

ICT Hub announces Regional Champions to Co-ordinate and strengthen ICT work

The ICT Hub is today announcing the successful commissioning of a Regional ICT Champion in each of the nine English regions. The regional champions will enable the ICT Hub to work more closely with local infrastructure organisations and grassroots voluntary and community groups.

The key aim is that by March 2008 through better co-ordinated networking of ICT providers the champions will show to more local groups the strategic importance of well planned ICT and ways to access effective local support across all regions.

The regional champions will achieve this aim by:

- Signposting front-line voluntary and community organisations to the range of practical ICT resources available locally in their region or at a national level enabling them to benefit from more effective use of ICT to achieve their aims.
- Mapping service providers and then sharing best practice so that existing infrastructure organisations can become sustainable.
- Working alongside infrastructure organisations in the delivery of local workshops and other ICT awareness raising initiatives to small grassroots organisations.

Paul Webster from the ICT Hub, who is co-ordinating this project said: “The regional champions have been selected on both the basis of their previous skills and expertise in working across their region in achieving these aims and their passion for ICT to be a resource that connects and enables organisations to simply ‘Do better things’ and ‘Do things better’. “For small groups or providers of support it’s often just a gentle nudge or steer in the right direction that is needed – something that the regional champions will be equipped and eager to do”.

Between May 2007 and March 2008 the combined work of the regional champions will deliver over 1,400 days of ICT training, workshops, research and facilitated networking to the sector.

The regional champions are:

Region	Name	Organisation	Based in
North East	Matt Legg	VONNE	Newcastle
North West	Pauline Baker	GMCVO	Manchester
Yorkshire & Humber	Colin Harrison	Electroville	Dewsbury
East Midlands	Tony Okotie	High Peak CVS	Whaley Bridge
West Midlands	Jackie Carey	Community First	Great Malvern
East of England	Paul Ruskin	Advice For Life	Ely
London	Miles Maier	Lasa	London
South East	Mark Walker	SCIP	Brighton
South West	Julie Harris	Cosmic	Ottery

Full contact details for each regional champion, links to their website and a short biography of their work and motivation can be found on the relevant link from the ICT Hub's Regional Infrastructure pages -

http://www.ictHub.org.uk/how_we_can_help/Regional_Infrastructure_06.html.

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For more information or an interview please contact Elise Cross, Media Officer at NCVO, at Elise.Cross@ncvo-vol.org.uk or 020 7520 2469

Notes to editors:

- The regional champions will be co-ordinated by Paul Webster at NAVCA, one of the core partners in the ICT Hub with a focus on enabling the work of the ICT Hub to be shared amongst local infrastructure organisations.
- The ICT Hub is part of ChangeUp, the Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community sector, created by the Home Office in June 2004. It aims to effect practical changes in the way that voluntary and community organisations use and benefit from ICT. The Hub will do this by: raising awareness of the benefits of ICT amongst voluntary and community organisations, improving the ICT funding and procurement environment within which voluntary organisations operate, and providing them with ICT support and resources at a local level. The five members of the ICT hub steering group are: AbilityNet, IT4Communities, LASA, NAVCA and NCVO.
- In recognition of the increasingly important role the third sector plays in both society and the economy, the Prime Minister announced the creation of the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) in May 2006. The OTS brings the

work of the former Active Communities Directorate (ACD), originally in the Home Office and the Social Enterprise Unit (SEnU), formerly in the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) together within the [Cabinet Office](#). For more information, visit the Office of the Third Sector website at: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thirdsector

- **ChangeUp** is the Capacity Building* and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community sector, published by the Active Community Unit in June 2004. ChangeUp's aim is that by 2014 the needs of frontline voluntary and community organisations will be met by support which is available nationwide, structured for maximum efficiency, offering excellent provision, accessible to all, truly reflecting and promoting diversity, and sustainably funded. ChangeUp describes the basic architecture of support which frontline organisations need. For more information please go to www.capacitybuilders.org.uk or call 0121 237 5100.
- **AbilityNet** is a national centre of excellence in computing and disability and provides national pan- disability services in this area. It has significant experience in providing web audits, and is in an excellent position to provide training and resources to the VCS to develop more accessible websites, as required by law. For more information go to www.abilitynet.org.uk or e-mail enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk.
- **IT4Communities** is an initiative to encourage companies and individuals with professional IT skills to volunteer these skills for the benefit of the community. By supporting both charity and volunteer, all the way from project definition to project completion, IT4Communities aims to bridge the gap between IT professionals and charities needing IT help. For more information please go to www.it4communities.org.uk or contact John Davies, Programme Director at jid@it4communities.org.uk or 020 7796 2144.
- **LASA** has been involved in the provision of expert advice and information to the voluntary advice and legal sector since 1984. It has developed and implemented a number of innovative ICT systems to assist with the raising of standards. These include: *Knowledgebase*, a free database of ICT information and advice; the development and support of circuit riders* to meet the needs of the voluntary and community sector; consultancy and project management services and an ICT telephone helpline. For more information please visit www.lasa.org.uk or contact Terry Stokes, Director of ICT Services at tstokes@lasa.org.uk or 020 7426 4725;
- **NAVCA** (the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action) is the national voice of local voluntary and community sector infrastructure in England. Our purpose is to promote local voluntary and community action nationally. Our 360 members work with 140,000 local community groups and voluntary organisations which provide services, regenerate neighbourhoods, increase volunteering and tackle discrimination, in partnership with local public bodies. For more information please visit www.navca.org.uk or contact Dianne Leyland, Director of Development on 0114 289 3967 or e-mail dianne.leyland@navca.org.uk.
- The **National Council for Voluntary Organisations** (NCVO) is the umbrella body for the voluntary sector in England, with sister councils in

Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. NCVO has a growing membership of over 4,900 voluntary organisations, ranging from large national bodies to community groups, volunteer bureaux, and development agencies working at a local level. For more information please visit www.ncvo-vol.org.uk or contact at or 020 7520 2569 For more information or an interview please contact Elise Cross, Media Officer at NCVO, at Elise.Cross@ncvo-vol.org.uk or 020 7520 2469

* Capacity building is about ensuring that organisations have the skills, knowledge, structures and resources to realise their full potential

* Circuit Riders are mobile ICT workers who support a caseload of small voluntary organisations and work collaboratively as part of the Circuit Rider movement.