

# SPEAKING OUT

Supporting the Sector to Influence Policy

Quarterly E-Bulletin:

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## Update from Speaking Out **Place Shaping Video Project**

The Speaking Out project is hosting a joint conference on Place-Shaping with **YMCA** and the **Foyer Federation**, to take place in May 2008. Place-shaping aims to give children and young people the opportunity to shape and influence their local communities and create a place where they can belong, contribute and thrive in their communities. Further information will follow once the date and venue have been confirmed. As part of this event, the project partners – NCVCCO, NCVYS, Foyer and YMCA – are inviting proposals from their members for short-videos by children and young people about where they live and what they want from these places. Each selected video proposal will be awarded a budget of up to £1000. The deadline is 1 February 2008.

For more information >> [Video Project on Place Shaping](#)

## **Drugs: Our Community, Your Say**

Following a successful roundtable event with the joint NCVCCO and NCVYS membership, the Speaking Out project prepared a joint response to the Drugs Strategy consultation initiated by the Home Office in July 2007. The response is currently being integrated into a policy briefing paper that will be published in due course.

To read the original consultation documents >> [Home Office](#)

## **Follow-up Knife Gun and Gang Crime Seminar**

Speaking Out will be organising a follow-up seminar on Knife, Gun and Gang Crime at the end of February to continue the debate from the first event held in June 2007. This event, co-organised by the National Youth Agency (NYA), the Association of Principal Youth and Community Officers (APYCO) and Speaking Out, will bring together Government representatives with representatives from children and young people's voluntary sector. While the event is by invitation only, more information on the issues will be available following the event.

## **Speaking Out Resources**

Information on the Speaking Out project can be accessed via both the [NCVCCO](#) and [NCVYS](#) websites. This includes summaries and full versions of the policy briefing papers, responses to government consultations to date and information on upcoming events. The joint response to the consultation on the Draft Rural Development Programme for England 2007-2013 by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, is now also available here.

To read the response >> [Draft Rural Development Programme Consultation Response](#)

To read the original consultation documents >> [DEFRA](#)

### [In the news](#)

#### **Children's Plan**

Secretary of State for Children, Young People and Families, Ed Balls has published 'The Children's Plan: Building brighter futures' which sets out government's plans for the next ten years based on five underlying principles including a focus on supporting families, engaging children, young people and families in the design of services, and working on prevention rather than cure.

To download the summary and full document >> [The Children's Plan](#)

To find out more about NCVCCO's briefing, contact >> [Mubeen Bhutta at](#)

#### **NCVCCO**

To view NCVYS' briefing >> [NCVYS Children's Plan Summary](#)

### **New powers**

New powers to tackle gun and knife crime came into force on 1 October 2007 as part of a set of measures from the Home Office. The new powers are aimed at tackling alcohol-fuelled disorder, knife and gun crime, and include making it an offence to sell an imitation gun to a person aged under 18; doubling the maximum sentence for carrying an imitation gun in public without reasonable excuse, from 6 to 12 months; and making it an offence to sell a knife or a crossbow to a person aged under 18 (increased from 16). Realistic imitation firearms feature in a significant number of crimes, ranging from nuisance and intimidation to armed robbery. In 2005/06 there were 3,275 offences involving imitations, which accounted for about 15 per cent of all firearms offences in that period.

For more information visit >> [Home Office](#)

### **Community cohesion action plan**

In October 2007, responding to the 10-month review by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, Communities Secretary Hazel Blears announced a ten-point action plan which includes a £50 million investment over the next three years to promote community cohesion and support local authorities in preventing and managing community tensions. The funds are to be spent by local councils responding to local challenges in various ways including through community based projects, youth projects and volunteering. The action-plan also calls for a new inter-faith strategy.

For more information visit >> [Community Cohesion](#)

### **Youth Justice Unit**

In November, the government launched a joint youth justice unit, merging the responsibilities of the former Ministry of Justice Youth Justice and Children Unit and those of the Young Offender Education Team of the Offenders Learning and Skills Unit of the former DfES. The joint unit will contribute by developing policy and law in relation to young offenders and those at risk of offending; and will ensure that those in contact with the criminal justice system achieve all five outcomes of Every Child Matters.

For more information visit >> [Youth Justice Unit](#)

### **Child Poverty Unit**

In October, work and pensions secretary Peter Hain announced plans for a dedicated Child Poverty Unit within government. The new unit will be working across the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Children, Schools and Families, with the remit of co-ordinating and developing policy with HM Treasury and across Whitehall to support the ongoing work to end child poverty.

For more information visit >> [Child Poverty Unit](#)

### **Family drug and alcohol court**

Camden, Islington and Westminster councils will be launching the first family drug and alcohol court in January 2008. Research findings show that two thirds of all care proceedings initiated by the councils are due to parental substance misuse. In response they have adopted a US model which has shown to be successful in enabling more children in care to return home because their parents have engaged with substance misuse services.

For more information visit >> [Family Drug and Alcohol Court](#)

### **Events and Consultations**

#### **Improving health, supporting justice**

In November, the government launched a consultation on how health and social care services can be improved for people subject to the criminal justice system. This is a joint initiative between the Department of Health, Department of Children, Schools and Families, Ministry of Justice, Youth Justice Board and the Home Office. The deadline for responses is 4 March 2008.

For more information visit >> [Consultation on Health and Social Care](#)

#### **Strategic review of DH funding of third sector organisations**

In December, the Department of Health launched a review to develop a strategic framework for its investment in the third sector that transforms current piecemeal arrangements into a strategic portfolio of investment that more explicitly supports delivery of the Department's objectives and priorities. The deadline for responses is 20 March 2008.

For more information visit >> [DH Third Sector Strategy Consultation](#)

#### **MoJ Third Sector Strategy**

In December, the Ministry of Justice also launched a consultation on their draft third sector strategy with an eventual aim to improve relations between the third sector and the various different parts of the MoJ. Some of the key areas and services that will benefit from better third sector relations are court activity, legal aid, victims and witnesses, including victims of domestic violence, and the overarching theme of improving the public's understanding of the justice system. The deadline for responses is 20 March 2008.

For more information visit >> [MoJ Third Sector Strategy Consultation](#)

### **NOMS Third Sector Action Plan**

In November, the National Offender Management Service launched a consultation on their Third Sector Action Plan. This draft plan builds on the current third sector action plan and will enable NOMS to finalise this new plan to be published in April 2008 when the existing plan comes to an end. The draft plan is set into the wider context of a Ministry of Justice Third Sector Strategy, which will itself be subject to consultation during the same period. The closing date for responses is 22 February 2008.

For more information >> [NOMS Third Sector Action Plan](#)

### **DEFRA Third Sector Strategy**

In December, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs published a consultation on their Third Sector Strategy. The views and experience on results of this consultation will help Defra prepare its Third Sector Strategy which we aim to publish in spring 2008. A range of issues are covered in this document including tackling climate change, protecting the environment and supporting rural communities. It also asks about the way in which Defra can create a level playing field for third sector organisations. The consultation closes on 22 February 2008.

For more information >> [DEFRA Third Sector Strategy](#)

### **Information Resources**

#### **Drug education**

In November, the Home Office published a report under Blueprint, the Government's research programme designed to test the effectiveness of a multi-component approach to school-based drug education. The results aim to provide both immediate learning to influence drug education policy and practice, and a clearer idea of what future research priorities should be.

For more information visit >> [Blueprint report](#)

#### **Positive Futures**

In November, the social research company, Substance published its annual monitoring report on the national social inclusion programme, Positive Futures funded by the Home Office. The report entitled 'Putting the Pieces Together?', reveals that engaging young people in activities they enjoy, such as sports and art, is a successful method for encouraging long term participation as well as opening up new pathways into achieving, education, volunteering and employment.

For more information visit >> [Putting the Pieces Together?](#)

#### **Cannabis**

Cannabis use by young people has fallen significantly since its reclassification in 2004, according to the British Crime Survey report published in late October. The figures showed that the proportion of 16- to 24-year-olds who admitted using

cannabis in the previous 12 months dropped from 25% in 2003-2004, when the change in the law was introduced, to 21% in 2006-07. The report – ‘Drug Misuse Declared’ - also shows that in general the use of cocaine powder has continued to rise.

For more information visit >> [Drug Misuse Declared](#)

### **Local Government**

In November, Communities and Local Government (CLG) published a number of documents regarding local government and Local Area Agreements including a new consultation on ‘Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities: draft statutory guidance’. The consultation period ends on 12 February 2008.

For more information on the CLG consultation >> [Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities](#)

To access the guidance documents >> [Good Practice and Guidance \(CLG\)](#)