



Manchester's first Voluntary Sector Assembly

The first Voluntary Sector Assembly event was held in February 2013 and was chaired by Prof John Diamond from Edgehill University. The focus was on the perceived threat to independence from public sector policy around 'welfare reform/cuts' and the outsourcing of the welfare state to the private and voluntary and community sector.

The Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Assembly events are an important space to learn, network, debate issues and develop a collective view/position to communicate to the public and commercial sectors. We invited key critical thinkers within the sector to address the assembly. There was a balanced argument on the open public services agenda from Bernard Davies from the National Coalition of Independent Associations and Heather Buckingham and James Rees from the Third Sector Research Centre. Both presentations are on our website: www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/about-voluntary-sector-assembly



Key messages

There were some strong reactions and some welcomed the opportunity to consider the issues. Some organisations resolved to reconsider their funding strategies, others had already decided their position.

The Assembly faces a challenge to maintain a clear role as a voice for the voluntary and community sector, while remaining relevant to the diversity of needs and views within the sector. However everybody present acknowledged the importance of a forum such as this where the sector can learn together and develop a collective message.



If you want to find out more about the assembly contact John Butler at Macc, Tel: 0161 834 9823, Email: john@macc.org.uk

For more detailed exploration of NCIA's views go to their website: www.independentaction.net