



Your Bi-Monthly Newsletter
from North Tyneside
Voluntary Organisations
Development Agency

September 2010 Issue 90



Last year's AGM at Wallsend Memorial Hall

In this edition:

Details of VODA's Conference Workshops	2
National News	3 - 5
VODA News	6 - 10
Local News	11 - 14
Spotlight On...	15
VODA Information	16

Focusing on the Future VODA's AGM and Conference

VODA's Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Conference will take place on **Thursday 21 October 2010** at The Shiremoor Centre between 10am and 2.30pm.

The AGM will see official **VODA** business take place, including a presentation of our Annual Report for 2009/10 and the launch of our new five-year strategic plan. A conference called Focusing on the Future follows, which will examine what lies ahead for the voluntary and community sector. There will be presentations from guest speakers including John Harris, Policy Development Manager at NAVCA, who will discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the sector and Ian Dodds from Government Office North East. There will also be an opportunity to take part in a series of workshops on topical subjects (see page 2 for details). **For more information and to book your place contact VODA on 0191 200 8555.**

VODA's Annual Report will be available from the date of the AGM. You can download a version from www.voda.org.uk or request a hard copy by contacting us on 0191 200 8555 or email admin@voda.org.uk.

Support

Inform

Represent

Focusing on the future: Conference Workshops

Our conference will include workshops on the following topics:

- ▶ **The future of volunteering:** including information about the new National Citizen Service (see page 4), changes to volunteering programmes under the new government and the changing culture for volunteers in the Big Society
- ▶ **The future of VCS funding:** outlining the main funding cuts the sector is facing, and new opportunities including the Big Society Bank and partnership work
- ▶ **The future of health services:** including information about changes to commissioning and the new HealthWatch organisations
- ▶ **The future of public service delivery/partnership working:** including information about changes to commissioning processes and examples of VCS groups successfully delivering public services
- ▶ **The future of local decision making:** information about local decision-making and how the sector can get (or remain) involved in it
- ▶ **The future of employment and skills:** including information on the new Work Programme and the Skills Funding Agency

Book your place now by contacting VODA on 0191 200 8555.

North Tyneside Council: Working with the VCS



North Tyneside Council

The Big Society will be part of the focus of North Tyneside Council's next 'Working with the Community and Voluntary Sector' event on **Friday 10 September**. Taking place at Saville Exchange, North Shields between 10am and 12noon, the event will look at what the Big Society means for the sector and ways groups and organisations can develop their staff and volunteers in order to meet the new challenges.

VODA's Chief Executive, Julie Duell will be one of the guest speakers, discussing the changing environment for the sector in terms of the coalition government's plans and the Big Society agenda. There will also be the chance to take part in focus groups around this subject. Jeff Morgan, Training and Development Officer for North Tyneside Council, will discuss innovative ways to develop staff and volunteers in a time of change, and lead table top discussions on this topic.

For more information or to book your place ▶ ▶ ▶ contact Felicity Shoesmith on 0191 643 7071 or email felicity.shoesmith@northtyneside.gov.uk.

Insurance for social and charitable organisations:

The event will also have an officer from North Tyneside Council present to offer organisations the opportunity to discuss their insurance needs and to obtain the information from the Council's own insurers, Zurich Municipal. Alternatively, for further information on insurance, contact Tracy Robinson at North Tyneside Council on 0191 643 5869 or email tracy.robinson@northtyneside.gov.uk

National news and events: Managing the cuts

In recent months, the new coalition government has announced significant cuts to most departments' budgets, and all local authorities are making cuts to public services and grant programmes. As well as the cuts, there are many other changes happening which affect the sector, such as a bigger emphasis on partnership working and an expectation that VCS organisations will become more involved in public service development. We have this summarised below:

- ▶ **Arguing the case for funding for local groups:** Many volunteer-led charities, organisations and community groups deliver services that fit well with the vision of the Big Society. These organisations need to be able to show evidence of what they do and prove that they provide a quality service. See page 8 for an article on the quality assurance system, PQASSO.
- ▶ **Continue partnership working with statutory bodies:** By this, we mean the voluntary and community sector working closely with North Tyneside Council and retaining the ability to influence at a strategic level. As a sector, we have to acknowledge the need for cuts but also protect voluntary sector interests. See page 2 for details of the next Working with the VCS event.
- ▶ **Defend the right of local groups to campaign against cuts:** NAVCA has produced guidance to challenging cuts based on the Compact (the agreement between the government and the voluntary and community sector), public law and equalities duties. This can be downloaded from NAVCA's website: www.navca.org.uk.
- ▶ **The nature of funding is changing:** Proposed changes to the use of Big Lottery Funding and the criteria that other trusts and grant-makers fund all have implications for voluntary and community groups. Come along to **VODA's Funding Fair on Thursday 14 October 2010** (see Funding Update) to speak to some of the region's funders and our own Funding and Development Advisors.
- ▶ **New contracting opportunities:** Voluntary organisations and community groups must respond to new opportunities, such as those which appear in the Coalition Programme (download from <http://programmeforgovernment.hmg.gov.uk>). If contracts are on offer, the sector must improve its tendering skills and learn more about commissioning and procurement procedures. **VODA** has produced a Procurement Factfile, which can be downloaded from our website or requested by contacting us on 0191 200 8563. We are also running a workshop on this topic as part of our AGM and conference - see page 2 for details.

Further Reading ▶ ▶ ▶ NAVCA Website: www.navca.org.uk

▶ NCVO Website: www.ncvo-vol.org.uk ▶ **VODA** Website: www.voda.org.uk

National Citizen Service

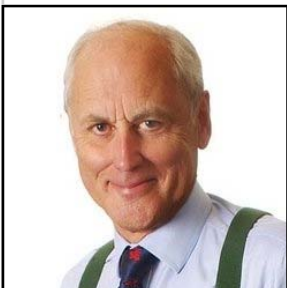
Amongst a number of new announcements from the coalition government is details of the new National Citizen's Service (NCS). This is a scheme through which charities, voluntary groups and businesses will organise volunteering placements and social action projects for 16 year olds.

VODA attended an information event in Sheffield on 9 August 2010 in order to find out more about how the scheme will work and how community organisations can bid for the work. The main points to note were as follows:

- ▶ It is a personal and social development programme for young people aged 16 years, whereby they will be provided with volunteering opportunities and helped to develop their own 'social action projects'
- ▶ Pilots will be run in the summer of 2011 to test the programme, and the government wishes to roll it out across the country in subsequent years
- ▶ The government wants different organisations from across the country to form partnerships to bid to deliver the programme, and is looking for a mixture of different kinds of organisations, not just the voluntary sector or the private sector
- ▶ Expressions of Interest for running one of the pilots had to be submitted by 25 August, but organisations who have not been able to bid will still be able to be involved in the future when the main programme is launched
- ▶ Exact amounts of funding for the programme are not confirmed (and will not be confirmed until after the Spending Review in October), but the government has stated that they will not be fully funding it – they expect organisations who bid to secure some of the funding from elsewhere

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Robin Fry at **VODA** on 0191 200 8568 or email robin.fry@voda.org.uk

Taskforce to cut red tape for charities



The Office for Civil Society has launched the Big Society Deregulation Taskforce to examine how red tape and bureaucracy can be reduced for charities and community organisations. At a time when voluntary and community groups are struggling with their income and funding, the aim is to reduce the burden of regulation and administration, making it easier for them to set up and be managed.

The taskforce will be led by Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots (pictured), president of NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations). NCVO is currently gathering evidence from groups as to what they find frustrating and time consuming in terms of administration. You can contribute to the discussion via NCVO.

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Visit www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

National and Sector News Snippets

▶ **Office for Civil Society cuts £11million from the sector**

The Office for Civil Society will cut £11million from its 2010/11 budget by reducing its funding of Capacitybuilders, the Commission for the Compact and the youth volunteering charity v. These cuts will have a direct impact on the funding and services that these organisations deliver.

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ www.thirdsector.co.uk/news or www.voda.org.uk

▶ **Impact of Charity Commission online strategy**

The Charity Commission is seeking views on the potential impact of aiming to have all of its services online by 2012. The Commission already offers a number of online services for trustees, such as being able to view and update their charity's information - including complete annual returns or update forms, upload annual accounts and change trustee details. In order to find out people's views on this subject, the Commission is running a consultation until **Friday 29 October**.

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ www.charity-commission.gov.uk

▶ **Universities Minister urges disappointed students to try volunteering**

Universities Minister David Willets has suggested that students who fail to get on a degree course this year should take up volunteering to enhance their CVs. This could see an increase in numbers of potential volunteers looking for opportunities.

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ www.guardian.co.uk/education or **VODA's** Volunteer Centre on 0191 200 8568

▶ **Adult rate for minimum wage starts at 21**

The qualifying age for the adult minimum wage drops to 21 (from 22) as of 1 October 2010. The rate will increase from £5.80 to £5.93 an hour. Other changes will see the Youth Development Rate (18-20 year olds) rise from £4.83 to £4.92 an hour and the minimum wage for 16-17 year olds will increase from £3.57 to £3.64 an hour.

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ www.hmrc.gov.uk/nmw

▶ **Welfare to Work Conference 2010**

With reports and announcements on welfare reform being made on a daily basis from the government, this conference will focus on 'getting Britain working towards a single Work Programme'. The event takes place on Thursday 4 November in London.

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ www.govnet.co.uk/welfare/programme.html

VCS Employability Network: VODA's next Employability Network meeting will explore the Work Programme, with speakers from 3SC, Working Links and Job Centre Plus. The Network is aimed at any third sector organisations who are involved in the delivery of the employability agenda. The meeting takes place on **Friday 17 September**, 1pm to 3pm at The Shiremoor Centre.

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ contact Susan Postlethwaite on 0191 200 8561 or email susan.postlethwaite@voda.org.uk

VODA News:

Book your place on VODA's training now!

VODA's autumn training programme gets underway this month with a range of free and low-cost courses aimed at the voluntary and community sector. A couple of our courses are already fully booked, so don't miss out on your opportunity - book today!

Courses In September

- ▶ **Introduction to Involving Volunteers: Mondays 13 & 20 September**
Get your organisation 'volunteer-ready' with policies, roles and supervision (one-day course split over two evening sessions, 5.30pm to 8.30pm, free)
- ▶ **Running a Community Group: Wednesday 15 September**
Roles, responsibilities and best practice for being on a management committee (full-day course, 9.30am to 3.30pm, £15 to £85*)
- ▶ **Managing Successful Events: Thursday 23 September**
Practical tips for successful events, including planning, budgeting and marketing (full-day course, 9.30am to 3.30pm, £15 to £85*)

Courses In October

- ▶ **What's New in Office 2007: Tuesday 5 October**
A practical overview of the applications and changes to Office 2007 (full-day course, 9.30am to 3.30pm, £15 to £85*)
- ▶ **Volunteers and the Law: Tuesday 5 October**
Explore legal issues around volunteering, including CRB checks and insurance (full-day course, 9.30am to 3.30pm, free)
- ▶ **Introduction to Excel: Wednesday 13 October**
A practical course for those wishing to gain an understanding of this useful software (full-day course, 9.30am to 3.30pm, £15 to £85*)
- ▶ **First Steps to Fundraising: Wednesday 20 October**
How to plan and describe your project and what makes a good application (full-day course, 9.30am to 3.30pm, £15 to £85*)
- ▶ **Interview Skills: Thursday 28 October**
The necessary tools to conduct an interview and ensure you get the right person (half-day course, 9.30am to 12.30pm, free)

Full details and price breakdowns can be found on the Training Section of www.voda.org.uk. *Cost is based on the length of the course and the size and location of your organisation. Terms and conditions apply.

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ You can book your place online by visiting www.voda.org.uk or telephone 0191 200 8555

STOP PRESS! Details of new human resource training from Acas have just been announced - for more information visit www.voda.org.uk or telephone 0191 200 8555.

VODA Trustee Network Meeting: Recruiting new Trustees to your organisation



LOTTERY FUNDED

VODA's Trustee Network meetings provide an opportunity for Trustees and management committee members to come together, share knowledge and experiences and focus on a topical subject each month. The next meeting takes place at 5.30pm on **Tuesday 21 September** at The Shiremoor Centre.

The results of a recent survey conducted by **VODA** showed that groups are struggling to recruit new people to join their management committees or board of trustees. This Trustee Network meeting will address this issue and explore a range of ways to help your organisation bring new people on board, such as:

- ▶ Identifying skills gaps and the ideal role
- ▶ Attracting people and promoting the vacancy
- ▶ Planning the recruitment process

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Contact Katie Knowles on 0191 200 8563 or email katie.knowles@voda.org.uk to book your place

Annual Trustees' Week

The first national Annual Trustees' Week is being held from 25 to 31 October 2010. It is being led by the Charity Commission to celebrate the work of Trustees and raise the profile of the work they do in organisations across the country. Look out for details of a special event **VODA** will be holding during this week, coming soon.

VODA Finance Forum: Pension reform and changes that may affect you



LOTTERY FUNDED

Aimed at treasurers and people involved in managing the finances of groups and organisations, **VODA's** next Finance Forum meeting is focusing on the pension reform and changes that may affect your organisation. The meeting takes place on **Tuesday 28 September**, from 5.30pm to 7pm at the Shiremoor Centre.

If you are an employer, this topic is something you will need to be considering over the next 12 months, as you will be required to automatically enroll all employees into a qualifying work place pension in 2012. Come along to this meeting to hear more and discuss the key points and how they will affect voluntary and community organisations.

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Contact Katie Knowles on 0191 200 8563 or email katie.knowles@voda.org.uk to book your place.

Is your organisation delivering a quality service?



In this economic climate, it is increasingly important for organisations to be able to show that they are providing a **quality** service. We know that voluntary and community groups across North Tyneside deliver a range of services to local people, such as advice, mentoring, counselling, activities and clubs.

These services must be of a high quality, both to meet the needs of local people, and also to demonstrate to funders, partners and other stakeholders that the organisation is proving its worth. One system that can help you to ensure you are delivering a high-quality service is PQASSO.

What is PQASSO? PQASSO stands for Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations. It is a tool, specially designed for the voluntary and community sector, which is broken down into 12 quality areas such as governance, money, staff, training and management. By working through each of these areas, organisations can identify where they are working well and where they need to improve in order to maintain quality services.

Case Study



One local organisation that has recently been working through PQASSO is the Learning Disabilities Federation in Wallsend. They decided to implement the system to help strengthen their internal systems and to ensure they continued to develop services to meet the needs of their clients. Talking about their experiences with PQASSO, Chief Officer Annette McGlade said "Implementing PQASSO in our organisation has been of great benefit. It has helped us to take a systematic look at the way we do things, and has helped us make decisions about where we need to improve. We have been able to focus on important quality issues and standards and build further on our strengths."

PQASSO is suitable for many organisations of different sizes and structures.

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Katie Knowles at **VODA** on 0191 200 8563 or email katie.knowles@voda.org.uk

VODA's Recession Survey

We would like to thank all those groups that participated in the **VODA/TWIC** Recession Survey. It has provided us with a lot of valuable information on how the recession has affected North Tyneside groups and what we can do to help. Every group that returned their survey was entered in to a free prize draw for a £50 M&S Gift Card. We are pleased to announce the draw has been won by the Linskill Centre.

News and events from Pentagon Partnership

Enterprising Charities Events

These events aim to help Tyne and Wear's third sector consider social enterprises and trading as a sustainable way to generate unrestricted income. Interested organisations will be referred to work with Pentagon's partners, Sustainable Enterprise Strategies (SES), who will help develop enterprise ideas. The events will feature:



- ▶ An introduction to social enterprise and trading
- ▶ Information about the legal intricacies of developing enterprise - when and why to establish a trading arm, and legal and tax implications of trading for income
- ▶ An outline of the free support on offer from SES to help you develop your enterprise ideas

The next events take place on:

- ▶ **Tuesday 21 September**, 9.30am to 12.30pm at The Dryden Centre, Gateshead
- ▶ **Tuesday 2 November**, 9.30am to 12.30pm at Quadrus, Boldon

Business Plus: The Equalities Act and the third sector

Business Plus events are designed to share information, initiate partnerships and raise the business skills of the sector, with a view to encouraging the collaborative delivery of public service contracts. The next event will be delivered in partnership with Equality North East and Sintons LLP. It will explore how the Equalities Act, which comes in to force on 1 October 2010, might affect your organisations as an employer, a learning provider or a deliverer of public services. The event takes place on:

- ▶ **Thursday 14 October**, 12noon to 2pm at the Tansy Centre, Sunderland

For more information and to book your place on any of these events

▶ ▶ ▶ Jon Goodwin on 0191 200 8516, email info@pentagonpartnership.org.uk or visit www.pentagonpartnership.org.uk

Places for Everyone Workshops

Is your organisation thinking about a building project or refurbishing a premises? If so, you may be interested in the Places for Everyone programme. Designed to help third sector organisations explore their capital development plans, the programme offers a range of support options, including workshops, one-to-one support, toolkits and access to specialist expertise for a small fee of £50+VAT

Introduction to the Capital Development Process workshops are taking place on:

- ▶ **Tuesday 12 October**, 10am to 4.30pm at Hirst Welfare, Alexander Rd, Ashington
- ▶ **Thursday 25 November**, 10am to 4.30pm at The Trinity Centre, Middlesbrough

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Contact PNE on 0191 261 6009 or email development@pne.org

News from VODA's Volunteer Centre: Lights, Camera, European Action



VODA has been successful in securing funding to host an international film and animation training programme during the last week of October.

'Lights, Camera, European Action' will bring together 21 youth leaders from seven partner organisations for a five-day training course located in North Tyneside. The course will use a variety of informal learning methods to provide youth leaders with the skills and knowledge to support disadvantaged young people to create films and animations about issues important to them.

During the training, course participants will find out about national award-winning film projects delivered by local disadvantaged young people. They will also have the opportunity to explore the findings of VODA's recent research project investigating the impact of youth-led film projects on improving young people's skills and tackling important issues.

Youth-leaders will then work with disadvantaged young people in their own countries to develop a series of short films and animations exploring a common issue. These films will be hosted on VODA's dedicated media showcase website www.youthvision.org.uk (website currently in development). Participating countries for this project are Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Lithuania, Italy, and Portugal.

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Contact Robin Fry on 0191 200 8568 or email robin.fry@voda.org.uk

News from North Tyneside LINK



North Tyneside LINK (Local Involvement Network) is a network of people, groups and organisations that work to improve health and adult social care services for everyone in North Tyneside. It does this by giving its members a stronger voice on the issues that are important to them and the communities of the borough.

Some of the projects LINK is currently involved in are:

- ▶ The quality of care on certain wards of North Tyneside General Hospital
- ▶ The implementation of the National Dementia Strategy
- ▶ Involving local people and groups in the refresh of North Tyneside's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), an important document that influences health and well-being planning in the borough

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ If you are interested in improving health and social care services, find out more at www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk or contact the LINK

Local news, events and training

North Tyneside Together



North Tyneside Strategic Partnership

You may have heard in the news about the public, private and voluntary sectors finding new ways to work together, in partnership with residents. This is happening across the country as areas respond to the challenges posed by the national economic situation. North Tyneside Strategic Partnership (NTSP) has examined how this approach could be adopted here and as a first step is focusing on how it can reduce the harm caused by alcohol and drugs in the borough.

The project is called 'North Tyneside Together' and is closely linked to NTSP's Sustainable Community Strategy. NTSP chose the alcohol and drug theme because of the impact these have on the lives of residents, visitors, the reputation of the area and the cost to public services:

- ▶ The borough is the eighth highest 'binge drinking' area in England
- ▶ 47% of crime and 57% of domestic violence is alcohol-related
- ▶ The estimated cost of alcohol misuse in the borough is £99m-£142m
- ▶ 16% of residents think 'people being drunk or rowdy in public spaces' is a problem
- ▶ 11% of residents think 'people using or dealing drugs is a big issue'
- ▶ We have around 1,000 problem drug users
- ▶ Acquisitive crime (such as shoplifting) by drug-using offenders is estimated to cost the borough £9million per year

Detailed information is being gathered from partners, which will inform how the project develops its ideas to focus efforts, improve results for residents and reduce costs. A partnership event about North Tyneside Together is being held in October with representatives from a wide range of organisations and sectors, including the voluntary and community sector.

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Visit the NTSP website at www.ntsp-online.org.uk or telephone 0191 643 5621

Tyneside Rape Crisis Centre AGM

The Tyneside Rape Crisis Centre will be holding its AGM (Annual General Meeting) on **Tuesday 28 September** at Central Square Building, Forth Street, Newcastle upon Tyne between 3.30pm and 6pm.

The meeting will see guest speaker Laura McIntrye, from the Cyrenian Gap Project, lead a discussion entitled The Reality of the Sex Industry in Tyneside. Anyone interested in attending should book their place by Monday 20 September.

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Telephone 0191 222 0272 or email enquiries@tynesidercc.org.uk

North Tyneside Council Takes Pride



At the recent Northern Pride Festival the council had a market stall to promote its services, meet as many LGB and T residents as

possible and to engage with those who may be interested in working with the council in future.

Pride is an annual event and has grown over the years. Estimates were that 10,000 people attended this year's event, with around 900 being from North Tyneside. While it is targeted at the LGB and T communities, it is open to anyone to attend and is a family festival with music, entertainment and a carnival atmosphere. Over 50 organisations were represented at Pride, including other local councils, the fire service, police, housing associations, trade unions and health agencies.

Do you live in North Tyneside, identify as LGB or T and would like to work with the council in future? If so, please contact Angela Melvin on 0191 643 5608 or email equalities@northtyneside.gov.uk

Free 'Young people and money' training in North Shields

Aimed at staff and volunteers who work with young people (aged 16 to 24) who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), this training will equip frontline workers with the skills and knowledge to support young people in becoming financially capable. The training takes place on **Thursday 30 September** at YMCA North Tyneside between 9.30am and 4.30pm.

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Telephone 0207 8597 2900 or visit www.yyam.org

New Prospects open day and AGM

Local charity New Prospects, which offers support and help to people with learning disabilities, is holding an open day at the Shiremoor Library on **Thursday 23 September**. Running from 10am to 3.30pm, the event is an opportunity to find out what New Prospects can offer in terms of support and volunteering opportunities. People who are looking for work are also invited to come along and talk to partners who might be able to help with benefit advice and pre-employment training.

New Prospect Association's AGM will be take place on **Wednesday 15 September** at the Linkskill Centre, North Shields. The afternoon will involve all of the people who use the Association's services and will culminate with a performance by the Learning Disabilities Federation choir. This will be followed by a buffet tea and the formal AGM, which commences at 6pm. **For more information or to book your place** ▶ ▶ ▶ Telephone 0191 251 7737 or visit www.newprospects.org.uk.

New Horizons: Developing enterprising organisations

The 2010 Community Alliance Conference takes place on **Friday 22 October** at The Durham Centre, Belmont Industrial Estate, Durham.

One of the biggest current concerns for community organisations is how to fund the future. Organisations used to rely on grants, earned income from room hire and their own fundraising. Now contracts, commissions, trading and loans are all being considered. As a result, many organisations are looking in detail at how to utilise their experience, their building and their services to create income for their work.

This one-day conference looks at how to create organisations that take an enterprising approach in developing sound financial futures for their work. There will also be an opportunity to enter Bear's Lair - a Dragon's Den-style session - to present enterprise ideas and potentially win a tailored package of support.

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Telephone Susan Heads on 01670 518150, email s.heads@dta.org.uk or download a booking form from **VODA's** website.

101 Ways to... Tell your story, have a voice, make a case, engage your community

The Community Alliance are also holding this roadshow event aimed at organisations wishing to tell their story and promote their services. Taking place on **Wednesday 29 September**, 10am to 2pm at the Pioneering Care Partnership in Newton Aycliffe, the event looks at different ways that community groups can reach new people, publicise events, attract attention and promote their work. Places are limited and only cost £10 (free for members of bassac, Community Matters and DTA).

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Telephone Susan Heads on 01670 518150, email s.heads@dta.org.uk or download a booking form from **VODA's** website.

Social Enterprise and Employment (SEED) Project

The SEED Project is an Action for Blind People initiative set up to match blind and partially sighted people to social enterprises for paid placements throughout the North East. The Project provides six-month paid trainee placements and shorter unpaid work placements to visually impaired people within social enterprises. Both trainees and enterprises will be supported by the SEED team throughout the placement, including the loan of any adaptive equipment or support creating development plans.

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Email seed@actionforblindpeople.org.uk, telephone 0113 386 2800, visit www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk/seed-project.html

Local News Snippets

North Tyneside Friends of the Earth Events

On **Tuesday 28 September**, senior lecturer in environmental management from Northumbria University, Dr Bruce Carlisle will share his personal experience and research entitled *The Tropical Rainforest: its value, loss and the future*. On Tuesday 28 October, an Environmental Film Night will see a screening of *The End Of The Line*, a documentary revealing the impact of overfishing on our oceans. Both events take place at 7.30pm at The Trojan Rooms, Whitley Bay. **For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Telephone 0191 257 8000 or email northtynesidefoe@aol.com**

MEA House: Offices to let to charities in Newcastle upon Tyne

MEA House, in the centre of Newcastle upon Tyne, currently has four offices to let (from 489 sq ft). The building was created by the MEA Trust for exclusive use by charities. It provides good quality city centre office accommodation with affordable rents. The building is fully accessible and there is a large public car park adjacent. **For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Contact Lauren Young on 0191 232 6291, email lauren.young@storeys-ssp.co.uk or visit ww.meahouse.org.uk**

North Tyneside Rethink Group

This is a local support group for mental health users and carers who come together, share experiences and help people recover a better quality of life. The group meets every Thursday at The Linskill Centre in North Shields at 5pm.

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Telephone Darren on 07540 264515

North Tyneside Cafe serves up new opportunities

A new cafe in North Tyneside won't just offer food and drink to the community - it will also offer valuable training and employment opportunities. MHC (Mental Health Care) Social Enterprises, which provides training and employment to people with mental health problems and physical difficulties, has been awarded the contract to run the cafe in the John Willie Sams Centre in Dudley. The organisation will be employing four people, as well as offering a number of training and volunteering opportunities in administrative and catering roles. The cafe will open on **Monday 4 October 2010**.

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Suzanne Devine on 0191 549 6500

Tynemouth Mencap Charity Halloween Disco

Tynemouth Mencap are holding a Happy Halloween charity disco on **Thursday 28 October** between 7pm and 11pm at King Street Club, North Shields. Tickets cost £5, including buffet. **For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Learning Disabilities Federation on 0191 200 1100 or Kash on 0191 262 7922 or Brian on 0191 257 9319**

Becoming Visible: British Sign Language (BSL) Courses

Becoming Visible are running a range of BSL courses, beginning in September, so you must be quick to book. **For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Telephone 0191 233 9914 or visit www.becomingvisible.co.uk**

Spotlight On: Bertram Grange Community Centre



In February, a Shiremoor community centre with a 53-year history was facing closure, but a call to **VODA** has helped secure their survival and a glowing future.

Since 1957, the Bertram Grange Community Centre has proudly served the residents of Shiremoor and the surrounding area, but the recession and mounting bills had hit the group hard.

Meryl Southall, volunteer and Secretary for the Centre, said: "With the recession

and everything else our finances were just going down and down. The insurance was due, it was £1,800, and that would have left us with only £400 in the bank. I was so close to calling a meeting and saying 'that's it we're bankrupt'. The overheads, the electricity, the gas...we had to get help from somewhere."

That help came in the shape of **VODA**, and Funding Advisor Sue Reed, who helped the group prepare funding bids as well as contacting grant providers directly. The end result was three separate grants of £500 each from the RW Mann Trust, Rothley Trust and Sir James Knott Trust funds. With help from **VODA**, Bertram Grange have also re-written their constitution, sent members on Child Protection training courses and developed their financial planning skills.

Recently, the group also secured a further £1,659 funding from Grassroots Grants, which has been used to run a range of after school and school holiday activities and to support a gardening project. The Centre now provides activities from children's discos to a bingo and supper club and sees residents come from Shiremoor, Moorside, Wallsend and North Shields. The support of new local volunteers (in many cases, the children and grandchildren of those who first opened the Centre over 50 years ago) combined with these new activities will help to secure the Centre's long-term survival.

VODA's Funding Advisor Sue Reed said: "Places like Bertram Grange are so important to the communities they serve and here at **VODA**, we were delighted to be able to help such a long-running institution. We would urge anyone in a similar position to get in contact with us." Meryl continued, "We wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for **VODA**. I feel now we can go from strength to strength because of the help they have given."

For more information ▶ ▶ ▶ Contact Meryl Southall at Bertram Grange on 0191 251 1263. To find out how **VODA** can help you contact us on 0191 200 8555 or visit our website at www.voda.org.uk

Useful Information

VODA News

VODA News is the bi-monthly Newsletter from North Tyneside **VODA**. Voluntary organisations can photocopy or reproduce articles from **VODA News** as long as they acknowledge North Tyneside **VODA** as the source.

The information in **VODA News** is, at far as we know, correct at the time of going to print, However, North Tyneside **VODA** can take no responsibility for any changes that occur and cannot guarantee the quality of information or services provided by others.

Alternative Formats

Please contact us if you require this newsletter in a different format. An electronic version is also available on our website at www.voda.org.uk.

Membership of VODA

There are a number of benefits to becoming a member of North Tyneside **VODA**. To find out more, visit the About Us section of our website www.voda.org.uk or telephone **VODA** on 0191 200 8555 to join.

Insert Service

VODA is a community newsletter that has a current circulation of 750. We offer a low-cost insert service as a way of groups and organisations circulating leaflets, flyers or posters. The costs are as follows: **VODA Members: £30**
Voluntary and Community Groups: £45
Statutory Organisations: £75
For more information or to book this service telephone 0191 200 8555. Please note, inserts are independent publications, **VODA** does not endorse any specific services advertised.

Next Issue of VODA News

Issue 91: November 2010.
Deadline for articles = 20 October 2010
Deadline for inserts = 27 October 2010

VODA Volunteers

- ▶ John Kirk
- ▶ Rachel Forde
- ▶ Daniel Fawcus
- ▶ Germelina Smith
- ▶ Faye Cording
- ▶ Caroline Wood

Thank you to all of our regular volunteers.



VODA Contact Details

Address

The Shiremoor Centre,
Earsdon Road, Shiremoor,
NE27 OHJ

Telephone: 0191 200 8555

Fax: 0191 200 8556

Email: admin@voda.org.uk

Website: www.voda.org.uk

Charity Number:

1075060

Company Number:

3703221

A full list of **VODA** staff and their contact details can be found at www.voda.org.uk