



NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2011

G:XL Latest New Resources Review of G:up Opportunities

As temperatures plunge (well, almost), G:up's here to keep you warm through the long winter. Apologies to all our loyal readers (and those who just skim!) that this edition is slightly delayed, but we keep you updated with all G:up's top news and events through our **monthly G:up Spotlight** and to prove we haven't been slacking, this quarter's Newsletter is especially packed with information. We hope you enjoy and please do give us any feedback or suggestions. Happy 2012 to everyone. Warm wishes. G:up team.

www.gup.org.uk/newsletter

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G:up is an alliance of West Midlands children, young people and families', voluntary and community sector (CYPF VCS) organisations, networks, and partners.

G:up works in a regional space to develop networks, collaboration and communications, build capacity and shape policy. Joining G:up is free! Read on for more or visit the G:up website: www.gup.org.uk



LOTTERY FUNDED

G:up AGM Outcomes

G:up's 2011 AGM, held on 3rd November 2011, saw the adoption of G:up's new constitution and the election of the first members of G:up's new, governing, Executive Committee.

The AGM was the culmination of a programme of activities that took place throughout the year to review G:up, its mission and services to ensure these were aligned with the needs of its members and the sector.

Timeline of Review of G:up

Jan 2011 - G:up Interim Steering Group formed to lead the review of G:up after G:up's original governance group was decimated due to cuts

May 2011 - G:up produced an Evaluation Report of its role and services after contacting all G:up members for phone interviews or questionnaires

Summer 2011 - throughout this period the G:up Interim Steering Group produced a variety of organisational and governance documents including a proposed new G:up constitution

July/August 2011 - G:up members were given a month to review and discuss the proposed new constitution and vote to endorse it. Over half of G:up's membership voted and all votes received were in favour!

August 2011 - G:up advertised the first vacancies for its Executive Committee, to be elected by G:up members at the AGM, asking suitable candidates to complete self nominations

November 2011 - G:up AGM: certain amendments to G:up constitution were voted on and the new constitution was adopted; the first members of the G:up Executive Committee were elected

Minutes of G:up's 2011 AGM and a copy of the new G:up constitution can be found on the G:up website: www.gup.org.uk/influence

Turn to page 7 to find out about the latest vacancies on G:up's Executive Committee.

* The following extract is the opening of G:up's new constitution, view the whole document at: www.gup.org.uk/influence

Growing up in the West Midlands (G:up) Governing Constitution*

G:up is a constituted, membership based alliance of voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations and other stakeholders that work across the children, young people and families (CYPF) agenda in the West Midlands.

Vision

Our vision is that all children, young people and families have access to a wide range of high quality VCS services that meet their needs and aspirations.

Mission

To enhance the support to voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) working with children, young people and families (CYPF) in the West Midlands.

Aims

We will engage our members, funders and other stakeholders in achieving the following aims:

- ◆ To improve sharing of information across the region between CYPF VCOs and between Infrastructure Support Organisations (ISOs)
- ◆ To increase collaborative working between ISOs and frontline VCOs
- ◆ To increase the sharing of good practice and resources amongst VCOs
- ◆ To increase the influence of the VCS on local and regional policy and decision making
- ◆ To increase the capacity and resources available to ISOs to enhance the work of CYPF VCOs

Principles

G:up will work within and promote a culture of:

- ◆ Collaboration, connection and cooperation
- ◆ Quality, improvement and learning
- ◆ Fair and inclusive practices
- ◆ Openness and transparency
- ◆ Being informed by the views and opinions of its members

G:XL Voice and Influence - Strategic Representation

This G:XL work stream aims to review, support, and increase the level and quality of CYPF VCS representation at strategic, decision making, arenas in the West Midlands. For resources, events and Learning Cluster meetings visit: www.gup.org.uk/represent



Conference Outcomes

All the presentations, workshop notes and a review of G:up's free conference, 'Local Voices - Influencing Change', are now available on the G:up website: www.gup.org.uk/influence

The conference built on the foundations of the recent, G:XL Strategic Representation **audit report** and **action plan**, which mapped and proposed developments for sustainable CYPF VCS strategic representation across every West Midlands, top tier, local authority area.

The conference, held in November 2011, asked '**Who speaks for your organisation?**' - demanding what skills those representing the sector at strategic forums should have and inviting attendees to find out how representatives work with CYPF VCS organisations so they can be involved in decision making and influencing policy.

Read the **conference review** for a range of interesting discussions on these and related themes, captured at conference workshops. These reveal feelings and experiences about strategic representation in the sector and investigate the potential for a regional network or learning cluster to support this area.

The following speech bubbles represent a random selection of current issues raised and discussed at G:up's 'Local Voices - Influencing Change' conference. Download the **review** for more and the full workshop notes.

The days of relying on Government contracts are gone

Often it is the case that people are elected but don't feedback

More people are attending more local meetings – how do you build on that for the representation?

If you are going to have a voice, you need to be there at the beginning of the conversation not the end

Knowing who the links are within the sectors is vital

The priority is how are we going to survive?

Sometimes we forget the smaller groups and services in the rush for funding and a place at the table



Contact

Sue Thomas of Common Sense (Leadership & Management) Solutions is the contract holder for the G:XL Voice and Influence - Strategic Representation work stream.

To comment on or contribute to this work you can contact Sue on sue@commonsensecic.com

Test Driving G:up's Toolkit

User case study shows how **easy to use** and **useful** Self Assessment Toolkit is

G:up designed its free, online, Self Assessment Toolkit to help organisations evaluate their performance in key work areas and identify relevant quality standards that could support and evidence their development. This user case study underlines just how straightforward and useful this tool is for organisations.

Angela Richards, Director of Building Futures WM, took 15 minutes out of her busy schedule to complete G:up's Toolkit and told us how she found it and the ways the tool benefited her organisation.

G:up: Angela, thanks for trialling the toolkit. What do you think?

Angela: At first it did look a little bit daunting...But actually the instructions were really clear and after I'd done the first couple of pages it got easier and easier.

'anything that gives us a better understanding of how we can strengthen and improve our performance is a big plus'

G:up: What did you find most useful about G:up's toolkit?

Angela: The report that you can print out at the end of the process. It didn't just show us how we were doing, it gave us some ideas about the sorts of quality standards that we could think about implementing. We're a small volunteer led project with HUGE! aspirations so anything that gives us a better understanding of how we can strengthen and improve our performance is a big plus.

G:up: How do you think you will use the report?



Pictured: Angela Richards, Director of Building Futures WM, who felt the toolkit was useful for all VCS organisations.

Angela: Well actually we are in the process of developing a business plan so I'm going to share the report with our trustees so we can have a think which quality standard would best suit our needs.

G:up: Have you got any ideas at this stage?

Angela: If you'd have asked me before doing the toolkit I would have probably said PQASSO because it's the one that seems to be really popular in the voluntary sector. But now I would still say PQASSO not because it's popular but because it's really clear from going through the toolkit that it would be the most flexible and useful

Download this great development tool absolutely free at www.gup.org.uk/toolkit

quality standard for us as a developing community organisation.

'I know a lot of...organisations that would really benefit from using such a simple and straightforward tool'

G:up: Were there any things that put you off completing the toolkit or made it difficult?

Angela: I suppose if you didn't manage all areas of your organisation's work, for example you were a trustee and didn't get involved in operational issues, I suppose it would be more difficult for you to answer questions. Mind you, it would be an interesting exercise for a board to do as a group. I'd like to do it again in about a year's time but I think I'll involve the rest of the board in the process. I think it would stimulate some interesting discussion.

G:up: Finally, what sort of organisations might benefit from doing G:up's Organisational Self Assessment Toolkit?

Angela: I know a lot of small, inner-city BME organisations that would really benefit from using such a simple and straightforward tool. These are just the kind of organisations that need to have a better understanding of how they can grow and develop their organisations. It's not that they aren't quality organisations, they often are, but having a quality standard will help them communicate that to other organisations and funding initiatives that they want to work with. Overall the toolkit is a really useful tool and covers a wide range of work areas so I would actually recommend it to any VCS organisation.

G:up's Organisational Self Assessment Toolkit is available for all to download, free of charge, from the G:up website! www.gup.org.uk/toolkit

....IN BRIEF

Learn: WM Partnership Wins Catalyst Funding

G:up has spearheaded another capacity building opportunity for the sector by coordinating the formation of the Learn: WM Training Partnership and submitting a successful bid and business plan on behalf of the consortium for the Catalyst - Training Partnership project, funded by NCVYS.

Learn: WM is a diverse partnership of West Midlands training organisations and will launch its services in 2012 - so watch this space.

This is G:up's 2nd successful Catalyst bid, as G:up's 'Knowledge into Action - Training Summit' on 14th December 2011 was funded through NCVYS's Catalyst - Skills Development project. Find out more at: www.gup.org.uk/catalyst

Help The Sector Engage

Sign up to be a G:XL champion and support CYPF VCS organisations in your local area or networks to make their voices heard and influence decision making. Simply fill in and return the champions form found via the link below. This is a great opportunity to help develop the sector by supporting your organisations to engage and enhancing the effectiveness of representation: www.gup.org.uk/represent

Please also let us know if you're aware of anyone who deserves a thank you for championing CYPF VCS organisations in the West Midlands, so we can thank them at the next G:XL Voice and Influence - Strategic Engagement conference. Find out more at: www.gup.org.uk/thankyou

G:XL Regional Participation Event

Come and participate in our **FREE**, thought-provoking and inspiring event! Open to all voluntary, community and statutory sector staff and volunteers, working with children and young people (CYP).

This event is suitable for a variety of workers including Youth Workers, Play workers, Arts and Learning Officers, Outreach and Community Workers, who work across the West Midlands.

Visit: www.gup.org.uk/participation for a booking form.

The keynote speaker is Dr. Jason Wood, Senior Lecturer at De Montfort University's Youth & Community Division, and guest speaker Liam Preston, British Youth Council.

The event will also offer interactive workshops, enabling you to share ideas, network and celebrate your work regionally, whilst assisting you in your participation journey.

Workshops include:

- Making participation activities accessible for young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
- Participation through journalism
- Participation: Recognising, celebrating and awarding
- Encouraging participation through visual arts
- Encouraging participation through digital media
- Participation and the natural environment

Book Now

Download a **booking form** from www.gup.org.uk/participation and return it to participation@wayc.org.uk by 16th Jan 2012.

G:up keeps CYP Participation on the map

- [Regional Participation Report](#) - mapping CYP participation in every West Midlands, top tier, local authority area and providing a number of useful participation resources
- [G:XL Participation Learning Cluster](#) - interactive regional forum, open to all CYP VCS staff

Don't Hesitate Participate

Participation...

The Way Forward

Saturday 21st January 2012

To be held at the:

**Methodist Central Mission
208 Corporation Street
Birmingham, B4 6QW
10:30am-3.30pm**

Keynote Speech

By Dr Jason Wood, Senior lecturer at De Montfort University, Leicester; Youth & Community Division

A free activity at Ackers Adventure for your group as part of the follow up!

Book your place by contacting participation@wayc.org.uk

Places will be booked on a first-come, first-served basis!

For further details contact **Tracy Hayes** or **Cath Errington** on 01926 450 156

www.gup.org.uk/participation



Be a G:XL Participation Champion

Visit www.gup.org.uk/participation for a sign up form for this exciting role. Could you:

- Promote awareness of children and young people's (CYP) participation to organisations?
- Help increase opportunities for CYP participation in the VCS?
- Help shape participation resources and initiatives to be rolled out to the sector?

If so, please get in touch! This opportunity could offer you excellent **development opportunities** and be suitable if you're new to participation or an experienced participation practitioner.



Prestigious Influencing Training, subsidised by G:up

G:up is offering prestigious 'Working with DUO' training from Changes, designed for VCS Infrastructure Support Organisations, it gives staff critical training in how their organisation can influence and be influenced.

- **Dates: Wed 22nd & Thur 23rd February 2012, at bayc, Birmingham, closing date for bookings is Wed 1st February 2012.**

'Working with DUO' is a **brand new course** developed following the successful VOICE and ECHO training and will be facilitated by Changes; several G:up members have experience of these and have found them extremely effective.

G:up is able to subsidise this training through its Big Lottery-funded G:XL project, for which it meets key objectives in increasing voice and influence in the sector.

G:up is offering places at just £80 each (normally £240!) Places are limited to a maximum of 20! This is **excellent for a 2-day course** that will give you a range of skills and materials (including course folders) to improve the way you work for the benefit of your organisation and your members.

See more information and a booking form on the G:up website: www.gup.org.uk/duo. You can also find out how this course relates to and differs from previous courses at: www.axisofinfluence.co.uk

Don't miss this wonderful opportunity as places are being snapped up fast! For more information contact G:up on gup@bayc.org or 0121 460 5870.

....IN BRIEF

Executive Nominations Wanted

We are now opening recruitment for co-opted members on our governing, G:up Executive Committee.

If you have skills or experience in any of the areas below, identified as gaps in our governance structure by the G:up Executive, please apply:

- **VCS families**
- **VCS play**
- **VCS early years**
- **VCS equalities**

Get more info, 2012 meeting dates and a nomination form at: www.gup.org.uk/executive

CYPF Prime Contractor

- **25th Jan, 1pm-2pm, bayc, Birmingham RAWM**, G:up and Children England's Network have agreed to work in partnership to explore opportunities to engage with European Social Fund (ESF) funded, Prime Contractor, 3-year CYPF programmes in the region.

Come along to find out about the current position and delivery of Prime Contractor work in the region and explore options for a VCS consortium to enable the sector to support these contracts. www.gup.org.uk/primecontractor

Also, before this event, 10am-1pm at bayc, attend the inaugural meeting of the Children England Family Policy Network: find out about Children England's latest family policy and opportunities.

Info & Comms Training Resources

Download slides and extensive resources from recent G:XL training sessions on writing for the web, writing a good press release ('Get Noticed' training) and taking great photos.

Look out for 2012 events and send us suggestions www.gup.org.uk/category/gxl/improve-information-and-communication

Join G:up! - It's completely **FREE**

G:up is an alliance of West Midlands children, young people and families', voluntary and community sector (CYPF VCS) organisations, networks, and partners.

Our members include:

- VCS organisations: our membership is open to VCS organisations and partnerships
- Infrastructure support organisations (ISOs) that support the West Midlands VCS e.g. by providing information, advice, training or helping with networking, partnerships, advocacy and campaigning
- Public sector and national partners that work with or are interested in G:up's work and agendas

All G:up members:

- **Receive automatic email Updates** packed with sector news, events and training, posted on our website and via online sector news feeds
- **Receive a login for our website**
- **Can post their training, events, news and comments on the website**
- **Have priority information about G:up events and training**

As a G:up member you will be:

- Better informed about what's happening in your sector
- More connected with organisations that can support and enhance how you deliver your services
- Part of a wider alliance that advocates on behalf of CYP and the VCS
- Able to access exclusive support, information and opportunities
- Able to promote your work, events or information to and via a wider network
- Able to participate in discussions about your sector, your needs and concerns
- Positioned to directly influence local, regional and national policy that affects the CYP sector in the West Midlands



Find out more about G:up, our vision and work on the G:up website:

www.gup.org.uk/about

To join G:up or for further information, email gup@bayc.org, phone **0121 460 5870** or download a membership form at: www.gup.org.uk/join. We look forward to hearing from you!