



Leeds Conference

7th Dec 2010

The Big Society and Volunteering in the UK



 **CabinetOffice**
Office for Civil Society

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What is the Big Society?

“The Big Society is about a huge culture change, where people, in their everyday lives, in their homes, neighbourhoods and workplace, don’t always turn to officials or government for answers to the problems they face, but instead feel both free and powerful enough to help themselves and their own communities.”

Prime Minister, Liverpool, 19 July 2010.

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How will the Government encourage the Big Society?

- On the 14th October the Minister for Civil Society launched a strategy 'Building a Stronger Civil Society'.
- This outlines Government's support of civil society and puts civil society organisations at the heart of the Big Society.

How will the Government encourage the Big Society?

Three strands:

1. Encouraging social action
2. Public service reform
3. Community empowerment

Encouraging Social Action

- Our volunteering rates are high by international standards.
- Citizenship survey results for April 2009 – March 2010 show 25% formally volunteering once a month and 40% at least once a year.
- However, there is more that we can do to ensure that the giving of time becomes a social norm.

Encouraging Social Action

- That's why we are promoting social action through:
 - Implementing the National Citizen Service.
 - Cutting through the bureaucracy that can create barriers to volunteering.
 - Creating the Civic Service.
 - Training 5000 community organisers to act as catalysts for change and social action
 - Supporting the European Year of Volunteering

Importance of Infrastructure

- Government recognises the importance of infrastructure.
- OCS are currently consulting on infrastructure support for civil society.
- OCS is also looking specifically at new ways to support volunteering infrastructure.

The European Year of Volunteering 2011

The EU will use the Year to work towards four main objectives:

- 1. To create an enabling and facilitating environment for volunteering in the EU;
- 2. To empower volunteer organisations and improve the quality of volunteering;
- 3. To reward and recognise volunteering activities, and
- 4. To raise awareness of the value and importance of volunteering.

The European Year of Volunteering 2011

- **Europe-wide Tour.** Roadshow will visit each European Capitol to highlight volunteering. Coming to London in early June (venue TBC)
- **Journalist relay.** Reporter will visit 2 VIOs in each country and promote inspiring stories. Deadline for VIOs to apply is 10/01/2011
- **Conferences.** 5 high level events planned throughout 2011
- **Website:** Resources for events and facility to share stories and activities

National Priorities and Themes

1. Encourage and enable individuals to make a contribution within their communities and help solve social issues by volunteering.
2. Promote good practice across all sectors sector in developing of effective employer supported volunteering (ESV) programmes.
3. Identify and share good practice and resources relating to effective volunteer management.
4. Promote good practice in opening doors to volunteering opportunities to those traditionally less likely to volunteer.

National Priorities and Themes

The 5 themes form part of priority 1. These are:

- **Young people and children:** March and April
- **Environment:** May and June
- **Sport:** July and August
- **Culture and the arts:** September and October
- **Health and social care:** November and December

National Priorities

- The intention is to identify voluntary and community sector organisations to lead on the 5 themes under priority 1 and the 3 remaining priorities.
- The OCS is currently agreeing the most appropriate process for identifying these leads and will make more information available shortly.
- To keep up to date on the latest information and opportunities to get involved you can email the OCS at:

eyv2011@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

Get Involved

- Consider including EYV themes & priorities in **your events**
- Promote EYV 2011 to **your members / stakeholders**
- Apply to be a **host organisation** for EYV Reporter
- Get involved with the **London Roadshow**
- Access resources and share your stories and best practice at EYV 2011 website:
<http://europa.eu/volunteering>

Links and contacts

- **Official website:** <http://europa.eu/volunteering>
- **EYV 2011 Alliance website:** <http://www.eyv2011.eu/>
- **For queries on the national work programme in England and for regular updates contact the Office for Civil Society:**

eyv2011@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk