

# National Coalition for Independent Action

*It's about power, stupid!*

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## Not only what you do, but the way that you do it.....

A hot summer hello from the Coalition. It's odd, sometimes uncanny, the way themes emerge from the scan of news that gets distilled into this newsletter. A strong one this time is *process* - the ways things are done, what effect these ways have on people and services, and what this says about your values and your ideology. If your view of the world is one that is participative, libertarian, inclusive, you are likely to choose ways of working that echo such aspirations. If your view of the world is top-down, elitist, standardised, then you'll go for a different mix. We've had a lot of the latter for so many, many years that we need to remind ourselves that other ways are possible - and will most probably get a better result.

And don't forget, that we're busy talking to people about how to create a process, and approach to management, which allows us to keep our souls. So if you want to join the chorus, contact us on [indyaction@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:indyaction@yahoo.co.uk)

## The Liberal Republic – new publication from Demos

Much of this debate is about power, so we start with this. The 'think-tank' Demos has published a tract - a kind of manifesto - taking us back to the ideas behind liberal republicanism. Haven't digested it yet, but the report is interestingly divided into three sections dealing respectively with independence, capability and power - themes that are commonly rehearsed in these columns. Looks like a report to pay attention to. Here's a flavour:

"Power should be held at the lowest level possible. Instead of 'devolving' power, our assumption should be that power is vested in people. Only when there is good reason should power be consolidated upwards to communities, local agencies, national government or international bodies.

The 'good society' is not a perfect shape to be carved by the elite out of the crooked timber of humanity. It is created by independent, capable people charting their own course through life.

This is the foundation of the liberal republic, a society built on the idea that power originates and

belongs with people. Populated by powerful citizens, it is a cacophonous, unpredictable and messy place. A place where people have the freedom to live in the manner of their choosing and the power to determine their own version of the good life. A place where institutions exist to serve individuals, not the other way around. A place where equality is measured not by what you have, but by what you can do."

You can download the report at <http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/theliberalrepublic>

## **Critic of 'new managerialism' shut down**

Bad news that Simon Caulkin's Observer Management column has been chopped. In a blistering exit, Caulkin's final contribution offers an eloquent account of the school of management that we are trying to resist within the Coalition as it arrives in the voluntary and community sector.

For example: "Across both public and private sectors what readers experienced as "management" was pervasively problematic. It just wasn't what it said on the tin. .... The talk was empowerment, shared destiny, pulling together: the walk was increasing work intensity, tight performance management, risk offloaded on to the individual. The talk was flat organisations: the reality, centralisation and a yawning divide between other ranks, required to minimise their demands for the greater good, and a remote officer class whose rewards had to soar to motivate them to do their job."

"Shamefully, (this story) reached its explosive climax on the watch of a Labour government that, betraying its entire history, not only encouraged ethics-free market-led management principles in the private sector but imposed them wholesale on the public sector..... ..The emails of rage and despair from public-sector workers at what has been done to their profession have to be read to be believed. And still ministers don't get it. The elevation of the grisly Alan Sugar to "enterprise tsar" and the timorous, frozen-in-the-headlights approach to City reform in one sense are as risible as MPs' expenses - but they are also a terrifying denial of reality."

And his conclusion is that: "The management model that has run us for the past 30 years, like the discredited economic theories (rational expectations, efficient markets) to which it cringes, is bust, dead, finished - a mortal danger to us and the planet."

Quite. If you want to be reminded that you are not alone in being upset about all this, you can clock the whole article at <http://www.guardian.co.uk:80/business/2009/jun/14/final-management-column>

And if you want to say bon voyage to Simon then e-mail him at [simon.caulkin@observer.co.uk](mailto:simon.caulkin@observer.co.uk)

## **And more support for our stand from the private sector**

Never thought that I'd be quoting Ruth Lee, former head of policy at the Institute of Directors, for her positive contribution, but according to the Guardian (9/6/09) she thinks that:

"The public sector has been administered on a very basic, and misleading, interpretation of how the private sector operates. If you are a salesman, you have sales targets, but if you are in, for example, human resources or legal services, you have a job description and you do it, without targets. Education is not just a matter of turning sausages out of a sausage machine and hitting

targets - and that's where it's gone wrong."

Meanwhile, Advice UK's favourite consultant John Seddon, has discovered that what he has bemoaned in the public sector has arrived in the world of voluntary action. Writing in his own newsletter, Seddon says:

"Talking to someone working in a charity I learn that the regime is working to kill off voluntary services. Of course that is not their aim but it will be the consequence. The regime is offering money (the 'incentive') for voluntary agencies to merge and share 'back-office' services. The argument is this will create economies of scale. Instead of voluntary agencies receiving grants (the historic, local, practice), agencies will, in the future, respond to tenders.

We can confidently predict (given tendering in health, trading standards (Consumer Direct) and legal services, for just some examples) the tenders will not reflect demand. Tender provisions will standardise services thus less ability to respond to variety and all of the tension created, as well as the burdensome new reporting, and will cause volunteers to leave..... Voluntary agencies need to be local and flexible, they respond to demand and should be designed against demand. The new regime makes this very difficult."

## **To prove the point – CES's First PQASSO Quality Mark is 'awarded'**

For some time Charities Evaluation Service has intended to market its PQASSO quality system as a new 'externally-accredited' Quality Mark. Well the first, of no doubt many, hapless applicants has successfully satisfied the new set of inspectors and Blackburn-based Child Action Northwest has got the gong - described as 'the new 'kite mark' for the third sector'. The award was presented by MP for Blackburn Jack Straw, which itself involves a touch of irony as his own Ministry of Justice is right at the front in enslaving voluntary agencies to its discredited 'quality' systems, through the Legal Services Commission 'Quality Mark' (close relation).

And while we're on the LSC Quality Mark, apparently 65% of the advice agencies holding this testimonial - acknowledged even by the LSC as spurious - have signed up to pay out of their own pocket, the £1500 they will now be charged for their QM audit and personal enslavement. This is the kind of news that makes one lose the will to live. .... what is the matter with them??

## **More banging-on about the Compact**

If there's a *process* that *does* waste people's time it's the bloody Compact. As we've said before, why people think that officials working to Government targets are going to pay any attention to the lofty principles of the Compact beats us. The latest move over the last year or so has been to 'give the Compact more bite' by putting the whole thing on a statutory footing. Latest attempt here was a Parliamentary 10-minute rule bill back in May to give the Compact a "limited number of new powers and duties". Not too many though. Tom Levitt who tabled the motion was quoted as saying it would not be appropriate to give the commission stronger powers beyond naming and shaming because "having hard and fast rules is outside the spirit of the Compact". I thought it was the lack of spirit they were complaining about. The bill is 'unlikely to become Law'. You don't say!

Meanwhile the Commission for the Compact wants to measure yet again "awareness, knowledge, use and understanding of the Compact in central government departments and non-departmental

government bodies", and then plans to repeat the exercise every year. Tenders have been out for this important (not!) piece of work and results will be in by November apparently.

And Compact Voice, the NCVO-driven, voluntary sector bit of this partnership industry is going to do a survey of its own to "see how the Compact is working locally." This is consistent with its general approach - it has recently come out with: 'new methods of monitoring and evaluating local Compacts need to be found to combat widespread cynicism'. This is taken from a report called [\*Problems, Issue, Solution: the Future of the Compact\*](#). Quite how monitoring and evaluation can dispel cynicism is a new one on us, but according to Oliver Reichardt, head of Compact Voice, "The recommendations in this report will ensure the Compact delivers on its potential." Give us a break.

## Half of funders 'refuse to negotiate terms and conditions', according to Directory of Social Change

More evidence for the 'widespread cynicism' about the Compact, and suchlike, comes from a DSC report, 'Critical Conditions', which looked at how Government departments, trust and foundations approach their grant-giving. 61% of the Government departments and 45% of the trusts and foundations who responded said they did not negotiate terms and conditions with applicants.

The report concludes that: "Charities are being forced to compromise what they do to secure grants because funders refuse to negotiate terms. .... When funding terms and conditions are non-negotiable, applicants can be faced with a take-it-or-leave-it situation. If they refuse to sign the agreement, they could lose their funding. If they sign and ignore the terms, they may jeopardise their project, organisation and beneficiaries." You can get the report here: [Critical Conditions](#),

Meanwhile, here at the Coalition we're working on a template for a voluntary sector contract which groups can use as a basis to negotiate with funders. We'll tell you when it's ready and put it on our website. But if there's anyone out there who already takes this approach get in touch at [indyaction@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:indyaction@yahoo.co.uk)

## And lastly from the frontline

In commenting on the notes from the last Coalition Assembly meeting, one local activist complained:

"The notes include this: ... the concept of "good practice", as if there is only one way of being good... In fact the problem I think is that they all go on about 'best' practice, and this has spread everywhere. We have to be the best city, the best education, the best nation, the best company, the best everything. It drives me to distraction as people don't even realise what they are saying repeating this mantra for everything. The problem with this is that only one thing can be best, and it is that makes it seem there is only one way of being good.

But 'good' practice is OK I think, as that allows for lots of different ways of doing something that is good. I also often say 'good enough' is also OK, so I don't have a problem with 'good' practice. It is 'best' practice that we should outlaw."

Nicely put.

# Organising, mobilising and keeping-on-keeping-on

## New pitch for 'real democracy'

The 'Campaign for real Democracy' had its first meeting in June to kick off the initiative. According to its organisers: "We are a group of grassroots activists, based in London who are looking to develop a new campaign for 'real democracy'. What we mean by this is open, but three things we are agreed on are (1) the importance of local neighbourhood structures, (2) the use of consensus decision making and (3) the urgent priority that local democracy/neighbourhood defence groups join up to build a movement for democracy". The focus is thus on local democracy and as an alternative to representative democracy and it looks like the intention is to work with local campaigns to try and get them to see beyond single issues, join up and build more effective local democracy.

Their next meeting will be on Thursday **23rd July** (6.30-8.30) in the Guernica room at **Whitechapel Gallery** (right by Aldgate East tube) If you want to go or find out more email to [crdlondon@gmail.com](mailto:crdlondon@gmail.com) or ask James Holland at [james@dogmanet.org](mailto:james@dogmanet.org).

They are also planning a **London Democracy Picnic on August 15<sup>th</sup>** on Parliament Hill, Hampstead Heath. Check out the Picnic Facebook group:

<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=93829936659>

### Local radio sign-up

We're pleased to welcome our first community radio sign-up - Radio Felixstowe - a "community radio station somewhere in Suffolk". They e-mailed us to ask if they could join in. Why of course you can!

They plan to launch on FM 107.5 in September. Now you can check out their website at [www.felixstoweradio.co.uk](http://www.felixstoweradio.co.uk) If you're in the area and want to help them out (they're all volunteers) contact them online or phone 01394 282123 or 07746 474186.

Incidentally a local radio station in Virginia I came across, had an anarchist hour every thursday called 'daily dissent'. Any room for that in Felixstowe?

## Coalition Against Poverty appeals for cash

The London Coalition Against Poverty (LCAP) is working hard right now - campaigning for decent housing from Hackney council, for better treatment at the Job Centre and against welfare reform that will cut people off from the benefits they need. During June, the Coalition toured London boroughs exposing council's gate keeping of the homeless and distributing information about people's rights.

But all this costs money and they are appealing for dosh. If you're short of a good cause, here's one for you. Best, they say, is a standing order from your bank to London Coalition Against Poverty at the Coop bank: Sort Code: 089299: Account Number: 65273979 (tell then you've done it by

emailing: [londoncoalitionagainstopoverty@gmail.com](mailto:londoncoalitionagainstopoverty@gmail.com)). But if you want to make a one-off donation , send it to: LCAP Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1 7QX

If you want to know more about their activities or get involved yourself have a look at the website [www.lcap.org.uk](http://www.lcap.org.uk). For more information about the gate keeping campaign email [gatekeepingroadshow@gmail.com](mailto:gatekeepingroadshow@gmail.com) or call the office on 0207 247 6101.

## Manifesto planned on race equality

Equanomics UK and Operation Black Vote are putting together a manifesto to secure party political support for black communities and race equality from the next Government, whoever that may be. This work is being done with JUST West Yorkshire and the 1990 Trust. More information from Karen Chouhan at [kchouhan@instantemail.t-mobile.co.uk](mailto:kchouhan@instantemail.t-mobile.co.uk)

### Black Sisters celebrate 30 years!

Southall Black Sisters are this month celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their work - to highlight and challenge violence against women; empower them to gain more control over their lives; live without fear of violence; and assert their human rights to justice, equality and freedom. SBS has been at the forefront of challenging domestic and gender violence locally and nationally, and campaigning for the provision of support services to enable women and their children to escape violent relationships.

Go on, give them a pat on the back by emailing your congratulations to [info@southallblacksisters.co.uk](mailto:info@southallblacksisters.co.uk)

## Pressure mounts on Hazel Blears

All is not over for our Hazel. Having survived an attempt to deselect her in her Salford constituency, she is now to face an angry public. A Hazel Must Go! Campaign has been launched in Salford. A first public meeting has been called for Thursday **16th July**, 7pm at **Pendleton Bowling Club, 13 Eccles Old Road, Salford M6 7DE**. Up to date information on the campaign can be got from the Salford Star, the local community newspaper which has been broadcasting Hazel's shortcomings for some considerable time.....[www.salfordstar.com](http://www.salfordstar.com) or email: [info@salfordstar.com](mailto:info@salfordstar.com) or phone 07957 982960.

## Welfare Reform Bill opposition continues (just about...)

The shameful Welfare Reform Bill has passed through the House of Lords in its passage to Law. With unemployment in Britain passing the two million mark and steadily rising, the government is seemingly still clinging to a fantasy that they can boot everybody off benefits and into non-existent jobs and proposes a dismantling of the welfare system on a scale Margaret Thatcher would be proud of.

This is a multiple attack on the most vulnerable in society. Income Support will go - affecting amongst others, maternity and carers' allowances, and especially single parents. Mothers will face a fine - leading to prison - if they refuse to name the father of their child on the birth certificate, and up to

seven years for giving false information. Non-payment of child maintenance may lead to the seizure of passports and driving licenses. Drink and drug addicts will have to submit to testing and rehabilitation, and those who can't find jobs after a two year period will have to 'work for their benefits'. There will be sanctions for non-attendance at job centres and work-focused interviews for the over 60's. The list goes on. Inevitably immigrants, who, because of institutionalised racism, are the lowest paid and often the first to lose their job, will also be disproportionately affected.

The lack of any co-ordinated opposition to these plans is a mystery. Why haven't there been riots on the streets? The changes will completely redefine - and downgrade - our rights as citizens to social and financial support.

The provisions of this punitive plan will, if enacted, also deny full protection to women and children fleeing violence, and increases danger from ex-partners. Black Women's Rape Action Project and Women Against Rape [www.womenagainstrape.net](http://www.womenagainstrape.net) continue to protest and mobilise against these measures specifically and ask people to sign a statement condemning them. You can get a copy of the statement and signing form from [bwrap@dircon.co.uk](mailto:bwrap@dircon.co.uk) or [war@womenagainstrape.net](mailto:war@womenagainstrape.net) or phone 020 7482 2496.

## People and Planet in dash for cash

People and Planet, the UK student campaigning organisation, has got itself selected by the Co-op Bank to receive a donation. But how much it gets depends on how many of the bank's customers vote for it. The money - up to £100,000 is available - will be used for P&P's 'Inspire UK Activism' project. If you use the Co-op for your banking, insurance or investments, and you want to vote for P&P, go to <http://www.goodwithmoney.co.uk/you-vote-we-ll-donate/>.

<http://peopleandplanet.org>

## 'In defence of youth work' attracts the crowds

The roadshow of the Critically Chatting Collective has been gathering support from around the country. Recent workshops have had up to 90 people coming along and more are being demanded. A second London workshop will now take place on **20th July**, 11am-3pm at Goldsmiths College, New Cross, SE14, and there is talk of a national conference. More information from Dr. Kalbir Shukra at Goldsmiths College on 0207 919 7825 or email [k.shukra@gold.ac.uk](mailto:k.shukra@gold.ac.uk). You can have a look at the blog here: <http://indefenceofyouthwork.wordpress.com/>.

## Local authority grants budgets – is anyone doing it right?

Two years ago NAVCA published a study of 4 local authorities (Gloucester, Reading, Notts and Newcastle upon Tyne) which have sustained large grants budgets and have decided to keep grant funding as a key way to support local organisations and groups. They now want to find 4 more and are asking for suggestions for local councils who are "making intelligent use of grant funding as part of commissioning?" Does such a council exist?

If you've a suggestion to make then please contact Kevin Curley at NAVCA - [kevin.curley@navca.org.uk](mailto:kevin.curley@navca.org.uk) or phone 0114 278 6636

## **MPs expenses? Well, dispossess them!**

Squatters have taken over one of the houses owned by 'Mr and Mrs Expenses' - MP couple Anne and Alan Keen. Mrs Keen, a health minister recently admitted making an expense claim for private hospital treatment for a member of her staff. At the centre of their scandal was their double mortgage claim, where they illegally used Parliamentary expenses to pay interest on the mortgages of both their homes - one of which has now been occupied by outraged locals and activists.

The location formed the venue for a comedy night on 3<sup>rd</sup> July featuring Mark Thomas and others. The house is at 38 Brook Rd South, Brentford TW8 ONN and the squat can be contacted on 07549160296. For more information on the occupation, check at: <http://london.indymedia.org/articles/1688>

## **Community Reinvestment Now**

The need for alternatives to the banking system and the excesses of global capitalism is now greater than ever. Urban Forum has been looking at how the UK banking system can be 'reformed'. They say: "Frustrated by the lack of an obvious 'return' on the huge public investment in the banks, and a lack of vision and ambition over what our post-recession society might look like, we've developed some ambitious proposals under the banner of 'community reinvestment'. Our aim is to establish a new approach to financial services that places social objectives alongside the pursuit of profit and creates people-centred financial services fit for the 21st century."

Worth a look? - here it is: <http://www.urbanforum.org.uk/community-reinvestment/community-reinvestment-people-centred-finance-for-the-21st-century>

## **Threats to independence**

### **Independence on the rails**

In a stunning statement of the obvious, the Commission of the Compact has concluded that the recession could compromise the independence of voluntary organisations as they chase spiraling levels of government funding.

In a [discussion paper](#) considering the possible effects of the recession on the sector and the Compact, the commission warns that "increased competition for government funding may have a negative effect on the independence of third sector organisations".

The paper says: "One risk is that third sector organisations feel less comfortable challenging government, for fear they may be less likely to receive much-needed government funding." But the report's authors look on the bright side, for, they say, increased levels of unemployment could improve the implementation of the Compact "through the easier recruitment of high-calibre workers". Excuse me?

### **But don't worry - NCVO will look after us**

Looks like Stuart Etherington over at NCVO has been reading our newsletter and we are pleased to welcome him as a Coalition supporter. According to Stuart, writing in the latest issue of 'Engage: giving voice and support to civil society', he says: "we need to see a restoration of independence to



civil society institutions, that is the really new agenda, the challenge of the next ten years". You can catch the piece and Stuart's almost messianic pose, profiled beside Regent Canal - but only if you're an NCVO member (!) - here: <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/engage/index.asp?id=1731>

## The madness continues.....

### Ministry of Justice supports the Coalition on advice services damage

In recent times we have returned many times to the plight of independent advice services and our own work with AdviceUK is trying to whip up some defensive action. Now the damaging impact of the Government's Legal Aid reforms - one of the weapons in the assault on the sector - has been openly acknowledged in a review commissioned by the Ministry. The report - [The Study of Legal Advice at Local Level](#) - concludes that the reforms are forcing local organisations providing legal advice to reduce the quality of their services. It says advice agencies are being forced to 'cherry-pick' less complicated cases, hire inexperienced and cheaper members of staff and take less time over cases than they previously did. In other words, exactly what we said would happen when they announced these disastrous changes.

AdviceUK was unhappy with the recommendations however. Phil Jew, Heads of Campaigns here said: "The study clearly recognises what the issues are for local legal aid providers, which is positive," he said. "However, it simply concludes that more work needs to be done, when really the Government should be applying the brakes to any reforms that are proving damaging to the sector."

If you're affected by Legal Services Commission madness and want to push back, then get in touch with Penny Waterhouse or Frances Sullivan on [indyaction@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:indyaction@yahoo.co.uk)

#### Is it a grant or is it a contract?

This one from Kevin at NAVCA: a quote from Southampton Council's contract rules:

"The Rules do not cover grants which the Council may receive or make except where the grant is in the form of payment for a contract for services where the Council specifies the output or outcomes to be delivered".

It seems Southampton CC is insisting on competitive tendering for all contracts over £10k - or is that for grants?

So that's all fine and clear. Any offers to go to Southampton and help them?

### Bidding for contracts: Adapt or die, charities warned

Meanwhile the two-brains over at charity consulting firm Action Planning have concluded that 'Competition will increase as statutory funding shrinks' and that: 'Organisations that are uncomfortable with the idea of competing with other charities for contracts might not exist in 10 years' time.'

The comments were made at an ACEVO funding roadshow. "Winning contracts will involve winning them off your competitors," said Derek Smith of Action Planning. "If your organisation is one that doesn't like the idea of competition, it might not be around in 10 years." Voluntary organisations would need a more "private sector" approach, with increased emphasis on contract management, business planning and marketing. He said projects should be devised to fit funders' agendas. This view was supported by Janet Moore, third sector team leader at the Department for Children, Schools and Families who said her department needed to be confident that the projects it funded were "giving us what we want".

Well there we are then....

## **Six thousand sports clubs fear closure, says CCPR**

Sporting association umbrella body CCPR reckons that about 6,000 community sports clubs fear they could close in the next year because of the recession and "endless increases in regulation". The organisation issued its warning after publishing the results of a survey of clubs

"Sports clubs are in trouble," said Brigid Simmonds, chair of CCPR. "Unless we act, thousands could go under. That would be a tragic shame for their members and their communities. Simmonds said CCPR had been "fighting off endless increases in regulation" that had increased clubs' costs. "What we need now is a moratorium on any new regulations, laws and charges affecting clubs," she said. "We are already fighting off liquor licensing fees, drainage charges from multi million-pound water companies, a development tax and music licence fees.

The survey revealed that 40 per cent of clubs had experienced a fall in membership income and 60 per cent had suffered a decline in commercial revenue.

## **A4e investigated for 'New Deal' fraud**

Private sector predator A4e is being investigated for fraud allegedly committed at its Hull office in 2008. It is understood that at least two other recruitment companies have been probed by the DWP. The revelation comes weeks after A4e was earmarked for £100m of the next lot of contracts for the government's Flexible New Deal, in which private companies will be paid for each person they place in a job. It remains unclear why the DWP investigation has been going for 13 months, when A4e was bidding for major government contracts. One of A4e's consultants is David Blunkett, former work and pensions secretary (who has been paid around £30,000 a year by them). No doubt he'll get to the bottom of it.

Incidentally for those of you who are especially aereated by A4e there is a blogsite just for you: 'Watching A4e, Making Profit From The Poor'. You can find it here:

[www.freewebs.com/watchinga4e](http://www.freewebs.com/watchinga4e)

## **Reports and writings**

**The 'First Principle of Voluntary Action' doesn't apparently include a political perspective**

Last month we threatened to review Baring Foundation's latest offering to the 'independence debate'... Well we've now got Colin Rochester to do that and you can read the whole thing on our website by following this link <http://www.independentaction.net/firstprinciples>

His conclusion is that whilst the report "provides yet more evidence of the emasculation of voluntary action as an independent actor on the policy stage and a distinctive voice for social justice by Government..... it also reveals the limitations of the approach that underpins the (Baring) programme and its lack of urgency and intellectual vigour in addressing the issues."

Colin points out that " *The First Principle of Voluntary Action* rehearses the pressures wearing away at the independence of the sector in terms of the processes of policy implementation rather than their underlying causes." But, "At bottom, the attempt to answer the paper's own question 'What to do?' is of little value. There are two kinds of explanation for this inadequacy. On one level, the discussion is circumscribed by the search for technical solutions. The relationship between government and the voluntary sector is seen as something that is in need of adjustment rather than radical change....." and ..... "the essays show little understanding of the history of voluntary action and its relationship with the state. Too often, they seem to have adopted the view of the British Government that nothing of any importance happened before the 1990s. The lack of historical insight is accompanied by an absence of theory: we look in vain for the kinds of conceptual framework that could help us understand better what is going on and how best to respond to events. Until and unless we develop a new paradigm of this kind, we will be condemned to respond to deep-rooted problems with solutions which remain superficial. "

You can get the report itself here: <http://www.baringfoundation.org.uk/FirstPrincipleofVA.pdf> or a hard copy by e-mailing Valerie Cadoret at [Valerie.cadoret@uk.ing.com](mailto:Valerie.cadoret@uk.ing.com).

## More on crime, punishment and the voluntary sector

Two new reports from the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies. The first summarises a meeting held at the beginning of the year called: 'Partners or Prisoners? Voluntary sector independence in the world of commissioning and contestability'. Amongst others, the debate heard Tina Jenkins, Head of Third Sector and Strategy, Ministry of Justice, say that voluntary agencies bidding to be involved in criminal justice contracts and services "had to be comfortable with punishment as well as rehabilitation. It's up to them..." You can download the summary here [www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/partnersorprisoners.html](http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/partnersorprisoners.html)

The second report looks at voluntary sector attempts - and dilemmas - to address black young people's overrepresentation in the criminal justice system. Based on interviews in four cities in England, 'Policy, purpose and pragmatism' includes extensive first-hand accounts from representatives of voluntary and community organisations. It finds their ability to provide quality support for black young people affected by crime is undermined by contradictory governmental agendas and a constant competition for limited resources within a conservative funding environment. No surprises there then. You can get this one at: <http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/policypurposeandpragmatism.html>

Both reports are part of a wider initiative from the Centre looking at the role of the voluntary and community sector in this field. This will include a special issue of their magazine *Criminal Justice Matters* in September. If you want to know more get in touch with Richard Garside at [director@crimeandjustice.org.uk](mailto:director@crimeandjustice.org.uk).

## Campaigning is OK ... apparently it's official!

Don't know whether to file this one under mobilising (good) or lunacy (bad), so it's gone under 'reports'.... but the 13<sup>th</sup> July sees the launch of 'Campaigning is OK', "a guide to capacity building for advocacy and campaigning by community and voluntary groups....". This apparently builds on a series of regional events earlier this year.

Unfortunately the very mention of 'capacity building' puts us off (we have a t-shirt if you want to order one that emblazes 'I don't need my capacity built') and the fact that the launch event is to be held in the House of Commons, in partnership with 'Parliamentary Outreach' is hardly a cracking incentive to attend. The initiative also seems to be in the ownership of Novas Scarman, not known to be at the radical end of the sector's political perspectives. However, we are happy to be proved wrong. Maybe someone could hold their nose long enough to get through the meeting and let us have a report back... You can find out more from [Kellie.white@novasscarman.org](mailto:Kellie.white@novasscarman.org) or download the materials here: <http://static.novas.org/files/campaigningisok-456.pdf>

## About this Newsletter

This newsletter is the voice of the NCIA. Views expressed are not necessarily that of everyone involved with NCIA. We aim to issue newsletters regularly to keep you informed of what we and others are doing or saying.

## How Can You Participate?

Tell us your news, write articles, sound off with your opinions and feedback but - most important - find ways of taking your own practical action to defend and protect the independence of your work and aspirations.

Talk to us and others via the Coalition google group <http://groups.google.co.uk/group/ncia-discussions> or the Coalition email address - [indyaction@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:indyaction@yahoo.co.uk).

We are all volunteers here and we welcome more offers of help. If you'd like to help make this initiative prosper then please get in touch with us.

## Unsubscribe

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