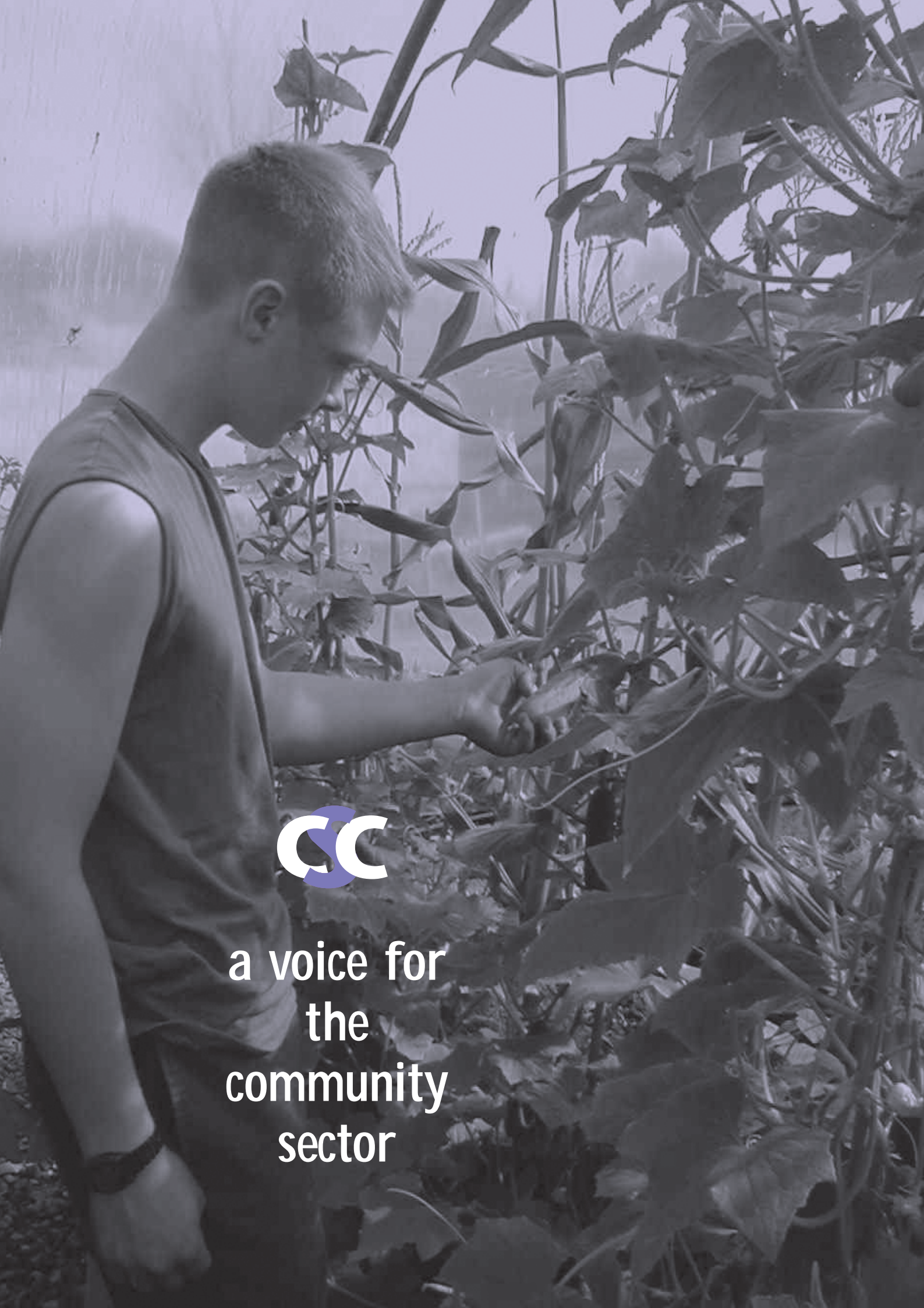


Community Sector Coalition Strategic Plan



**community
sector
coalition**

April 2007
to
March 2010



a voice for
the
community
sector



The Community Sector Coalition

The added value that is generated through members working together ensures that resources are used more effectively across organisational boundaries and that a stronger, unified voice campaigns on issues vital to the sector

The Community Sector Coalition was established in 1994 by a group of Chief Executives of national umbrella organisations whose work focussed on the community sector. They met to establish a Coalition of organisations that wanted to champion the unique contribution that the community sector makes to society.

Since 1994 the Coalition has met regularly to

- share information
- network
- develop joint projects
- and
- respond collectively to Government policy.

The added value that is generated through members working together ensures that resources are used more effectively across organisational boundaries and that a stronger, unified voice campaigns on issues vital to the sector.

In 2006 the Coalition appointed its first full time Co-ordinator which enabled it to undertake a strategic review and produce its first strategy and operational guide to see the Coalition into its next stage of development.

What is the community sector

Why the community sector is so important - a global perspective

Today, many people feel that civil society and its' local associations aren't very important. Instead, they think what really matters are big institutions like corporations, health systems and governments. However, what makes a democracy isn't its institutions. Rather, it is citizens working in their clubs, groups, organizations and associations that make a democracy.

The heart of democracy is the free space where people form their own associations to provide care, advocacy and community. Without this vital centre, democracies become hollow and institutions become oppressive and unresponsive. And people lose their citizenship by becoming nothing more than clients and consumers.

John McKnight

The Asset Based Community Development Institute, Chicago

The community sector is the part of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) that is **driven by the communities it serves**. These may be communities of place such as a neighbourhood or village, or may be communities of interest such as people who share a faith or a disability.

The community sector is made up of a wide range of different types of activity and organisational form, including

- **Community activists** – individuals who motivate others in a community to take action
- **Community development workers** – these are professional workers or volunteers who work for a range of different organisations to work with communities, engaging individuals in community action and developing community groups in a particular neighbourhood or community of interest
- **Specialist community activity** – there is a wide range of activity that takes place at community level, owned and run by community groups, for example, arts and sports events, city farms and community gardens, youth groups, learning opportunities, advice centres and conservation activity
- **Community groups** – these are small, often informal and are run on a voluntary basis by the people who benefit from the activity. They may or may not have a constitution or paid workers membership is made up of community groups or local residents in a community, they often represent the community to outside agencies
- **Community centres** – these buildings often provide a space where the community groups and other activity takes place
- **Community anchors** – are independent community-led organisations which are multi-purpose and provide holistic solutions to problems
- **Tenants or residents associations** – these are organisations whose membership is made up of tenants or residents in a community

ector?



The community sector is made up of a wide range of different types of activity and organisations

The community sector makes a unique and important contribution to civil society. This includes:

- Building social capital, or relationships between people in communities leading to a decrease in crime, an improvement in health and well-being and a decrease in dependence on the state
- Providing free or low cost activity or services to people who may otherwise be unable to afford it to improve their quality of life
- Providing an entry point for those with low levels of educational achievement to gain new skills and confidence to re-enter education or employment
- Increasing engagement in local democracy and the governance of formal institutions operating in the community
- Empowering people as active citizens in their community



Vision, Mission, Aims and Values

Vision

The Coalition's vision is for the community sector to be empowered, valued and active in local democracy

Mission

The Coalition's mission is to be a credible and authoritative independent voice for the community sector

Aims

- To campaign for policy change that will benefit the community sector
- To deliver a programme of research and learning about the community sector
- To enable members to share information and identify priorities for collective action

Values

- **Inclusive** The Coalition seeks to include national organisations that support the wide spectrum of activity in the community sector
- **Diverse** The Coalition values the diversity of communities as an important way of challenging discrimination and disadvantage
- **Transparent** The Coalition will work to ensure that information about its activities, plans and decisions are clear, accessible and easy to understand
- **Independent** The Coalition will ensure it is independent from Government or any other independent interest group
- **Enabling** The Coalition exists to serve and enable collaborative working between its members, not to further its own existence
- **Credible** The Coalition will work to create a robust evidence base for all its campaigns and policy influencing based on the research and experience of its members



Delivering our vision 2007 - 2010

Our activities for the next 3 years are presented here under each of the Coalition's aims:

1 To campaign for policy change that will benefit the community sector

2 To deliver a programme of research and learning about the community sector

3 To enable members to share information and identify priorities for collective action

1 Campaigning for policy change that will benefit the community sector

Goal: For the community sector to be well resourced and to be an active participant in local democracy

We are going to develop and run two areas of policy work over the next 3 years. The first will focus on the funding of the community sector while the second will focus on the role the sector plays in local democracy.

Funding the Community Sector

There is evidence of a shift away from grants to other forms of investment for the community sector. Where there is funding available to community groups, the levels of accessibility and associated bureaucracy are variable, causing volunteers to spend disproportionate amounts of time on paperwork not on community work.

Stengthening Local Governance

Publication of the Local Government White Paper and Bill in 2006 outlines a radical change in the way that local communities will be governed in future years. Foremost among the proposed changes that will impact on smaller community groups is the devolution of local governance, decision making and possibly budgets to neighbourhood or parish level.

The devolution of local governance from city or district level to neighbourhoods will therefore require a coherent and properly resourced community capacity building strategy in order to harness the skills, knowledge and experience of residents and community groups at neighbourhood level.

Campaign Actions

We will develop simple campaign actions suitable for a range of different people and organisations across England. These actions along with campaign tips, evidence and downloadable materials will be freely available on the Coalition's website to enable maximum participation in the policy work.

2 Delivering a programme of research and learning about the community sector

Goal: For the Coalition to be the first point of call for people seeking information about the community sector

We will establish research and learning work within the Coalition to maximise the sharing of knowledge and learning amongst our members

- Building partnerships with research and learning institutions with interests in community sector research
- Identifying gaps in research into the community sector
- Promoting key messages from research to policy makers
- Developing and delivering through our members a programme of training on the community sector for the public sector
- Organising learning opportunities for Coalition members and research professionals to reflect on the implications for the sector of the latest research findings
- Collating community sector research from Coalition members and elsewhere on the CSC website
- Producing email briefings on existing and emerging community sector research findings

3 Enabling members to share information and identify priorities for collective action

Goal: For CSC members to have a good awareness of wider developments and to agree key priorities for collective actions within the sector

The Coalition will keep abreast of external policy developments and when appropriate will respond to influence policy from a community sector perspective e.g. the Coalition's work on Local Area Agreements and Children and Young People's Trusts. The Coalition will maintain a leadership role in sustainable development, as demonstrated through its role as Chair of the £4million Defra programme Every Action Counts. The Coalition will also produce a regular bulletin of information, news and events from members and other agencies.

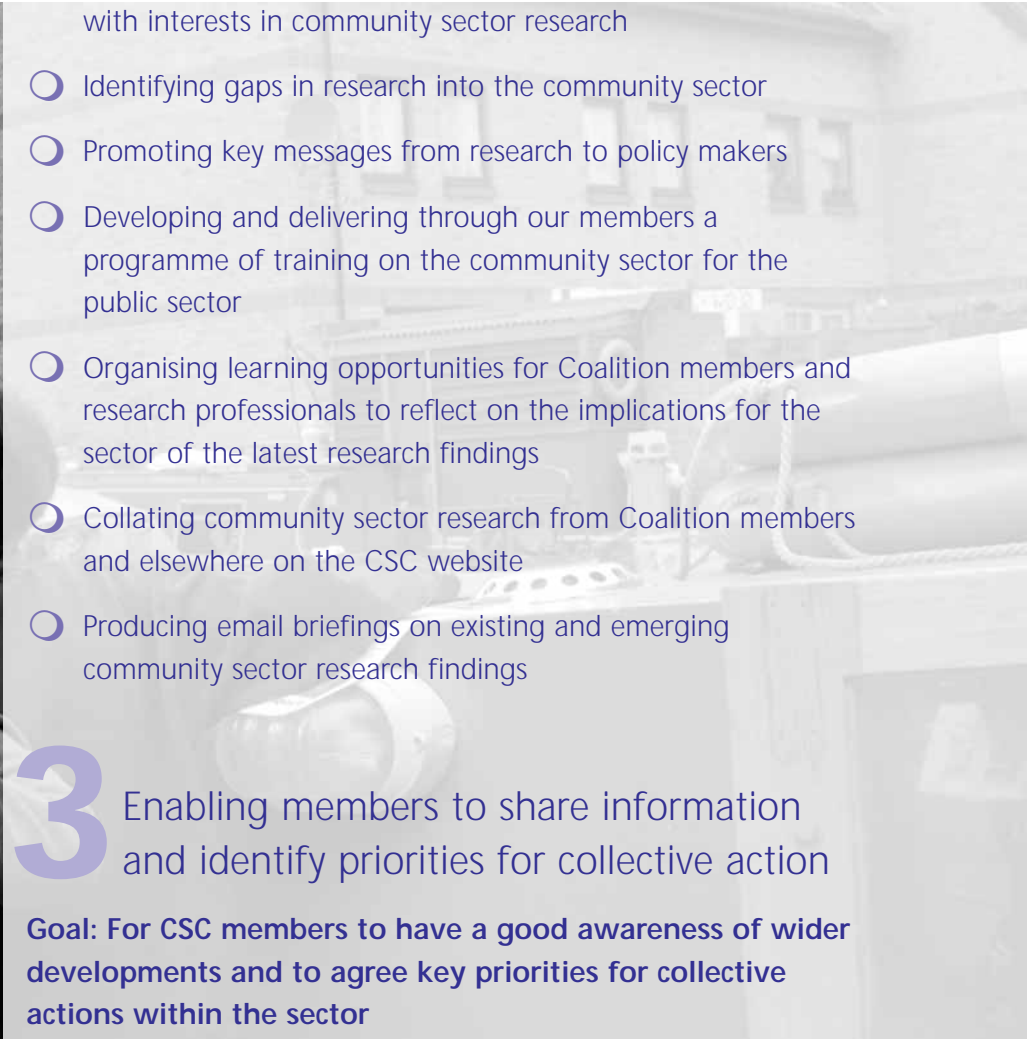
campaign



learn



enable



Coalition meetings will take place quarterly. The purpose of these meetings is:

- To enable members to meet and exchange information
- To provide space to discuss issues affecting the sector and establish priorities for the Coalition's work
- To enable members with specialist expertise to feedback on developments within their area
- To build trust and effective working relationships between member organisations



Coalition Facts

Coalition Website

In April 2007 the Coalition launched a new website which will become a central communication tool for anyone with an interest in the community sector. Features of the site include:

- A search function for all the Coalition's members websites and online publications
- Information on the Coalition's campaigns and policy work with opportunities for anyone to get involved in campaign actions
- An online calendar of events taking place over the year in the community sector
- Regular news updates from Coalition members
- The ability to generate survey data about the community sector through the Coalition's members' networks
- Information about the Coalition's research and learning programme of events and meetings

The website address is: www.communitysectorcoalition.org.uk

Income generation

Fundraising is taking place to enable the Coalition to carry out its aims. The Coalition is independent and aims to generate 25% of its turnover through earned income.

- 1 through membership and associate subscriptions
- 2 through the Coalition tendering for specific pieces of work that clusters of its members can deliver, retaining a management fee

Membership

The Coalition has a membership of Chief Officers of national organisations that support the community sector.

Executive Group

The Coalition is a network of organisations governed by an elected Executive Group which meets 4 times a year.

Full members

Full membership of the Coalition is open to national (England wide) voluntary or charitable organisations, where the major part of their work is carried out on behalf of the community sector.

Associates

In April 2007 a new type of membership was introduced for any England wide voluntary or charitable organisation that has an interest in or supports the community sector in any part of its work.

Hosting

The Coalition is a network of organisations and is not formally constituted. Bassac acts as accountable body for the Coalition, employing and hosting staff at the Community Hub in Corsham St, London, which is jointly owned by bassac and the Development Trusts Association (DTA).

Operating Guide and Work Plan

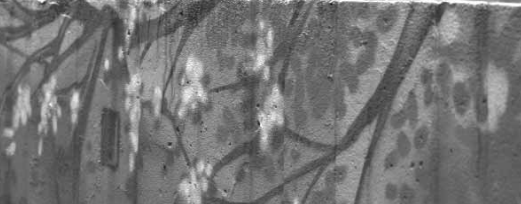
If you would like more detail about the work of the Coalition and information about how the Coalition works we are happy to share our work plan and operating guide, just get in touch.

Staffing

The Coalition is currently supported by one full time equivalent member of staff, shared between two individuals each working 2.5 days a week.

They are:

- Naomi Alexander: naomi@communitysectorcoalition.org.uk
- John Routledge: john@communitysectorcoalition.org.uk



Current Membership

Executive Group (as at April 2007)

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE), Sylvia Brown
British Association of Settlements and Social Action Centres (bassac),
Ben Hughes

Community Matters, David Tyler, Chair of the Coalition

National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA),
Kevin Curley

Urban Forum, Toby Blume

Full Members (as at April 2007)

ADEPT, Denise Taylor

Advice UK, Steve Johnson

Black Training & Enterprise Group (BTEG), Jeremy Crook

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), Neil Canham

Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), Neil McInroy

Churches' Community Work Alliance (CCWA), Nils Chittenden

Community Development Exchange (CDX), Amanda Inverarity

Community Development Foundation (CDF), Sarah Benioff

Confederation of Indian Organisations (CIO)

ContinYou, Laurence Blackhall

Development Trusts Association (DTA), Steve Wyler

Educational Centres Association (ECA), Bernard Godding

Faith Based Regeneration Network (FbRN), Doreen Finneron

Federation for Community Development Learning (FCDL), Janice Marks

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (FCFCG), Jeremy Iles

Federation of Stadium Communities, Judy Crabb

League of British Muslims, Mr Khalid Hussain

National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS), Stephen Quashie

Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS), Phil Morgan

The Scarman Trust, Dorothy Newton

Voluntary Arts Network (VAN), Robin Simpson

Contact Details

Community Sector Coalition
33 Corsham Street
London N1 6DR

T: 0207 336 9461

F: 0845 241 0376

www.communitysectorcoalition.org.uk
info@communitysectorcoalition.org.uk



**community
sector
coalition**