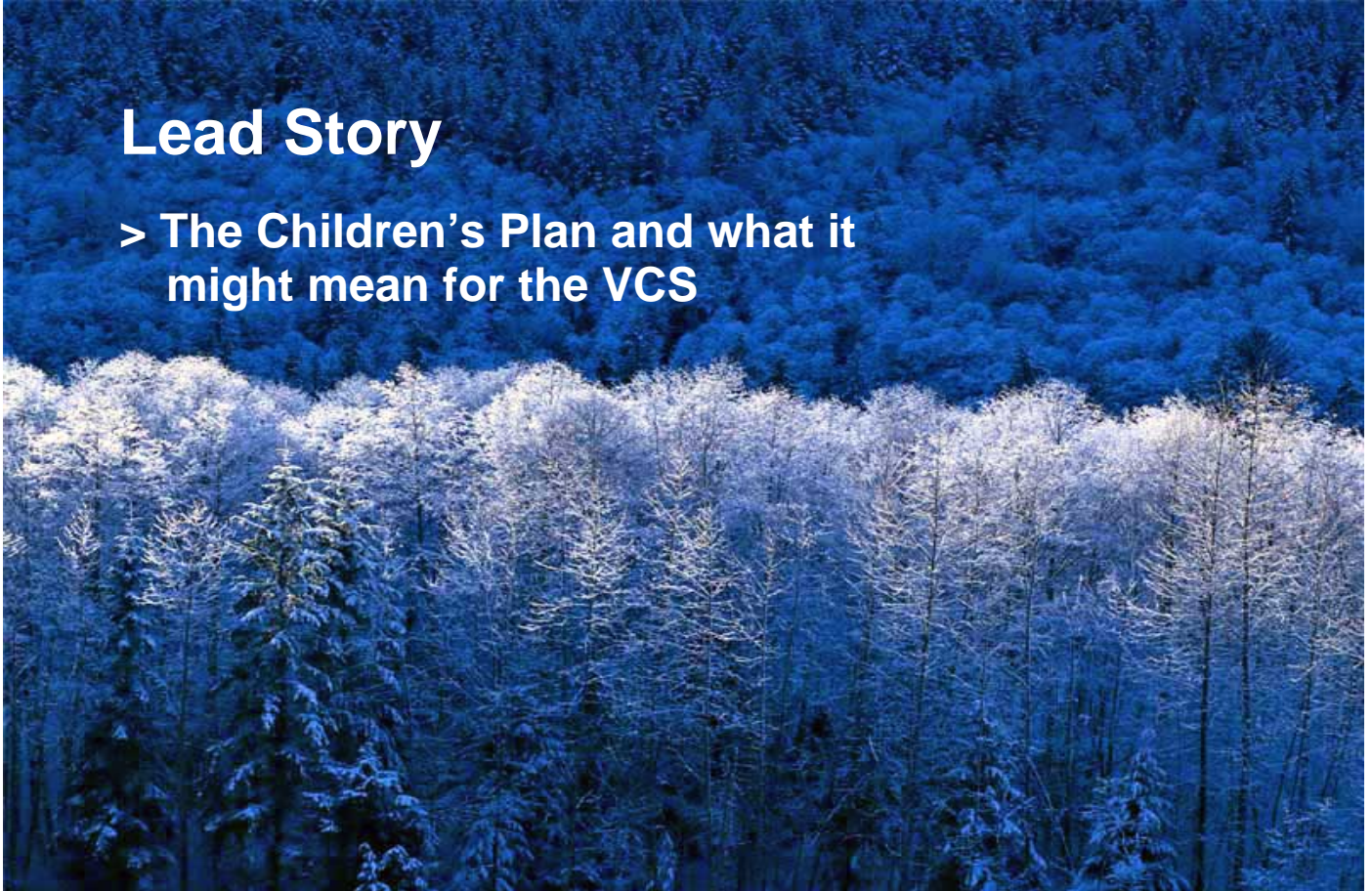


<b>Children Matter East</b> East of England Regional VCS Infrastructure Consortium			
			

## Lead Story

> **The Children's Plan and what it might mean for the VCS**



## Other Headlines\_

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## > The Children's Plan and its implications for the VCS

Just before Christmas the new Department for Children Schools and Families, or as an Ofsted inspector was heard to say "Comics and Science Fiction", published its highly trailed Children's Plan – *Building Brighter Futures*, intended to be a national equivalent to Local Authorities Children and Young Peoples Plans, which are a statutory requirement for Children's Trusts as part of the Children Act 2004.

The promise is that every year the minister will report to Parliament, and one would assume the rest of the county, as to progress or otherwise. So what does it all mean for the Voluntary and Community sector?, what else is in store for us this year, who are the winners and losers (if any) and how can it change the sectors attitudes?

**Firstly**, how does this fit with Every Child Matters – well should it? Emphatically yes, it would appear to fly in the face of all the activity and no little progress were BBF not to build on ECM. It is both stocktake and further direction finder; however it is also about changing agendas, ministerial and indeed prime ministerial. As with Youth Matters it finds the gaps in Every Child Matters and tries to address any perceived inequalities, two big winners this time around – Schools, there is big money on its way around Extended Schools and Workforce Development and yes to a degree the VCS, although just like any "good" budget it takes as much as it offers.

**So where is the 0-19VCS included and where does it count** – well not in terms of a very readable document, 170 pages is simply too long by anyone's standards – and the Executive summary is (probably designed that way to make you read the full version) rather skimpy. The VCS is mentioned periodically throughout, but particularly in relation to Safeguarding where the Plan promises a greater acknowledgement of the sectors capacity issues, specifically smaller organisations. So expect as part of the Staying Safe Action Plan in the spring an explicit acknowledgement of the sectors contribution to Safeguarding and proposals to address the identified need.

**Where else then is the sector "mentioned in dispatches" - well Chapter Seven, Making it Happen** holds some of the clues, many of which the sector associates as being "in the gift" of Children's Trusts, including that ;

>**The voluntary and community sector** should be fully represented in the Children's Trust, just as it is vital that schools and other services close to children and their families are involved.

> There is an increasing expectation that Children's Trusts look beyond direct local authority or other statutory service provision to a wide range of potential providers, **in the voluntary and community sector and in the social enterprise** and private sectors.

> Greater consistency in the involvement of all relevant statutory agencies, and the full involvement of **the voluntary and community sector** in the commissioning function, and as providers.

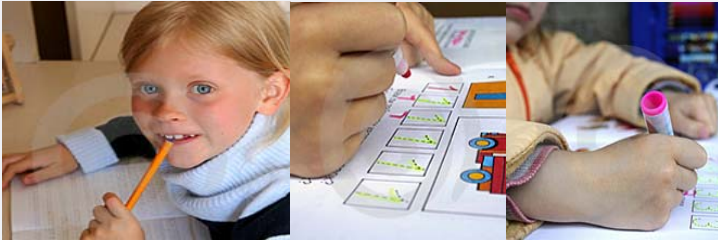
>To provide the basis for securing the improvements in outcomes..... **delivered through effective commissioning of services, including through private, voluntary and third sector providers, not by an old-style command and control approach.**

In addition the Children's Funding circular 2008-11 proffers the following guidance in relation to working with the private, voluntary & community sectors

"The Government expects that local authorities will take a strategic approach to the joint commissioning of services in order to improve outcomes for children and young people. This will involve consideration of how to develop markets where there is currently little alternative provision, or where the private, voluntary and community sectors appear under-represented. It will include engaging private, voluntary and community sector partners in developing needs assessments and in the design of local programmes. Local authorities will want to consider what support they can offer to facilitate voluntary and community sector engagement. Children's funding may be used to build capacity and infrastructure in the voluntary and community sectors in pursuit of the objectives of the relevant grant. In working with partners through children's trusts, local authorities will want to consider options for pooling budgets to find ways of joining up contracting processes".

**Could things be about to change** – well in Andrew Marr'sesque fashion .. You know ... they just might

> **Reality into Rhetoric:** The Children Matter East 2<sup>nd</sup> annual conference



# RHETORIC INTO REALITY

THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES EAST OF  
ENGLAND VCS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Wednesday 27 February 2008

**Buckingham House  
New Hall College, Cambridge**

The Children Matter East annual conference will focus on integrated delivery, and the skills needed to turn the vision of the (DCSF) Third sector Strategy and Action Plan and the forthcoming Children's plan into reality.

**Confirmed Speakers and contributors include:**

Jane Hayward	-	Chief Executive, CWDC
Maggie Jones	-	Chief Executive, NCVCCO
Mary Crowley	-	Chief Executive, Parenting UK
Chris Hilliard	-	Go East, Director for Children & Learners

**Email:** [admin@cover-east.org](mailto:admin@cover-east.org)



## > Destinations Unknown: What happened next?

Readers will recall that in early part of the Autumn we published our long awaited and extensively promoted report on the outlook for the sector around **The Children's Fund, Sure Starts Local programmes migration to Children' Centres and the prognosis for the Local Network Fund**. The keen amongst you will recall that no sooner had we moved to publish then the Minister announced a "continuation" the Children's Fund and dedicated resources for the original Sure Start programmes.

**Sensationally**, it would appear we scored a major hit the report has elucidated a response from most of the regions Local Authorities, some of which are implementing many if not all of our recommendations with Hertfordshire ,Thurrock and Suffolk in the vanguard. Stunningly, the report has had extensive national coverage Children and Young People Now picked up the baton and ran with it, first featuring the report in the Early Years section, this was subsequently picked up by the sister publication Nursery World. Finally to cap it all Children and Young People are scheduled to go with a major article on the Children's Fund in the New Year- based on our report they have launched their own survey.

## > Inaugural VCS Engagement Award, Winners: NCMA Bedfordshire

**A celebration of achievement and best practice in work with children and young people across the UK.-** *In association with the Children's Workforce Development Council*

"These awards highlight some of the excellent practice that is delivering better outcomes for children. We should celebrate such good practice, learn from it, and replicate the success across the country, in order to provide all children and young people with the best start in life."

*Beverly Hughes, Minister of State for children, young people and families, Department for Children, Schools and Families*

**Winners of 2007 awards unveiled : Voluntary and Community sector Engagement Award - NCMA** for Bedfordshire Community Childminding Scheme

Childminders are helping cut the number of children being taken into care in Bedfordshire under an innovative partnership project. The Bedfordshire Community Childminding Scheme is run by the charity National Childminding Association (NCMA) and commissioned by Bedfordshire County Council.

The scheme sees childminders providing respite care for families and foster carers, which can mean caring for a child for a few hours or a longer period of time. It is a service that can make all the difference to families going through difficult times and brings together a range of professionals. It means;

- families get time and space to sort out problems before they get worse or have a much-needed break from the responsibilities of caring for a child with a disability or other complex needs.
- The children can be cared for in their own community and therefore continue to attend local schools and other services
- Being cared for in a home environment is often of greater benefit to the child

This extra support means fewer families reach the point where the only alternative is children going into residential care.

## > The VCS Engage programme: Latest News

As the programme approaches its conclusion – activity reaches fever pitch , this months update, in addition to reflecting on Destinations Unknown and highlighting the regions award winners, covers the latest national training available, including details of the England wide additional support the programme has been able to offer BME Groups.

### Training in commissioning Is your organisation commission-ready?

The way in which local authorities commission children's services is changing. The free training course will enable you to enter the new commissioning process with confidence, equipped with the tools to understand what commissioners want and how you can deliver

**The training will:** Examine the differences between grant funding and commissioning ,Identify the key skills, characteristics and standards that VCS organisations need to demonstrate , provide the tools to effectively evidence them, and provide a checklist for writing a successful tender

**Why attend?** This day provides the opportunity for VCS organisations to attend fit-for-purpose training that is uniquely tailored to meet the specific needs of the sector.The day will also offer the chance to meet colleagues, exchange experiences and share knowledge with others working in the field.

**Who should attend?** This course will build upon the principles covered in the previous VCS Engage training in strategic planning and commissioning. However, this is a stand-alone module and delegates do not need to have attended the previous training to benefit from this course.The training is suitable for organisations of all sizes, working within all sectors of the children, young people and families VCS.

### Training content

- **How does commissioning differ from grant funding?** Delegates will take part in an interactive exercise to help identify three key differences.
- **How commission-ready is your organisation?** This theory-based session will identify the key skills, characteristics and standards that VCS organisations need to demonstrate.
- **How do you write a successful tender?** Using case studies from front line VCS delivery and infrastructure support organisations, delegates will be asked to write sample tenders.

Participants will then complete identical tenders and will be asked to score and evaluate each other's submissions. At the end of these two practical exercises, delegates will have developed a clear idea of how to write a successful tender and will leave with a comprehensive checklist that they themselves have developed.The training day will conclude with the opportunity for delegates to consolidate their knowledge and discuss their learning with colleagues.

**Pre-training reading** Please note that in order for delegates to benefit fully from this training, a small amount of pre-training reading is required. The pre-reading will take a maximum of two hours and VCS Engage will supply all documents two weeks prior to the course date. The documents will include:

VCS Engage programme overview, training needs analysis: process, findings and rationale for training development, background to the development and definition of children's trusts, definitions procuring, tendering and commissioning

**Book Online Now** <http://www.vcsengage.org.uk>

**Venues:** Chelmsford City Football Club, Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2008 **FULL**  
Bedfordshire Silsoe Conference Centre, Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2008

## Training for BME and faith organisations in strategic planning and commissioning



### Engaging in the Every Child Matters agenda

This training programme is designed to support the engagement of BME and faith organisations in the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda. This **free** course will help you to understand how the ECM agenda impacts upon your services and will develop your capacity to engage in all aspects of children's trusts arrangements, and will be tailored to meet the East of England's needs

It will:

- Provide an introduction to the ECM framework
- Consider the impact of the ECM agenda on the delivery of BME and faith services
- Examine current levels of BME and faith organisations' involvement in children's trusts arrangements
- Provide an overview of the new commissioning framework
- Explore the existence of BME and faith networks in your region

**Why attend?** This training has been developed in consultation with BME and faith organisations and is uniquely tailored to meet the specific needs of the sector.

**Who should attend?** Those working within VCS BME and faith organisations BME and faith infrastructure support organisations

### Training content:

#### ECM and your service

This short session will provide an introduction to the ECM framework. It will: Explore the key concepts of ECM, outline the five ECM outcomes, Consider how the ECM agenda impacts upon the delivery of BME and faith services

**In your area:** Group discussions will focus on the regional perspective and explore some of the key issues that are specific to your area, including:

- The impact of the ECM agenda on the delivery of services within your region
- Key issues relating to engaging with children's trusts in your area

**Children's trusts,** this session will explore the delivery of BME and faith services in the context of children's trusts arrangements. It will:

- Provide an overview of children's trusts arrangements
- Explore current levels of BME and faith organisations' engagement
- Consider how to increase effective participation

**Commissioning** This section will provide an introduction to the new commissioning framework, including: Key concepts and stages within the commissioning process **Networks** This session will help to establish which BME and faith networks currently exist in your area and will: Help to map existing BME and faith networks in your region, consider the advantages of participating in these networks and explore how you can get involved

**Book Online Now** <http://www.vcsengage.org.uk>

**Venue:** Luton, Wigmore Hall Conference Centre, Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2008

> **COVER STORY** (from *Cover's autumn bulletin*)

The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) is the central government department responsible for national policy on local government, housing, planning, regeneration and cohesion - **all issues which are of relevance to the third sector**. In the summer it launched a discussion paper on a draft strategy for enhancing its engagement with the sector, the consultation around which closed recently.

The strategy aims to set out a framework by which the CLG will support a growing partnership between the third sector and government, as detailed in the report "**The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration**".

Tim Pope, head of the third sector team at the CLG, discusses what the consultation has revealed.

*The Third Sector Strategy discussion paper set out the ambition of the CLG to enable effective and on-going relationships between the department, local government and the third sector, in delivering prosperous and cohesive communities. This is part of an ongoing dialogue which has included a series of regional events up and down the country, hosted by the Government Offices, this autumn. These events have been incredibly useful for the department in reaching out to organisations we do not have direct relationships with, but affect through the design and delivery of our policies.*

**Respecting the sectors independence** : The strategy recognises that both central and local government and the sector share many aims and objectives, but have distinctive roles. By respecting the sectors independence, while involving, consulting and informing it when drafting and implementing policy, the department can be clearer on its priorities and achieve more from partnership working. The strategy also recognises that the sector faces many challenges, including adapting to the new local government framework, where it can help create a more positive environment. **Therefore CLG has determined four broad areas for action:**

>**To improve ways of working**, including promoting greater awareness among staff of effective working with the sector, and seeking to eliminate all breaches of the Compact

> **Facilitating more effective working** between local authorities and the sector by changing the way performance in different areas is assessed, through a new comprehensive area assessment a clear expectation of third sector involvement.

> **Identifying and working with a network of strategic partners** that can provide links between national and local third sector organisations and ensure action across government priorities

>**Considering investment in supporting existing community anchor organisations** to become more sustainable.

Our conversations have revealed that the sector generally welcomes the thrust of CLGs strategy, and recognises the broad objective of the Government and the sector working together. **Some of the main themes to emerge from the consultation include:**

- The Compact can be a valuable tool in providing a framework for effective working, and it needs to be used to support the strategy. The Compact should be promoted by CLG both internally and externally
- The focus on community anchors was welcomed, but with caveats, eg there needed to be more clarity on what they were and their role
- Capacity building on a range of issues, including the Compact, would be required for both the sector and local government
- The strategy should build on and strengthen existing mechanisms, especially local area agreements.

**Watch this space for further assessment of the Strategy and any potential impact on the 0-19VCs as and when it is published.**

## > Voluntary Youth Services Eastern Region News - Yannick Auckland

### Participation

**Participation Works** – this consortium of six agencies have developed a free support service offering resources, workshops, training and networking opportunities. Membership offers regular e-bulletins, the opportunity to learn from other practitioners and to attend free events and training. To become a member go to the network page of: [www.participationworks.org.uk](http://www.participationworks.org.uk) and select Join Now. Alternatively, as regional co-ordinator I am available to come and visit your forums and networks to run awareness raising sessions around participation and facilitate the joining process.

**YIPPEE** (Youth Involvement Participation Partnership East of England). This network is aimed at workers and supporting and promoting good participation practice. At the meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> December it was good to see some new faces from the VCS. We spoke about providing examples of good practice and learning for the GO East conference on Making a Positive Contribution on 14th March (see later) as well as the training programme being developed by members to support working with groups such as disabled and hard to reach young people.

Please could you all cascade this invite down to your members and ask them to contact me at: [yannick@young-lives.org.uk](mailto:yannick@young-lives.org.uk)

### Noticeboard

**Train to Gain – now open to volunteers** The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) has announced an extension of the Train to Gain Scheme to include volunteers working in the third sector.

**New qualifications for Young People** – 14 Diplomas combining practical and theoretical learning are being developed by multi-agency Diploma Development Partnerships led by the relevant Sector Skills Councils. The new Society, Health and Development Diploma will be available in some areas from September 2008, nationally from 2013. It will be a pathway to careers in social care, community justice, health and children and young people's workforce.

**Still Home Alone – recommendations for youth clubs for 11-14s** A new report has been launched by 4Children and Karen Buck MP, outlining how the lack of childcare for 11 to 14 year olds is putting thousands of children at risk of isolation, boredom and temptation into crime. The report 'Still Home Alone?', calls for a new pump priming fund to enable existing and new providers to develop activity provision for young people; and better joining up of current schemes such as extended schools and youth provision to maximise their potential.

The report makes recommendations for putting in place a new generation of support for 11–14 year that would offer youth clubs in schools, available after school and during school holidays whilst parents are at work. It includes calls for ;

- A renewed political commitment from Government for the 11–14s, including targets for the development of new places and the creation of a new stream of youth clubs in schools for this group of children who are seen as too old for traditional childcare and too young for traditional youth clubs.
- A new pump priming fund to enable existing and new providers to develop this kind of provision and ongoing funds to sustain and subsidise childcare in deprived areas.
- Better joining up of current schemes such as extended schools and youth provision to maximise their potential.
- Better information for parents on what is available and how they can get help to pay for it.

For further info see [www.4children.org/information/show/ref/1091](http://www.4children.org/information/show/ref/1091)

## > News from the National Council for Voluntary Child Care Organisations

From the latest edition of NCVCCO's quarterly journal "Outlook"

### A step-change in driving up the quality of parent services

The **National Academy for Parenting Practitioners** was launched on 21 November. It will work directly with parenting practitioners to provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to enable parents to deal with day-to-day challenges and give their children the best possible start

The National Academy for Parenting Practitioners aims to be a unique blend of practical knowledge, first-class academic practice and regional networks. With funding provided by the government and underpinned by the existing expertise of the Family and Parenting Institute, Parenting UK and King's College London, the Academy's aim is to improve the quality of support that is made available to practitioners and, in turn, to parents through research, training and information.

**Support for the Academy:** there is a substantial workforce of people in the UK who offer professional advice and support to parents including through Sure Start Children's Centres, schools and voluntary and community organisations.

**Hilton Dawson, Chair of the Academy,** speaking at the launch, said, "At the moment, there is a welcome range of parenting initiatives and a dramatic growth in the level of interest in parenting. However, there is also confusion about what really works, about the consistency and availability of parenting support across the country. The Academy's role is to provide a calm voice: high-quality advice for practitioners on the parenting support that works best, a world-class medium for ongoing research, a promoter of high professional standards for those working with parents, the engine to achieve effective roll-out of quality parenting programmes across England and a critical friend and adviser to any government which wants to take parenting seriously."

**Angela Sibson, Chief Executive of the Academy,** said, "The Academy's key aim is to improve the quality of advice and support parents can expect from parenting practitioners. If we are to get this right, it is essential that we build our evidence and knowledge base and share good practice and what works with the parenting workforce. In driving forward policy and practice, we aspire to be an international hub for the exchange of ideas and learning."

**Children's Minister Beverley Hughes** said, "Parents can learn a lot from each other about their children, and parenting programmes make for fascinating television, but for real help that makes a difference, parents need support from someone who is properly trained. That is why the new national academy is going to play such an important role. There is a clamour from parents for support with their children, and we want them to know that at some stage while their children are growing up it will be perfectly natural to ask for help. Raising a family is a huge responsibility – and it is our job to make sure that support is available whenever parents need it."

**Taking the Academy forward** The Academy will work with its key strategic partners and professionals including those who commission parenting services in a range of settings, those who manage people who come into contact with parents, and those responsible for parenting orders. The Academy is mapping existing parent support provision. The Academy will evaluate existing parenting support programmes and conduct research into specialist programmes, for example for foster parents. The Academy will also be evaluating different approaches to training practitioners; and reviewing how parenting support is being managed and delivered.

The Academy has begun its training programme, with a programme of training for each Government Office region, starting with trainers (between October 2007 and March 2008) who will, in turn, train practitioners who work in children centres, schools and voluntary and community groups. In parallel, the Academy is training practitioners to deliver high-quality parenting skills programmes – starting with regions which have been identified as having a shortage of provision.

**For further information on the Academy, go to [www.parentingacademy.com](http://www.parentingacademy.com).**

**> KEY PEOPLE IN 2008**

As always the world moves on, and people come and go, very fortunately from 0-19VCS perspective it appears we have more arrivals than departures and in this edition it is timely to update the working list of Who's Who from the sector in the regions Local Authorities. March's edition will mirror this with a list of LA based Key people

Area	Person	Role	Contact
Regional	Kevin Garrod Yannick Auckland	Regional Development Manager VYSER	kevingarrod@ntlworld.com yannick.auckland@virgin.net jennifer.drake@norfolk.gov.uk
Bedfordshire	Linda Bulled Matt Buttery	VOC Development Officer VOC Development Officer 13-19 Workforce Development	linda@cvsimidandnorthbeds.org.uk matt@familymatters.org.uk
Cambridgeshire	Lyn Hoggarth Paul Chambers Area Support Area Support Area Support	CEO , Young Lives Head of Voices Cambridge and South Cambs East Cambs and Fenland Huntingdonshire	lynl@young-lives.org.uk paul@young-lives.org.uk lenja@cambridgecvs.org.uk mailto:julie@fenlandcvs.org.uk paul@young-lives.org.uk
Essex	Brenda Towle Janet Dickerson	Executive officer ECVYS Cluster Coordinator	brenda@ecvys.org.uk
Hertfordshire	Mark Mitchell Matt Buttery Shaddy Mansouri- Marsh	CEO Dacorum CVS Strategic workforce Development Workforce Development	mark.dcv@classmail.co.uk matt@familymatters.org.uk shaddy_m@hotmail.com
Luton	Everton Blake Lorna Brown TBA	CEO Voluntary Action Luton CEN manager Network and Workforce Support Officer	everton.blake @valuton.org.uk lorna.brown@valuton.org.uk In post from April 1st
Norfolk	Mike Tingley Ros Czarnowska	NCVYS Development officer Workforce Development Manager	mike.tingley@norfolkcvys.org.uk ros@norfolkcvys.org.uk
Peterborough	Kathryn George Elizabeth Ingram Julie Kelham	Head of VCS Services Young Lives Executive Chair of Forum Development officer	kathryn@young-lives.org.uk elizabeth@vsforum.org.uk julie@vsforum.org.uk
Southend	Jan Axcell Celia Clark Colleen McCarthy	Workforce Development Partnership Manager Forums Development officer	janaxcell@savs-southend.co.uk Partnerships @savs-southend.co.uk <a href="mailto:cmccarthy@savs-southend.co.uk">cmccarthy@savs-southend.co.uk</a>
Suffolk	Bud Simpkin TBA TBA TBA	CEO Young Suffolk Area Support Officer North Area Support Officer South Area Support Officer West	ceo@suffolonline.net In post from April 1st In post from April 1st In post from April 1st
Thurrock	Naya TBA	CEO Thurrock CVS Network and Workforce Support Officer	naya@thurrockcvols.demon.co.uk In post from April 1st