Could your community group benefit from businesses lending a hand?

An increasing number of local employers are encouraging their employees to make a difference in the local community - with the help of our Employer Supported Volunteering programme.

It is a great opportunity for community organisations to get extra pairs of hands to help; either through one off, practical team projects or individual roles such as management committee members or ‘pro bono’ professional help.

Voluntary Centre Services are offering a brokerage service for employers and have recently helped Sainsbury’s, the Co-op, Premier Inn, Lush, West Lindsey District Council and Barclays to find local team projects and other voluntary opportunities.

For community and voluntary organisations there is real potential to make useful links with businesses in the local community. Whilst businesses may not have much spare cash in these austere times, they are often willing to give a little time or skills and expertise.

From the business point of view it can help to develop staff skills, enhance team communication, boost motivation and raise their profile at the same time as benefiting local communities.

If your organisation would like to know more about how to attract volunteers from the business sector, or you have a specific activity in mind that would be ideal for a team challenge, please contact Steph Bristow on 01529 308450 or email steph@voluntarycentreservices.org.uk.

Mayoral Medals

Lincoln’s Mayor traditionally offers up to six Mayoral Medals during their year of office as a way of thanking Lincoln residents who have worked hard for the community without any recognition or remuneration.

Nominations for this year’s awards are now open, with the awards ceremony due to take place at the end of April. Submissions should be made through the city council website by 7th March: http://bit.ly/1fNwqpE

Also in this issue:
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- Spotlight on mental health ............................. 3
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- Training and event dates ........................... 8

www.voluntarycentreservices.org.uk

Local and national news, plus funding updates for community, voluntary and social enterprise organisations

Keeping you in touch...
Could you deliver a talk?

Cranwell RAF Association would like to hear from potential speakers. Topics do not have to be military-related, speakers are welcome on a range of general interest themes.

Meetings take place at the RAF College, Cranwell in the Sergeants’ Mess on the first Tuesday of the month, starting at 7.30pm. Talks tend to last about an hour including time for questions.

The Association can provide basic refreshments and are happy to make a charity donation or pay modest fees or travelling expenses. For more details contact Mike Smith on 01526 833273 or email mjs_consultation@hotmail.com.

Discover Lincolnshire weekend

Saturday 22nd - Sunday 23rd March

Attractions across the city and county will be offering discounts and free admission during the Discover Lincolnshire Weekend.

To see what’s on offer go to Visit Lincolnshire at http://www.visitlincolnshire.com/DLW.aspx

Local networking events

Our Forums feature topical speakers, news, and the chance for you to share details of upcoming events or other items of interest. Book your free place now.

Voluntary Sector Forum
Friday 14 March, Sleaford

Forum - 10.00am - 1.00pm including lunch

With all the recent changes to health service structures and greater emphasis on meeting local needs in health provision, speakers include representatives from:

- Healthwatch Lincolnshire
- South West Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- POhWER, provider of the NHS Complaints Advocacy Service
- United Lincolnshire Hospitals Trust

The forum will be followed by an afternoon masterclass on the subject of Hate Crime and Social Cohesion, delivered by Chief Inspector Paul Timmins of Lincolnshire Police.

For further information on both events phone 01529 308450 or view details and book online at voluntarycentreservicesnorthkesteven.eventbrite.co.uk/

Dates for your diary...

Lincoln Volunteer Co-ordinators’ Forum
Tuesday 8 April, Lincoln

Forum - 10.00am – 12.30pm including lunch

Theme: Connections and stories: marketing the voluntary sector. Regular networking event for volunteer co-ordinators, with the latest news, updates and speakers.

For details phone 01522 551683 or email lincoln@voluntarycentreservices.org.uk

Voluntary Sector Forum
Friday 25 April, Gainsborough

1pm - 3pm

Quarterly networking event for voluntary and community organisations. Also features an optional morning workshop on a related topic. For details phone 01427 613470 or check updates at vcswestlindsey.eventbrite.co.uk/

Local news

Official opening of our new community space

Voluntary Centre Services new premises on Tentercroft Street in Lincoln includes a large room available for use by community organisations.

The building, which had been empty and neglected, was taken on after a move from our previous location at the Healthy Hub on Beaumont Fee. The whole building received a makeover courtesy of local businesses and volunteers last year.

In celebration of the move and renovation, around 80 people and members of the Civic Party attended the official opening on Friday 31st January. Lincoln’s Deputy Mayor, Councillor Yvonne Bodger, and her Consort listened to speeches and thanks from the team and assisted in cutting the ribbon and cake.

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Mental Health Showcase

Tuesday, 25th February 10am to 1pm
Christchurch, Green Lane, Stamford PE9 1HE

Mental health projects in the Stamford and south-west Lincolnshire area will be showcasing their achievements at this event. Anyone with an interest in mental health is welcome to come along. Attendees will be able to find out more about the help and support that is available in the area, and to learn about the mental health support networks that are being built up across the county.

Similar events will also be held in other areas of the county over the next 6-12 months.

If you are part of a mental health support group or other service provider and would like a stand at this event, please contact Sophie Deeks by email: Sophie.deeks@lpft.nhs.uk or call: 01529 222223 to book your place.

New Single Point of Access

The Single Point of Access (SPA) service provides a first point of contact for people wishing to access mental health, learning disability, and drug and alcohol recovery services in Lincolnshire.

The SPA team offers mental health triage and assessment to enable enquirers to be directed to the most appropriate service to meet their needs.

People can refer themselves, or make enquiries on behalf of a family member or friend, (with their permission), to the psychological therapy services (also known as talking therapies) and drug and alcohol recovery service, DART.

Designed for both routine or urgent referrals and enquiries, the Single Point of Access contact centre is staffed by fully qualified and skilled healthcare professionals 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

The SPA team works closely at times of mental health crisis with home treatment teams and partner organisations from across the public and private sectors.

Contact the SPA service on 0303 123 4000 or email Lincs.spa@nhs.net.

Involve@Lincoln

Involve@Lincoln, on Mint Lane in the city centre, has become established as a multi-use wellbeing centre.

It is home to a number of activities including a mental health peer group drop in; a physical health and medication group; a walking group; a creative writing group and an addictions group.

Other users of the centre include a cooking group; daytime activities for people with learning disabilities; counselling services; support groups; the Shine network; Lincoln Mental Health Forum and others.

Rooms are let by the session, with repeat bookings attracting room rate discounts. Rooms range from small consultation rooms, through shared hot desks and offices to the main social space suitable for activities, meetings, training, events, socials etc.

There is still the capacity for more groups to use the facilities.

Enquiries about use of Involve@Lincoln should be made to Community Assets Plus on caplus@lincolnshire.coop.

Shine

Shine is a network of organisations and people involved in, or with experience of mental health and mental ill health in Lincolnshire.

The website at www.lincsshine.co.uk is designed to connect people with services and support. It has a searchable directory, plus a newsletter, noticeboard and events calendar.

Membership of the Shine network is open to anyone supporting a positive view of mental health in Lincolnshire.

To find out more visit the website or contact Mike Martin on 07969 872804 or info@lincsshine.co.uk.

Spotlight on... mental health
East Midlands Community Learning
The Enable Community Learning & Skills Grants Programme 2014 - 2015 is now open for applications. The programme offers grants to small voluntary and community organisations to deliver a range of skills and employability support activities with the aim of enabling people experiencing multiple disadvantage to make progress towards the labour market.

The closing date for round one is 21 February. Download the application guidance at www.enable.uk.net/content/community-grants.

There will be other opportunities to apply:
• Round Two - Launch 9th May 2014. Deadline 6th June 2014
• Round Three - Launch 29th August 2014. Deadline 3rd October 2014

For more details contact Simon Wesley on 07964 380554 or email simonw@enable.uk.net.

First World War commemoration
4 August 2014 marks the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War.

Heritage Lottery Fund can provide funding to help groups, communities and organisations mark the centenary by exploring, conserving and sharing the heritage of the First World War, from memorials, buildings and sites, to photographs, letters and literature.

Grants from £3000 upwards are available. For more details of this and other grant programmes go to www.hlf.org.uk.

New funding plan for Lloyds
The Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales has announced its new grant giving strategy.

The new funding strategy aims to channel more money into projects run by charities with income of up to £1 million a year, that help people facing multiple disadvantage, and to support charities to become more sustainable.

More details at www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk, but full information will be available from April when the new programmes open.

John Laing Charitable Trust
Trustees of John Laing Charitable Trust have changed their approach to grant giving. Uninvited applications will no longer be processed; instead, it invites relevant organisations to register with them. Those registered will then be invited to request funding.

Only UK not-for-profit organisations that work with homelessness, disadvantaged and exploited young people, education or community regeneration can register.

‘Our Place’ support programme
Local organisations can apply for direct support and funding to improve local services in their neighbourhoods. The programme is open to applications from incorporated bodies with a primary purpose which is charitable, philanthropic or benevolent; parish or town councils; public service providers or local authorities.

The £4.3m package of support and grants for neighbourhoods has been made available by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The Our Place programme will help areas working to transform local public services in three ways:
• Direct support – you will be put in touch with a Relationship Manager, consultancy/coaching support tailored to meet the needs of your neighbourhood,
• Grant payments for different stages of development,
• Shared learning opportunities including peer groups, coaching, training and learning events, and networking opportunities.

http://mycommunityrights.org.uk/our-place/

MoneySavingExpert Charity Fund
Grants to help educate and inform people about financial literacy, consumer or debt issues are available to small/medium sized charities. The next round opens for applications between 1 - 31 May. For full details visit www.msecharity.com.
Free software training

Wednesday 12th March, Mansfield

Enable are offering a new free training session on a range of free software that community groups can use to help do surveys, create newsletters and take bookings for events.

The training will introduce the popular software tools SurveyMonkey, Mailchimp and Eventbrite.

For details contact paul@enable.uk.net.

New community event guidance

New event planning guidance for community groups has been published, alongside an updated street parties guide, by the Office for Civil Society.

Both sets of guidance aim to bust myths about what is required for community events, and help people to plan and run events with a minimum of bureaucracy.

Both documents are available on www.gov.uk:

The “Can do” guide to organising and running voluntary and community events - http://bit.ly/1dnbBMy

Your guide to organising a street party – http://bit.ly/1e6zRbU

Help someone ‘Spring Online’

Around 7 million people have never used the internet - 6 million of them aged over 55.

Digital Unite is calling on voluntary organisations across the UK to organise digital taster events in their communities as part of its Spring Online campaign from 31 March – 4 April.

Spring Online events can consist of anything from a couple of tablets in your front room to a whole day at a local library. Digital Unite provides support with downloadable posters, leaflets and certificates, activity ideas and advice. More information is at http://digitalunite.com/spring-online-2014.

Resources

Looking for an architect, surveyor or other property expert?

Community development body Locality has announced a new round of support for community organisations which are acquiring, refurbishing or looking to build a community asset.

Locality Brokers provides support at the critical preparation stages in sourcing help from architect, surveyor or other property expert.

Any community led organisation can apply, but applications must be made by 3rd March. A summary of the scheme is at http://bit.ly/1edis1s or go direct to the Locality Brokers webpage http://localitybrokers.org.uk.

Working with children?

Safe Network regional event
Thursday 6th March 10am – 1pm
Deaf Society, Nottingham

Safe Network is holding regional network meetings to bring voluntary and community organisations working with children and young people together with statutory partners such as Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

The network meetings will provide the opportunity to:

- Hear about OFSTED's new inspection framework and consider the strategic implications for the voluntary and community sector
- A region-specific session that will focus on one of the following: Our Decision, online safety, Safeguarding for Trustees amongst others
- Network, share experiences or opportunities and identify support needs

To find out more about the event and book your place (free for voluntary and community organisations) go to the booking page http://bit.ly/1bwg9ka or visit www.safenetwork.org.uk.

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For details contact paul@enable.uk.net.
**Latest poverty figures**

“In 2011/12, 13 million people in the UK were living in poverty. For the first time more than half of these people lived in a working family.”

Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2013 is the latest annual report on poverty in the UK published by the New Policy Institute and the **Joseph Rowntree Foundation** (JRF).

It covers issues including low income, unemployment, low pay, homelessness and ill-health.

Julia Unwin, Chief Executive of JRF, said: “This research shows millions of people are moving in and out of work but rarely out of poverty. Hard work is not working. We have a labour market that lacks pay and protection, with jobs offering precious little security.

“While a recovery may be gathering momentum in the statistics and official forecasts, for those at the bottom, improving pay and prospects remain a mirage.”


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**Voluntary sector independence**

**Independence undervalued: the voluntary sector 2014**

The independence of the voluntary sector is undervalued and under serious threat, according to the third annual report from the Independence Panel.

The report states that voluntary organisations do not place sufficient value on their independence and must fight harder to preserve it.

It also states that a new settlement between the sector and the state is required in order to safeguard the sector’s independence, and calls on the government to preserve the right of charities to bring judicial reviews, outlaw gagging clauses in contracts, restore a minimum 12-week period for consultations, and introduce legislation to outlaw state interference in the governance of charities.

The panel states that there has been an increasing number of attacks on policy and campaigning activities in the past year, including measures in the lobbying bill to limit political activity, and proposals to restrict charities’ access to judicial review.

In addition, charities are increasingly being funded through contracts, and that this is causing them to self-censor because they are afraid of losing income.

To download the full report visit [http://bit.ly/1kXvPq4](http://bit.ly/1kXvPq4) or visit www.independencepanel.org.uk to find out more.

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**UK Civil Society Almanac 2013**

The 12th edition of the **UK Civil Society Almanac** has been published online.

The Almanac is a reference publication for anybody interested in the voluntary sector and its role in civil society. It offers an overview of the voluntary sector’s scope and characteristics, enhanced by analysis of long-term trends using data from previous years and multiple sources.

Of the 162,177 registered voluntary organisations, 83,917 are small (‘micro’) voluntary organisations with an income of less than £10,000 – for example youth clubs, play providers, village halls. This figure does not include community organisations that are too small to register with the Charity Commission, which some estimates put at around 600,000.

Other data on finances, income sources, workforce patterns, levels of volunteering and key trends is available at [http://data.ncvo.org.uk/](http://data.ncvo.org.uk/).

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**Finding and using disability data**

The Office for Disability Issues has created a **Community Data Toolkit** for disabled peoples’ user-led organisations and other small groups and charities, which shows what data has been published about disability and how that data can be used.

It provides guidance to help organisations find and use data with confidence to support their work, for example, to help target services or contribute to evidence to inform grant applications: [http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/fulfilling-potential/toolkit.php](http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/fulfilling-potential/toolkit.php).
Health and safety corner

‘Health & Safety’ Myth Busters Challenge Panel

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) Myth Busters Challenge Panel was set up in 2012 to provide quick advice to people subject to ridiculous or disproportionate ‘health and safety’ decisions by insurance companies, local authorities, businesses and overzealous jobsworths.

It is chaired by HSE Chair Judith Hackitt and includes independent members who represent a range of interests including small businesses, public safety and trade unions.

The Panel provides a mechanism for anyone to raise potentially disproportionate or inaccurate advice or decisions, made in the name of health and safety.

The Panel has received over 200 cases since it was launched with nearly all rulings finding a decision was made without having any basis in health and safety law: [www.hse.gov.uk/myth/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/myth/).

Or if you’re a Twitter user check out #bustedmyth.

Meanwhile on a more serious note...

Update your health and safety law posters

If your organisation has paid staff, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is reminding employers that old 1999 health and safety law posters must be replaced by 5th April this year.

This can be with a newer version of the poster, or by issuing a copy of a pocket card or leaflet, which can be purchased from HSE’s website. To check whether you’ve got the right version, see more information at [www.hse.gov.uk/contact/faqs/lawposter.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/faqs/lawposter.htm).

ACRE Village Halls survey

A survey for village and community halls is being run by ACRE, the rural community council body for England, to get a clearer picture on topical issues such as licensing and broadband.

The information gathered will be used to help raise the profile of community buildings, their volunteers and volunteer management committee members.

The questions are designed to gather information on how issues such as licensing, VAT, rate relief and broadband are affecting village halls. There are also some general questions around volunteers, community enterprises and other activities.

To take part in the online survey go to [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MWRJ9RR](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MWRJ9RR).

Understanding the Disclosure and Barring Service

Children England, Safe Network, NCVYS and the Disclosure and Barring Service have co-produced Our Decision – a guide to using Disclosure and Barring Service checks as part of managing risk and safeguarding for voluntary and community organisations working with children and young people. It includes a decision-making flow chart to establish whether a role is regulated activity, plus a checklist for assessing the risks of a positive DBS check: [http://bit.ly/1iFL1nF](http://bit.ly/1iFL1nF).
## Workshops and events Feb - Mar 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>To book, contact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26 Feb</td>
<td>Recruiting volunteers</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>VCS Lincoln</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 Feb</td>
<td>Funding masterclass</td>
<td>Gainsborough</td>
<td>VCS West Lindsey</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Mar</td>
<td>Management committees: an introduction</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>VCS Lincoln</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Mar</td>
<td>Recruiting volunteers</td>
<td>Gainsborough</td>
<td>VCS West Lindsey</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Mar</td>
<td>Managing volunteers with extra support needs</td>
<td>Sleaford</td>
<td>VCS North Kesteven</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Mar</td>
<td>Voluntary Sector Forum</td>
<td>Sleaford</td>
<td>VCS North Kesteven</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Mar</td>
<td>Hate crime and social cohesion masterclass</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 Mar</td>
<td>Good practice in volunteer management</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

All events are **FREE** for volunteers. Some have a small fee for paid staff places.

View details and book online by clicking on the links above, or contact the appropriate office:

**Lincoln - new address**
16-26 Tentercroft Street, Lincoln, LN5 7DB  01522 551683
lincoln@voluntarycentreservices.org.uk

**North Kesteven**
26 Carre Street, Sleaford, NG34 7TR  01529 308450
northkesteven@voluntarycentreservices.org.uk

**West Lindsey**
The Guildhall, Marshall’s Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA  01427 613470
westlindsey@voluntarycentreservices.org.uk

Follow us on Twitter
VCS West Lindsey - @VCSWestLindsey
VCS North Kesteven - @VCSNK
VCS Lincoln - @VCSLincoln

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