
**Big Society and Sure Start Children's
Centres
28th Sept 2010**

**The Voluntary and Community
Sector:
Experience and Ambition**



The context

- Long term and serious public sector reductions
- Local decision making
- Less infrastructure support
- Ending duplication and waste
- Communities under pressure
- Greater emphasis on attainment
- Public/press assumptions and myths about services and needs



A lot less money and much more to do

- **Increasing demand for many services as cuts bite and adult unemployment grows**
- **Youth unemployment at crisis point already**
- **Rationing by raising thresholds**
- **Increasing poverty**
- **Stress and mental illness on the rise**

.....so do you think the Government can deliver on their promises without us?



This is our bread and butter

Big Society

Engagement

Volunteering

Prevention

Early intervention

Community action

Localism

Reach

Self help

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What does the VCS bring to the table?

Policy initiatives which play to our strengths

Personalisation; we are used to providing services tailored to need

Place based budgets; we have a track record in mixing and matching funding and targets

Localisation; we build from the bottom up; with and of the communities we serve.

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What are we contributing now?

- **Participation and Engagement**
- **Active , supportive partnerships**
- **Professionalism**
- **Cost effective practice**
- **Early intervention and innovation**
- **A motivated workforce**
- **Services built on principles and passion**



Messages from Government

Protecting Sure Start Expenditure

Effective early intervention (Munro)

Reducing barriers to effective commissioning

Helping the VCS and statutory sector learn from each other and work better together

Support for volunteering

Services led by users

Cutting red tape



Opportunities

- ✓ Meeting local need not national targets
- ✓ Emphasis on the front line
- ✓ Funding allocated more transparently
- ✓ Local communities and families leading services
- ✓ More support for innovation
- ✓ Reduction in social isolation
- ✓ Real challenges to service silos
- ✓ VCS as lead provider or support service



Risks we must manage

- **Transitions : move to local/ dismantling structures when nothing new in place/funding streams**
- **Unrealistic expectations: from partners and families**
- **Services for “unpopular” groups**
- **Oversupply**
- **Postcode disparities/ inequalities**
- **Lack of capacity and speed of change**
- **Impact of cuts on participation**



How will we need to change?

- **Collaboration, partnerships, crossing traditional boundaries!**
- **Proving evidence /evaluation/ shouting about what works and defending it**
- **Governance and accountability - more support for trustees/ management committees/active user participation**
- **Building services around the needs of families**



We do it OUR way

We can do this and we don't have to behave like the private sector to make it work either.

Their ways have failed and have reducing respect in communities.

Listen to and track the changing needs of your users. Knowledge is power and this is *commercial* intelligence the private sector would love

Build on our USP's

TRUST

ACCESS

IN DEPTH UNDERSTANDING

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How can we best deliver for the families that need us?

- ✓ Services and organisations supporting each other.
- ✓ Work together
- ✓ Play an active part in the networks
- ✓ “Stitch in time” services
- ✓ Be proactive, try new ideas

BE BRAVE and PERSISTENT



**Times like these are why we are
here**

**Children and families need a
VCS on their side and by their
side.**

www.childrenengland.org.uk

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