

Dear Partnership member,

Sunderland Partnership Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan Consultation

As you may be aware, development work on a Sunderland Partnership Volunteering Strategy commenced on the 12 May 2010. A draft document has now been produced and I would like to take this opportunity to seek your views through a formal consultation process.

This strategy has been created to reflect the changing landscape of volunteering at both the national and local level, and to build upon existing good practice in Sunderland. The Strategy and accompanying action plan will provide the basis for partners and organisations to work together to raise the profile of volunteering and increase the number and diversity of volunteers in the City.

I'm sure you'll agree that our volunteers make a vitally important contribution in Sunderland and we must continue to support them and the work that they do. The Sunderland Volunteering Strategy is therefore a vital tool to help steer our future working around volunteering.

The development of this draft has been a cross-sector piece of work, with extensive involvement from voluntary and community organisations as well as statutory partners. Examples of involvement undertaken during the two month development phase include:

- **Sunderland Volunteering Forum (15 June 2010)**

The Sunderland Volunteering Forum hosted a development and consultation event in collaboration with Sunderland City Council. The purpose of the Forum is to raise awareness of volunteering at a strategic level and promote collaboration. It is the principal arena in which to raise issues and concerns relating to volunteering in Sunderland, and to share best practice. The Forum is led by Volunteer Centre Sunderland, with membership drawn from the statutory and Voluntary and Community sectors. The Forum's Steering Group consists of representatives from the Sunderland Volunteer Centre, Sunderland City Council and Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) organisations. The Chair of the Volunteering Steering Group is the Chief Officer of Volunteer Centre Sunderland who is also a member of the Compact Implementation Group which reports to the Sunderland Partnership.

- **Compact Implementation Group (5 July 2010)**

The Sunderland Volunteering Strategy was discussed at the Compact Implementation Group meeting in July 2010. This group is a subgroup of the Sunderland Partnership and meets quarterly to oversee the implementation and

further development of the Sunderland Compact, including the Volunteering Code of Practice. Membership is drawn from the Sunderland Community Network, VCS organisations with relevant knowledge and experience relating to the Compact's Codes of Practice and Sunderland Partnership groups.

- **Sunderland Community Network VCS Assembly (7 July 2010)**

A presentation was given at the VCS Assembly hosted by the Sunderland Community Network (SCN). Participants took part in workshops around strategy themes such as volunteer management, Employer-Supported Volunteer Schemes, volunteer support, and recognition and rewards for volunteers. SCN is a network of VCS groups and organisations working within the City and provides an opportunity for the Sector to be formally represented as equal partners in policy and service design and delivery through the Sunderland Partnership and Area Committees. SCN is led by Sunderland CVS and funded by the City Council.

- **Inclusive Communities Thematic Group (18 May 2010)**

A presentation was given to the Inclusive Communities Thematic Group, which brings together representatives at a strategic level from the Sunderland Partnership and the Chairs of the Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs). Comments were also requested from the IAGs. These citywide groups were formed to provide an opportunity for marginalised or hard to reach people in the City to contribute their views on public services and policy development. There are seven groups looking at different themes - Disability, Gender, BME (Black Minority Ethnic), Older people, Younger people, LGB (Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual) and Faith – each feeding into the work of the Sunderland Partnership.

- **Circulation via mailing lists**

The draft Strategy was circulated via the Volunteer Centre's and Sunderland CVS' mailing lists which go out to a range of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations in the City.

Responses received during the formal consultation phase will be used to develop the Strategy further and inform its accompanying action plan, which will support the Sunderland Compact's Volunteering Code of Practice (June 2009).

The draft Sunderland Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan is available at www.sunderlandcompact.org.uk. Throughout this draft Strategy and Action Plan formal consultation questions have been posed. Copies can also be obtained by contacting Sunderland City Council's Community Development Team (as per the following details).

The consultation officially closes at 5pm, 17 September 2010. Please note that due to the extensive involvement of Voluntary and Community Sector and statutory sector organisations in the development of the draft document, the formal consultation period can be shortened from the agreed standard of 12 weeks.

Should you have any queries about the Sunderland Partnership Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan or the consultation process, please contact Sarah Grey, Community Development Team, Sunderland City Council on 0191 561 5017 or email sarah.grey@sunderland.gov.uk.

Working together for a better future

I take this opportunity to thank you in anticipation for your contribution to this process.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Taylor'.

Canon Stephen Taylor
Sunderland Partnership Chair

Please return your consultation responses by 5pm, 17 September 2010 to:

Community Development Team
City Services
Sunderland City Council
Jack Crawford House
Commercial Road
Sunderland
SR2 8QR

Tel: 0191 561 5002

Alternatively, responses can be submitted by email to
community.development@sunderland.gov.uk, or by fax on 0191 553 5005.

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