

Voluntary and community sector organisations in Manchester.

To reply please contact:
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24th October 2011

Dear Voluntary and Community Sector,

Re: Infrastructure Support Service in Manchester

Following our recent updates regarding an enhanced infrastructure support service for Manchester, I am pleased to announce that agreement has been reached with our current infrastructure service provider to launch a new volunteer centre for Manchester.

In the coming months, Manchester Alliance for Community Care (MACC) will launch an interim volunteering service that will provide some basic brokerage services from a number of locations in the city and will begin working towards accreditation as a volunteer centre with Volunteering England.

The interim service has been designed by a task group comprising a number of volunteering focussed organisations and will be delivered in conjunction with a number of local volunteering agencies with a track record of providing volunteering services. Running alongside the interim service will be a series of consultation events aimed at capturing the feedback and thoughts of third sector organisations that will help shape the final service (to be launched April 2012).

In order to provide strategic support, a member of the steering group of Manchester Youth Volunteering Project (MYVP) will join the board of MACC and the resources of MYVP – which has recently taken the decision to close – have been donated to the new volunteering centre. MACC will shortly publish details of consultation events that will influence what the final service design for volunteering will look like.

We have also reached an agreement with MACC that they will undertake similar processes with regard to community engagement and an enhanced support service around commissioning. Between now and April 2012, MACC will design and consult on a new community engagement service and an enhanced support service for commissioning. As with volunteering, agencies with particular skills and expertise in these areas will work together to design an interim service and feedback will be sought through a series of consultation events.

These consultations will inform and shape the development of the services prior to their launch. In order to ensure that the sector has a permanent voice in the development of infrastructure service, work will also begin on the formation of a Third Sector Assembly. This group will provide a voice to the broader voluntary and community sector to address issues of common concern and consider the changing needs of the voluntary and community sector in Manchester. MACC will also lead the development of this assembly but membership will be open to the third sector in Manchester and a governance board will elect itself from that membership.

In order to make itself more accountable to a broader range of organisations, MACC will also review its current structure and governance. This will be part of a separate process that MACC will release more details for directly.

Manchester City Council remains committed to providing a support service to the third sector that is responsive and relevant to the challenges we currently face. We are particularly grateful to those who have given their time and effort to shape the process so far and look forward to continuing to develop this most important service.

Yours sincerely

Steve Higgins
Third Sector Team