

**News and information for Wales from:
Wales Council for Voluntary Action**
Baltic House, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff Bay,
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New feature on WCVA funding website

Finding the funds to help run your third sector organisation is not an easy task. At its recent recession conference WCVA launched the new **Wales Third Sector Funding Portal - a one-stop shop for funding advice and opportunities.**

This new resource provides a wide range of information resources and funding advice to help organisations take on the funding challenge and improve their chances of success. The funding portal can be accessed by visiting WCVA's Sustainable Funding Cymru website - www.sustainablefundingcymru.org.uk

The funding portal provides access to a searchable database of UK funding opportunities, advice and support on raising funds and tips on how to diversify funding. The funding portal is a brand new resource for third sector organisations in Wales and has been funded by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Some of the features include a 'funding search' facility which makes it easier for groups to find out about funders from Europe, government, lottery, charitable trusts and corporate sponsors. For those who have little or no fundraising experience, the 'new to funding' section provides a wealth of information, from getting started in fundraising to setting budgets for small groups. There are details of

various funding and finance options available to the sector, including grants, giving, loan finance and earning income through contracts and trading. There is also the latest information on funding and tendering opportunities and where to find further help and support.

The funding portal has been designed and developed by WCVA's Sustainable Funding Cymru (SFC) team. The SFC project is funded by the Big Lottery in Wales and has been at the forefront of enabling the Welsh third sector to become more financially sustainable for almost three years. SFC equips the sector with the skills and information to diversify its funding mix and work towards long-term financial sustainability.

'The funding portal will ensure that third sector organisations in Wales will have access to the most up to date, relevant and comprehensive information possible on funding advice and opportunities' said Sara Carroll, Funding Advice Officer. 'It aims to assist third sector organisations in becoming more effective in fundraising and help them work towards a financially sustainable future.

To access the funding portal please visit www.sustainablefundingcymru.org.uk.

Guarantee scheme extends lending to social enterprises in disadvantaged areas

Last month, the Government announced changes to the Enterprise Finance Guarantee (EFG) scheme, to help improve lending to businesses and social enterprises with an annual turnover of up to £25 million in disadvantaged areas.

The changes will give additional support to community development finance institutions (CDFIs) by allowing them to access bank loans worth up to £20m. Unity Trust Bank, in response, also announced that it is making an additional £5m available for onward lending by CDFIs.

Community Development Finance Institutions, provide vital financial support to businesses and social enterprises which are unable to access bank lending due to the higher risk associated with supporting the disadvantaged groups and communities to which they lend.

To help social enterprises make the most of the new investment that will be available the Cabinet Office, in partnership with the National

Endowments for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA), announced a year long Access to Investment Programme. This programme will aim to find ways for social enterprises to gain the advice and support they need to access new forms of growth finance.

WCVA's Director of Enterprise Phil Fiander commented: 'We face challenging economic conditions so continued access to finance for the third sector is crucial. We would encourage all third sector organisations to investigate their eligibility for support under the Enterprise Finance Guarantee Scheme. As part of the development of WCVA's Communities Investment Fund, we are exploring whether the fund can offer Enterprise Finance Guarantee support in the future.'

For more information on how to access these schemes visit www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/enterprise/enterprisesmes/info-business-owners/access-to-finance/sflg/page37607.html.



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Free conferences offer opportunity to learn about engaging with the Assembly

Two conferences being held in July will look at how civil society has been engaging with the National Assembly for Wales since it gained more powers in 2007 and offer a chance to learn more about how to influence decision makers. The free of charge events are being organised by Tomorrow's Wales and take place on Monday 13 July in Llandudno and Thursday 16 July in Cardiff.

In July 2007, Tomorrow's Wales published a booklet *The new National Assembly for Wales - a guide*. Many organisations have found the guide an invaluable resource for understanding the powers that the Assembly now has and how to get involved in influencing it. Two years after the current devolution arrangements came into effect, Tomorrow's Wales is planning to update the guide and the conferences will form part of this work.

The two Building on experience two years on conferences will provide a valuable learning opportunity for those who want to learn more about how the Assembly works and how the Assembly's powers and procedures have developed over the past two years.

WCVA's Voices for Change Cymru project will feature as part of the conferences and will give a voluntary sector view of engagement with decision makers including lessons learned, barriers to engagement and the sector's role in a devolved Wales.

For more information or to register to attend visit www.tomorrow-wales.org/conference or call Tomorrow's Wales on 029 2043 1271 / email cymruyfory@stratamatrix.co.uk

Broad welcome for proposed European Year of Volunteering 2011

The European Commission has this month adopted the official proposal for a decision on the European Year of Volunteering (EYV) 2011, which will give better recognition of the contribution made by more than 100 million European volunteers.

The next steps will be to call on the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament to adopt the decision and to ensure an appropriate budget for the Year.

The objectives of the year have been carefully considered and will reflect the ambition for the future of volunteering in Europe: rewarding and recognising voluntary activities; empowering volunteer organisations; and raising awareness about the value of volunteering in our societies.

The European Year of Volunteering 2011 Alliance, which includes a wide range of organisations working on volunteering issues in Europe, has raised concerns about the European Commission's proposed budget: 'We are concerned that the European Commission has proposed a budget for the year's preparatory and implementation activities of merely 8 million EUR. Based on the experience of other European Years, this amount may not be sufficient to achieve the

above-mentioned ambitious objectives, especially because for the year to be successful it needs to reach out to the local level where voluntary activities take place.

'We therefore urge the European Parliament and the Council of the EU to increase adequately the budget in order to fulfill the expectations raised by the Year.'

WCVA's Director of Volunteering and Policy, Timothy Day, said that for EYV 2011 to have a successful legacy, there needs to be common effort by EU institutions, national governments, local authorities, third sector organisations, the private sector and the media.

He added: 'The European Year of Volunteering will rightly recognise the contribution of people in Wales to the huge impact of volunteering across Europe and beyond. I trust that the European Commission will allocate sufficient resources to ensure that the year has a really positive impact.'

As a part of the preparatory actions, the European networks involved in Alliance will launch a website devoted to European Year of Volunteering 2011 (www.eyv2011.eu) which will be the source of information and a point of reference for the year.



Invest to save - open to third sector organisations

The Assembly has announced a new £60m funding stream, Invest to save, that aims 'to support public sector improvement projects that will result in significant cash-releasing efficiency savings, whilst ensuring effective citizen-centred services.'

Investments from the Fund will be fully repayable, but there will be no interest payments and there will be flexibility on the payback period. They will typically cover revenue costs associated with project implementation. The Fund is not intended to substitute existing funding streams.

Bids are welcome from a range of public service organisations, as well as voluntary organisations in receipt of three year funding from the Assembly Government, or umbrella groups representing any of these.

Partnerships may also include voluntary and community groups and other bodies.

For further details:
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/improvingpublicservices>.

Rewarding good work

Voluntary organisations across Wales will be put in the spotlight during 2009 thanks to the second annual *Network Wales Awards*.

The *Network Wales Awards*, supported by Class Telecommunications, have been set up to showcase the work of the third sector and provide national recognition for outstanding achievements.

Individuals can nominate their own organisation for an award and can also nominate other organisations in separate categories. The categories are:

- Class award for best communications
- Green award
- Most admired organisation

Each nominated organisation will receive a certificate of commendation and the winners will be presented with an award at WCVA's annual conference dinner in December.

Last year's winners included Cartrefi Cymru, Ponthafren Association, and Fairbridge De Cymru.

The deadline for receipt of nominations is 18 September 2009.

To receive a nomination form for the *Network Wales Awards* please contact the WCVA Helpdesk on 0800 2888 329 or visit www.wcva.org.uk.

The recession is biting, so what is the impact on volunteering?

In difficult times there are many different demands on people. For some, redundancy provides the opportunity to do some voluntary work which they have wanted to do, but never had the time. For others, volunteering is a way of building self confidence and skills to re-enter the job market. Some volunteers will find they need to do less, so they can take a part time job to make ends meet.

Volunteering in communities which experience large scale job losses can increase or decrease. Organisations which meet peoples needs often find that demand increases when a recession hits.

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In this context, WCVA is conducting a survey of organisations which involve volunteers, to find out how many volunteers there are, and what they do. It is also asking these organisations to get their volunteers involved, telling WCVA about their volunteering experience. The results will be used to provide information for WCVA, volunteer centres and organisations which involve volunteers to improve the recognition which volunteering has in Wales, and to enable volunteers and their organisations and services to be more effective in making Wales a better place to live.

The survey is being sent to a sample of organisations which we know involve volunteers. If you are interested in joining in, more information can be found on the WCVA website www.wcva.org.uk/research, from the WCVA helpline (0800 2888 329) or by emailing research@wcva.org.uk.



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No 'slash and burn' for funding

Both First Minister, Rhodri Morgan, and Steve Thomas, Chief Executive of the Welsh Local Government Association, have pledged that a 'slash and burn policy' of cutting non-statutory and external funding is not a viable way forward.

Speaking respectively on the eve of 10 years of devolution, and at WCVA's recession conference, both leaders advocated a 're-engineering of the state' and a need to take a fresh look at how frontline services are delivered.

Rhodri Morgan also re-affirmed his commitment to the Making the Connections agenda:

'Throughout my period as First Minister, I have argued for a public service culture to take the place of the public sector culture in Wales, based on high-trust, not low-trust relationships between users and providers. It is all part of the theme which I've tried to develop this evening, of devolution as a device for throwing open the door of government in Wales and the catalyst for creating a new era of participation in the way Wales does things.'

But he also called upon providers, local authorities, new Health Boards, and the third sector 'to focus unremittingly, and with renewed imagination, not upon new ways to argue for extra money but upon using the money which they already have to better effect.'

Echoing these comments, Steve Thomas urged all to use this 'phoney war' of the next 18 months (until serious cuts in public expenditure kick in) to plan for a very different future and prioritise key frontline services. He thought there would be an increase in key areas of (local government) commissioning third sector services, agreed to honour local Compacts and liaison arrangements, and endorsed the principles of funding set out in the third sector Welsh Assembly Government Code.

The Minister for Social Justice and Local Government, Dr. Brian Gibbons, however would not be drawn upon whether he would use the extra

money announced in the Budget for a Hardship Fund (as there is England). He re-emphasised his commitment to the funding code and early dialogue and to many of the proposals made in the WCVA action plan.

The recession conference also heard some positive news. The Legal Services Commission had made more finance available to advice services in poor areas, Big Lottery Fund announced that it would be providing additional funding to recession-hit third sector organisations, and it was also announced that the Welsh Assembly Government flagship, Proact and React programmes, would now be open to third sector organisations.

WCVA Chief Executive, Graham Benfield OBE, who also spoke at the conference, commented: 'Many organisations are beginning to run out of money. Legacies, donations of goods, dividends, and income of all kinds, is drying up, while demand for services is escalating. Seven per cent of organisations in WCVA's survey have already announced redundancies, and 40 per cent may, or will, in the next six months.'

'In past recessions, local and central government have tended to go for the easy options, and cut third sector grants first and deepest.'

'I am pleased that both local and central government want to avoid "slash and burn" policies this time around, but good intentions, alone, will be insufficient.'

He added: 'Wait and see is not a responsible position, and early dialogue leading to a planned, future-proofed robust series of actions will test whether the warm words of the last decade - as transcribed into Codes of Practice, Schemes and Compacts - are meaningless tokenism, or will lead to a constructive way forward, avoiding the past mistakes of arbitrary cuts which so damaged trust and relationships in previous years.'

The next editions of this WCVA national supplement will be available at the end of July, September and November 2009 and January 2010.



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