves or to commission service provision from private, voluntary or community sector organisations. All plans should take account of the needs of all local children and young people.



## The vision

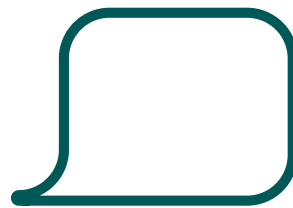
Children's trusts are required to involve children and young people at every stage from design to delivery and ensure that their needs are at the core of service delivery. The government has set out its vision for children's services in *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* ([www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)). All children's trusts will work towards the, now familiar, five key *Every Child Matters* outcomes, which are that all children and young people will:

1. Be healthy
2. Stay safe
3. Enjoy and achieve
4. Make a positive contribution
5. Achieve economic well-being

## Provision of services for children and young people

Opportunities for the voluntary and community sector to act as service providers have been created as a result of the provision for children and youth services becoming more formalised through the children's trust structure.

Every local authority must produce a children and young people's plan, develop extended schools services and build the children and young people's work within their Local Area Agreements (LAA). All of these developments are key to communities because they represent the structural framework through which commitments to young people are delivered locally.



# What does this mean for you?

## 1. *If you want to provide activities in partnership with extended schools...*

Schools are at the heart of the community and the government wants them to do more for children, young people and families outside of school hours. Many community organisations already provide services and activities for school-age children in the hours immediately before or after school. The extended schools programme aims to offer some core services to children, young people and families through all schools by 2010.

This 'core offer' from extended schools consists of:

- accessible and affordable childcare from 8am to 6pm all year round
- parenting and family support services
- a range of activities (study support), including sport and music clubs
- swift and easy referral to specialist services
- community use of facilities including adult and family learning and information provision.

However, not all of these services have to be provided on the school site. Schools are expected to consult on any extended services they plan to offer and work in partnership with local providers, including the voluntary and community sector. The purpose is to build on the existing provision offered by all partners and to develop new activities and support services that complement, rather than duplicate, existing provision.

Between 2006 and 2008 the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is providing £680 million to support the development of extended schools. Funding can be used flexibly and a wide range of partner organisations may deliver services. However, there are complex new guidelines around charging for young people's access to extended services. In addition, some organisations may find that having been through the remodelling process, schools decide to charge for use of their facilities or buildings, having previously offered them for free.

Schools are also developing their work through geographical 'clusters'. These provide further opportunities for the voluntary and community sector to build on an existing relationship with one school while possibly linking into a cluster of other local schools.

### **Where to get more information...**

The National Remodelling Team (now part of the Training and Development Agency) is working with tiers of contacts locally and regionally to support schools to develop their range of services. This includes:

- 290 extended schools remodelling advisers (ESRAs)
- 1,100 extended schools remodelling consultants
- 84 regional trainers.

Each local authority in England will now have an ESRA, who is the key contact for matters relating to extended schools. For those organisations which do not currently work with schools but that want to explore the opportunities presented by the extended schools agenda it may be useful to get in touch with their local authority either through the ESRA or through existing contacts, for example in local authority youth services.

Before making contact with your local authority ESRA, it may be useful to consider the following questions:

- Have you consulted with your clients to see how they and others might benefit from your working more closely with a school(s)?
- Do you have existing relationships with a school(s) that can be developed?
- Do you have relationships with local authority services?

- Are you aware of increased local need for the services you provide?
- Do you have the capacity to increase the amount of work you undertake?
- Are there other local organisations which you can collaborate with to increase your capacity?
- Have you thought how to communicate the benefits of your provision in an extended schools context?

## **2. If you provide services for young people...**

Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, local authorities now have a duty to secure access for young people in their area to sufficient positive leisure-time activities (the 'youth offer'). This includes a specific duty to secure access to sufficient youth work activities and related facilities. Local authorities also need to ask young people their views about current positive activities and take those into account when planning future provision. Finally, local authorities must consider the expediency of commissioning or facilitating other providers to offer positive activities so that all young people can access activities. When implementing their new duty, local authorities are expected to work over time with partner agencies to secure national standards for their local youth offer.

### **National Standards for Positive Activities**

1. Access to two hours per week of sporting activity including formal and informal team and individual sports, outdoor and adventure sports, and other physical activities such as aerobics and dance – provided through national curriculum and leisure-time activities.
2. Access to two hours per week of other constructive activities in clubs, youth groups and classes. This includes: activities in which young people pursue their interests and hobbies; activities contributing to their personal, social and spiritual development; activities encouraging creativity, innovation and enterprise; study support; and residential opportunities.
3. Opportunities to make a positive contribution to their community through volunteering, including leading action, campaigning and fundraising.
4. A wide range of other recreational, cultural, sporting and enriching experiences.
5. A range of safe and enjoyable places in which to spend time. This could simply be somewhere to socialise with friends.

The local youth offer will form a key element of the local children and young people's plan. This plan is the responsibility of the children's trust and provides the basis for the negotiations of Local Area Agreements.

Children's trusts are responsible for the commissioning of services. That will include the provision of positive activities under the local youth offer and will lead to a change in the funding arrangements for youth services. If you had a grant from your local authority in the past, you will need to get ready to deliver services on a contract basis.

### **What that means for you...**

The focus on involving young people and the duty to consider other providers offer many opportunities for community organisations. There are three main options:

- a) You could act as an advocate for young people and the community:**  
Help young people to get their voice heard by facilitating access to the consultations that your local authority and the children's trust has to organise.  
Organise forums for young people and other members of the community on behalf of the children's trust so that they can feed into needs assessments.
- b) You could deliver parts of the local youth offer:**  
Provide positive activities for young people in your community to help the children's trust meet the delivery targets it set itself as part of its children and young people's plan.
- c) You could continue to do your work outside of the new arrangements:**  
This is an option but you run the risk of being excluded from planning processes and, as a result, local young people may lose their voice and access to tailored and community-based provision.

### **Where you can get more information...**

The processes for the planning and delivery of local youth services are complicated. There are a number of ways in which community organisations can get involved. The local Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) and Council for Voluntary Youth Service (CVYS) are usually engaged in a variety of networks that provide opportunities for local groups to get involved. The children's trust and local authority websites also provide useful starting points if you want to know more about plans for the youth offer, the LAA and the development of a commissioning framework.

### **3. If you provide play opportunities or childcare...**

A large number of community and voluntary organisations are involved in the delivery of informal play provision for children and young people as well as activities for children under five. For these groups, it is important to keep up to date with the development of children's centres, which fall under the remit of children's trusts. Children's centres are a key part of the government's strategy to deliver better outcomes for children and families, building on the successes of Sure Start local programmes, early excellence centres and neighbourhood nurseries. Every community is expected to have a children's centre in place by 2010. However, this will not mean lots of new buildings because, as with children's trusts, the aims are to provide better access to services and to develop quality provision through partnerships.

Children's centres will be expected to provide the following core services to children under five and their families:

- early education integrated with full day care, including early identification of and provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities;
- parental outreach;
- family support, including support for parents with special needs;
- health services;
- a base for childminders, and a service hub within the community for parents and providers of childcare services;
- effective links with Jobcentre Plus, local training providers and further and higher education institutions;
- effective links with Children's Information Services, neighbourhood nurseries, out-of-school clubs and extended schools; and
- management and workforce training.

### **What this means for you...**

Children's centres offer another opportunity for the community and voluntary sector to engage in new partnerships and to provide new ways for children and families to access their services. If you are already delivering services that fall within the core offer of children's centres you should try to join up with activities in your area. If you are involved in more informal provision of play for children and young people, you may find that there is a new 'Play Officer' in your local authority who can offer you additional help and support.

### **Where to find more information...**

Your local authority and children's trust should currently be in the process of developing children's centres in your area, and is likely to have opened the first few already. You should be able to find more information about what is happening in your area through your local CVS or directly through an officer at the local authority. The National Council for Voluntary Child Care Organisations provides information and guidance on working within children's centres. You can also find information on the Sure Start website at [www.surestart.gov.uk](http://www.surestart.gov.uk)

## Case study

The recent development of extended schools has meant that the community and voluntary sector needs to embrace change to maintain and survive in an area that, historically, it has served well. The small team of trustees at Horndean Community Association (HCA) has embraced this development and integrated it into their own plan for development and sustainability.

HCA has an established and innovative programme of services for children located within the community. These services include weekly youth drama, holiday arts workshops and preschool activities.

HCA is staking its claim to providing extended services in the village of Horndean, 11 miles north of Portsmouth, in Hampshire.

HCA has incorporated the extended schools services and children's centres development into its own business plan. The plan has included the following:

- HCA will be a proactive part of the Horndean Cluster of extended services for Horndean and continue to build proactive relationships with all schools regarding services provided through arts and the HCA Under-10s Forum.
- HCA will buy into the local college's initiative to be the Horndean Children's Centre.
- HCA will retain and develop further its specialised multi-arts provision, whilst seeking the necessary funding and addressing the issue of affordability.

The local college put together a brief for extended schools funding which went out for consultation to attendees of the first Horndean Cluster. HCA sent a frank response outlining the unique services they already provide and the potential negative financial impact the funding brief would have on these existing services. HCA encouraged the college to be a mechanism to help develop existing services and support new developments across all partner agencies. These may take place on a school site or on a satellite site.

This direct response to the consultation eventually led to a much better understanding between the partners. Brendan Charles, Senior Manager for the Community Association, represents HCA on the Horndean Cluster. The Horndean Cluster, which has now met twice, first got together to look at why people wanted to be part of the initiative and to discuss a way forward. The second meeting outlined how all the partners could work together more effectively and identified some quick wins to be implemented. These include:

- healthy eating information for young people through the primary care trusts – creating healthy lunch boxes for holiday arts workshop attendees
- HCA to visit the local college's BIG FILM presentation (at a small charge) and to then use the theme of the film as the basis for the week's arts workshop at the centre
- the college to visit the BIG FILM presentation at the centre
- continue with and develop drama provision – building on drama days provided at the school
- the college to visit the live theatre shows put on at the centre.

The BIG FILM proposal is a direct outcome of the children's consultation exercise that HCA undertook in 2006 through its Under-10s Forum. The consultation found that the second major need for children and young people was a cinema facility in the village. HCA is building upon the cinema attendance with supporting workshops and activities.

*Case study compiled by Brendan Charles – June 2006*  
**Horndean Community Association**  
*[hca.admin@btopenworld.com](mailto:hca.admin@btopenworld.com)*



## Recommendations from the partnership

**1. To actively engage**  
The voluntary and community sector should be actively involved at all levels and stages in the process. Some organisations from the sector will need support for this to happen in a meaningful way.

**2. To continue high quality service delivery**  
The existing scale of community sector involvement in children's and youth services is enormous. These groups and organisations represent an essential link between children and young people and the neighbourhoods in which they live. It is vital that community sector organisations delivering children and young people's services continue to provide community-based opportunities that help to positively connect the community with children and young people.

**3. To achieve effective representation and coordination**  
Representation within children's trusts and local authorities is often best done through infrastructure organisations. There are existing youth specialist networks to engage with, for example the local Council for Voluntary Youth Services, or more generalised infrastructure bodies such as the local Council for Voluntary Service or the Rural Community Council. Representation must reflect the independence and the breadth of the sector with regard to scale and contribution.

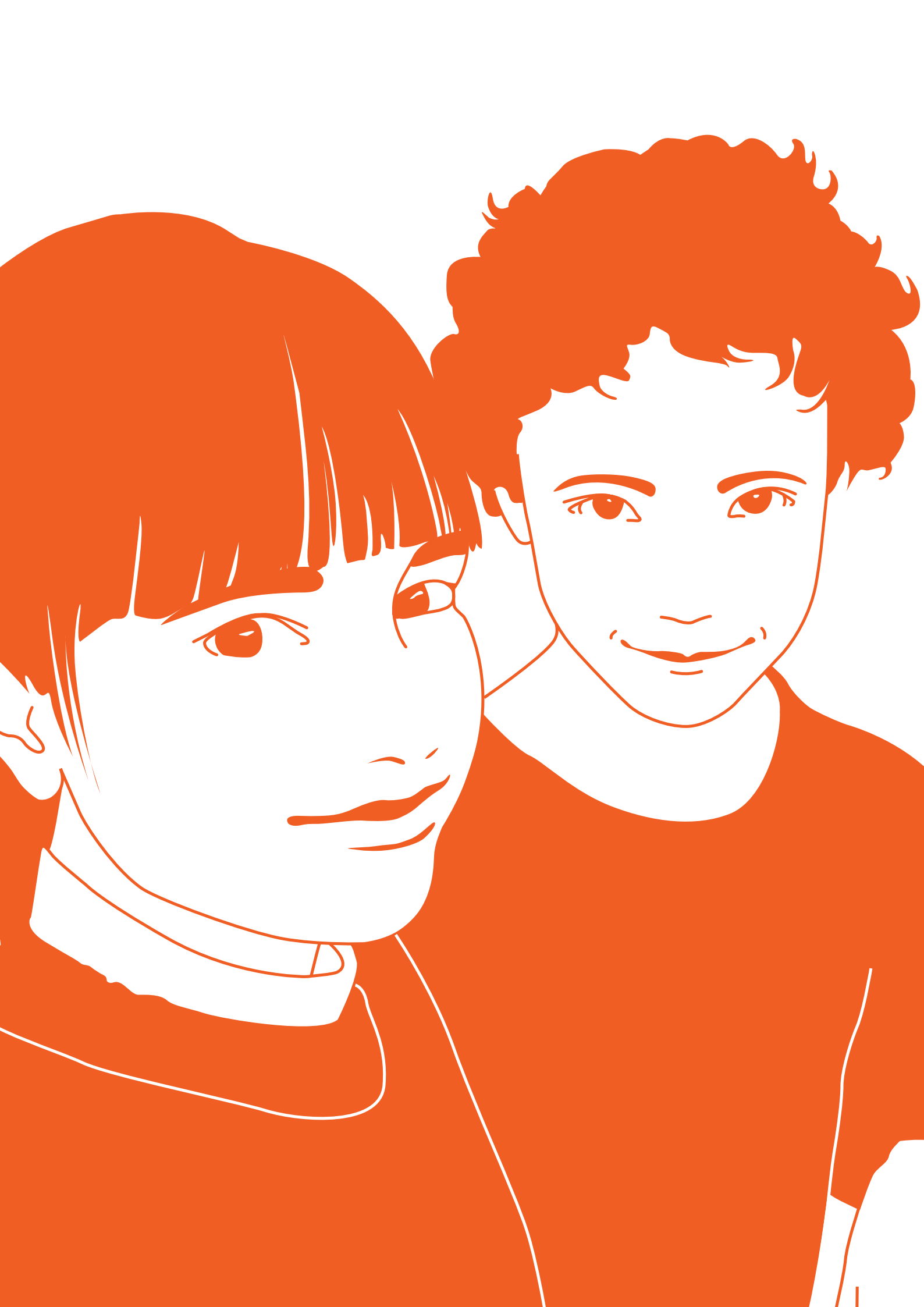
Representation must also be accountable and be reviewed and evaluated regularly. Wide consultation with plenty of time to respond must take place. We want to know if what we have said in the consultation has been listened to and influenced decisions. We want policies and decisions to be checked for their potential impact on the sector. The process for managing the implementation must be developed in true partnership with the voluntary and community sector and not just imposed on it.

**4. To lobby for fair funding opportunities**  
The voluntary and community sector should have the same opportunities and respect that are given to public and private organisations. This means:

- multi-year funding and making payments promptly and in advance
- funding codes and commissioning processes that are both fair and transparent
- minimising bureaucracy by developing simple funding programmes with easy application and reporting processes
- agreed outputs and outcomes which are fair and measurable recovery of the full costs of running a service
- processes that are reviewed regularly and which involve the voluntary and community sector in the review process.

**These recommendations reflect those contained in the document *Strengthening partnerships, which sets out the government's own aspirations to improve its relationships with the voluntary and community sector***

([www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/2005-strengthening-partnerships](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/2005-strengthening-partnerships)).



## What next?

There are a number of opportunities for the voluntary and community sector to get involved in the development of children's trusts, for example, through:

- Becoming members of a local children's trust board or lobbying for representation – Involvement at this level contributes to developing the overall strategy and could mean taking the lead on some parts of the agenda.
- Representing the views of service users and carers – This may be through advocacy or promoting/facilitating the direct involvement of children, young people and families on the children's trust board and promoting community involvement in services such as children's centres or extended schools.
- Contributing to a clear picture of local need – The information held by the voluntary and community sector can identify gaps in services and ways in which integration of services would improve services.
- Sharing expertise as a provider of innovative approaches to service delivery.
- Delivering, or continuing to deliver, services to children and young people in a community-based and, arguably, more accessible way.

Contact your local authority or local infrastructure organisation (such as your local Council for Voluntary Youth Services, Council for Voluntary Service or Rural Community Council) to find out what is happening in your area and who the key contacts are. Community anchor organisations such as local community associations, settlements and social action centres, development trusts and multi-purpose centres may also be able to offer information and support.

Also remember that:

- As an independent organisation you have the right to campaign and challenge.
- You should be willing to work more in partnerships – good working relationships will lead to an improvement in the quality of provision and a diversity of opportunities for children and young people.
- You need to keep as informed as possible, as this is a time of great change at a rapid pace. Seek advice from infrastructure bodies and do not be afraid to ask questions.



# The Community Sector Partnership for Children and Young People members

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# Members of the Community Sector Partnership for Children and Young People

## ACRE

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) is active in promoting the interests of rural communities. It also acts as the national umbrella organisation for 38 Rural Community Councils throughout England.  
[www.acre.org.uk](http://www.acre.org.uk)



## NAVCA

The national voice of local voluntary and community sector infrastructure in England. Our 360 members work with 140,000 local community groups and voluntary organisations which provide services, regenerate neighbourhoods, increase volunteering and tackle discrimination, in partnership with local public bodies.  
[www.navca.org.uk](http://www.navca.org.uk)



## bassac

The national network of multi-purpose community based organisations, dedicated to tackling the causes and effects of poverty, exclusion and discrimination.  
[www.bassac.org.uk](http://www.bassac.org.uk)



## NCVCCO

The umbrella body for children's charities in England; working with central regional and local government to strengthen relationships and cross sector working for the benefit of children, young people and families.  
[www.ncvcco.org](http://www.ncvcco.org)



## Community Matters

The UK federation of community organisations with over 1,150 member organisations across the UK. We play a key role in promoting and supporting action by ordinary people in response to social, educational and recreational needs in their neighbourhoods and communities.  
[www.communitymatters.org.uk](http://www.communitymatters.org.uk)



## NCVYS

The independent voice of the voluntary youth sector in England; working to inform and influence public policy, support members, and raise the profile of the voluntary and community sector's work with young people.  
[www.ncvys.org.uk](http://www.ncvys.org.uk)



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