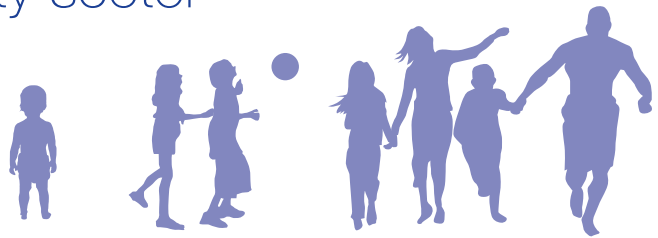


Every Organisation Matters

Mapping the children and young people's voluntary and community sector

July 2008

Executive Summary



This study, the first ever mapping of the size and scope of the children and young people's voluntary and community sector (CYPVCS), aims to help policy-makers, commissioners and those who run services to better understand the context in which they work. The research conducted by the University of Hull was commissioned as part of the Speaking Out project, a joint initiative between the National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations and the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services.

Key findings

- The CYPVCS employs as many as one in three of the total voluntary and community sector (VCS) workforce.
- There are up to four times as many CYPVCS organisations per 1,000 children and young people as there are VCS organisations per 1,000 of the adult population.
- The profile of the CYPVCS varies significantly across the country, reflecting local policy and demographic contexts.
- In common with the VCS as a whole, the CYPVCS is increasingly affected by growing levels of public service commissioning which favour larger organisations and enhance private sector involvement: this is not uniformly welcomed.
- The CYPVCS is being adversely affected by huge policy and structural change and consequent uncertainty about its sustainability.
- Children aged 7-13 appear to be poorly provided for, with an emphasis on early years provision and a growing government agenda around services for young people leading to this transitional age group being missed out.
- Few CYPVCS organisations have thought carefully enough about how to measure the long-term impact of their work.
- Effective national mapping of the CYPVCS is currently hindered by poor quality of data.
- Local mapping might be a more useful way of providing an accurate profile of the sector and for pointing to gaps in service and policy provision.

The national context: change in the voluntary and community sectors

The Government has introduced a wide range of policies aimed at the VCS, which has led to the sector gaining an increasingly high profile and recognition. Government itself has argued that the VCS can bring specific advantages to public services, including a strong focus on the needs of service users, knowledge and expertise to meet complex needs, flexibility and the experience and independence to innovate.

This increased profile has been accompanied by efforts to strengthen the evidence base for the contribution made by the VCS. Statistics on the VCS have been improving, in part with the introduction of Guidestar, an independent charity set up in 2003, to provide a single source of detailed information about every UK charity. This is in addition to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations's (NCVO) *UK Voluntary Sector Almanac* and the government-sponsored State of the Sector Panel.

According to the 2007 *UK Voluntary Sector Almanac*, the UK VCS has an **annual income of £29bn**, 38% of which is derived from statutory sources. It has a paid workforce of some 611,000 – 2.2% of the total workforce. Moreover, 11.6m people volunteer at least once a month. There are thought to be as many as 400,000 VCS organisations in England and Wales.

The children and young people's voluntary and community sectors

This study was a first attempt to map the specific territory covered by the children and young people's voluntary and community sectors and drew in part on the work that has been carried out in mapping the VCS as a whole.

The study took place against a context of considerable policy change affecting the CYPVCS over the past few years. Drivers for this have included an emphasis on improving educational attainment, reducing child poverty, fostering better inter-developmental working and implementing national programmes targeted at disadvantaged or socially excluded children and young people (including Sure Start, the Children's Fund, the Local Network Fund, Connexions, the Every Child Matters initiative, Extended Schools and programmes aimed at children in care). Taken together, these suggest that children and young people are now seen as a key policy priority.

However, alongside this, the current government drive to engage the CYPVCS in public service delivery has left many perceptions, as with the sector as a whole, that there is a state of managed crisis where short-term goals seem to be dominating and there is little political space or funding for developing a strategic response to these structural changes. The pace and scope of change is substantially disadvantaging smaller organisations which do not have the capacity to engage fully in it.

The research study

The research study comprised several elements: a literature review, a review of recent policy developments, a national email and postal questionnaire to VCS organisations working with children and young people, a quantitative analysis of data for four representative case study areas in England held on the Guidestar database (factored up to provide an approximate picture of the national profile of the CYPVCS), and qualitative fieldwork in the same four case study areas.

Academic, policy and research literature relating specifically to recent policy and service developments in the CYPVCS is relatively sparse, making it difficult to determine whether there are trends in this specific arena distinguishing it from broader VCS trends. Apart from national policy documents and local interpretations, much of the literature sourced was 'grey' literature, often produced by children and young people's organisations to inform their work, or involved some mapping at a very local level. This highlighted a more general issue for the sector as a whole, that of the inadequate evidence base.

Even at a local level, mapping exercises were found by this research generally to be incomplete, at a very early stage, or non-existent, and the key organisations which might be expected to take the initiative in undertaking this mapping had not actually done so. Substantial sources of information about children and young people's organisations deriving from the work of nationally-funded programmes, particularly the Local Network Fund, Sure Start and the Children's Fund, which had been maintained during

the life of these programmes, had not been updated since the end of the programmes. These potentially valuable sources of information thus turned out to be of no value at all.

A national email and postal survey was undertaken using national networks and databases of relevant organisations. This produced a partial response as some organisations were unwilling to collaborate with the study and several other related surveys were occurring at the same time. Some general trends were however apparent from the survey when taken in conjunction with the data drawn down for the four case study areas (the West Midlands, South-West and London Boroughs of Hackney and Richmond) from the Guidestar database.

The findings

In addition to the key findings outlined earlier, the research found that:

- The average income per local children and young people's organisation was just under £700k; for regional organisations £2.8m; and for national organisations approximately £7.3m. The overall average for the sample was £3.4m i.e. the income of national organisations skewed the picture substantially.
- If the value of volunteering is included, drawing on one widely used multiplier for the sector as a whole, the contribution to GDP of this small fraction of the CYPVCS was of the order of £3bn or, using the more modest multiplier used by NCVO in its recent *UK Voluntary Sector Almanac*, £1.6bn.

The average number of **staff per organisation** was found to be 95; this breaks down by geographical area of benefit in the following way: local organisations 20 staff per organisation, regional organisations 62 per organisation and national organisations 187 per organisation. Overall there were twice as many female staff as male staff.

However experiences from the sector suggest that there is a wide spectrum of organisations some of which employ only one or two people while others employ hundreds, showing both the limitations of the data available and that findings are heavily skewed towards larger organisations.

Importantly there is a significant discrepancy between data provided by the Guidestar database and the survey research: there appears to be almost two-thirds as many children and young people's voluntary and community organisations in reality as there are general charities as a whole recorded in Guidestar's database. This may be due to the fact that Guidestar does not include smaller unregistered organisations whereas the present survey included a significant number of these.

- The proportion of staff employed with a disability was just under 5%. Paid staff aged over 50 years represented about 12% of the total staff employed.
- Black and minority ethnic (BME) paid staff were employed at the rate of 1.5 per local organisation, 4.5 per regional organisation and just over 15 per national organisation. As a

proportion of total staff employed, BME staff represented 7.5% of local organisations' paid staff; 7.1% of regional organisations' paid staff; and 7.9% of national organisations' paid staff. The BME population of England as a whole is now more than 10% of the total population and the corresponding figure for the 0-18 year-old BME population is somewhat higher still, although varying significantly from area to area.

- Per organisation, the number of volunteers used by this sample was 38 per local organisation; 75 per regional organisation; and 4,927 per national organisation (or 1900 volunteers per organisation on average).
- There were some **regional differences**. The average income per children and young people's voluntary and community organisation is 40% higher in the West Midlands than in the South West. However, the total regional income for the West Midlands is roughly similar to that of the South-West despite the fact that it has a population of children and young people that is 23% greater than that of the South-West region. The cost of providing services to children and young people is likely to be higher in rural areas than in urban areas but that was beyond the scope of this study.
- The CYPVCS employs roughly between a third and a quarter (about 160,000) of the numbers employed in the total VCS workforce.

All organisations interviewed had experienced **financial difficulties** at some point. Larger organisations and smaller groups agreed on one aspect of funding and commissioning:

‘the current trend with regards to how particular government funding streams and strands are being initiated will exclude a lot of the smaller organisations.’

Funding and sustainability were constant themes across all four areas.

No organisation had a systematic means of **monitoring the sustainability** of their work. They acknowledged it to be a weakness but argued that it was difficult to prove a negative - i.e. that without CYPVCS input children and families would have ‘gone off the rails.’

Listening to the views of children and young people was seen as very important to all the organisations interviewed: ‘it’s at the core of what we do’: but experience was patchy. Partnerships with children and young people were seen as a key activity, with some organisations doing this well across the sector. National initiatives are also influencing local relationships:

‘messages from the government are more positive than they have ever been ... unfortunately, the reality and the rhetoric don’t match.’

Conclusions and recommendations

It is clear that the CYPVCS is a very significant player within the voluntary and community sector, employing approximately 160,000 paid workers and generating income of at least £15bn a year.

However, there are fears that if current trends continue, children and young people’s voluntary and community organisations will become parallel public service organisations and political and economic pressures will push the sector towards providing services ‘on the cheap’. This may mean that development work, the process of working with children and young people in a supportive framework over a period of time, diminishes as organisations are forced more and more to concentrate on core service delivery. This is where the issue of impact becomes critical: until the CYPVCS can demonstrate the longer-term impacts of its work, it will not be able to set the terms on which resources are allocated.

Amongst the specific **recommendations** to emerge from this work are:

- Building a clear evidence base of the size and the scope of the sector is vital to maximising the contribution of the CYPVCS. Further consideration should be given to how Guidestar data can be utilised. The Office of the Third Sector (OTS) must also commit resources to ensuring that this study is regularly updated to provide an ongoing, accurate picture of the CYPVCS. All funders, particularly at a local level, must capture and update details of all the organisations that they are funding.

- It is vital that the CYPVCS is able to play a full part in children's trust arrangements, local strategic partnerships and other appropriate forums. Local authorities should ensure that they have appropriate processes and mechanisms in place to hear from a range of stakeholders and to resource the participation of children and young people's organisations, particularly those which are smaller with few if any paid staff.
- The Children's Workforce Development Council has a key role to play in collecting data on the CYPVCS workforce. Sustained investment is needed in the training and development needs of the CYPVCS workforce.
- It is clear that the Government's desire to commission the CYPVCS to deliver public services has left many organisations operating within a context of significant uncertainty and working to short-term goals. Public service commissioners must ensure they are supporting sustainable service provision.
- **Further research** is needed into the extent to which smaller organisations may be faring less well due to a shift to commissioning and the support needed to ensure the survival of smaller organisations working with some of the most vulnerable children and young people.

The full report *Every Organisation Matters*, by Professor Gary Craig, Helen Gibson, Neil Perkins, Dr Mick Wilkinson and Dr Jane Wray, of the University of Hull, can be downloaded from www.ncvcco.org or www.ncvys.org.uk

SPEAKING OUT

Supporting the Sector to Influence Policy

Speaking Out is a partnership between the National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations (NCVCCO) and the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS), which seeks to build a voice for the children and young people's voluntary and community sector across government. The project is funded by the Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office.



The data used to compile this publication has been provided by GuideStar UK the UK's most comprehensive online encyclopaedia of charities at www.guidestar.org.uk

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