

Outsourcing and Austerity

Civil Society and the Coalition Government



CONFERENCE REPORT

Friday 5th October 2012



navca

local focus national voice



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The following are the key points of the day :



**Key note presentation from
Ursula Murray, Birkbeck
College, University of London**

This is a brief summary of the opening presentation given by Ursula Murray. Ursula lectures at Birkbeck in voluntary and community sector studies, public sector management, local government, lifelong learning and gender studies. She previously worked as a senior manager in local government and prior to that in the voluntary sector.

The presentation covered four key areas and concluded with some possible practical joint responses for trade unions and the voluntary sector:

- ❖ Cuts in the voluntary sector
- ❖ Funding changes
- ❖ Legislation and outsourcing
- ❖ Civil society, 'big society' and volunteering

Cuts in the Voluntary sector

Under New Labour there was a 40 per cent growth in the voluntary sector paid workforce over the decade 2001-2010, rising to 765,000, driven especially by ideas of partnership and a shift towards contracting. The sector receives 38 per cent of its £36.7bn income from government of which 79 per cent is generated through contracts for provision of services - rising from £4.4bn in 2001 to £10.9bn in 2009/10. However, the period since 2010 under the Coalition Government has seen a contraction with an anticipated loss of £3.3bn income over the period 2011-16. There were 70,000 job losses in London's voluntary sector in 2011.

However, the plurality of the voluntary sector makes the position difficult to generalise. In 2010, half of the 164,000 registered charities had a turnover of under £10,000, whereas just 4,084 had turnovers of £1m and 474 of over £10m. At one end of the sector are the national 'super charities' some of whom are 'hoovering up' contracts, in direct competition with the private sector for public service contracts. At the other end are the 'under the radar' voluntary sector groups, often placed outside the mainstream social policy discourse which is highly focused on the professionalised segment involved in contracting for 'modernised' public services. In between lay the infrastructure and support structures like CVSs.

Cuts in funding and a continued increase in contracting are making sweeping changes in infrastructure provision at national and local level, with some agencies closing altogether, others merging, others emerging so far relatively unscathed. However, the tendering of a whole raft of new community and welfare services by local authorities and the NHS in the apparent interests of creating 'choice', alongside official support for 'social enterprise' is likely to bring about significant challenges and change in the local voluntary sector.

These different interests in the voluntary sector are increasingly represented by different national structures with somewhat differing agendas to those of the NCVO and ACEVO. These include the National Coalition for Independent Action and the National Association of Voluntary and Community Action.

At the same time, there has been a reported rise in employment in the voluntary sector overall last year. This may point to the uneven distribution of cuts, or the fact that around 60 per cent of income is generated independently of the state. But it may also point to the extent to which voluntary agencies are being assigned a new 'safety net' role as the welfare state is dismantled.

However, away from the world of contracts, more encouraging signs are emerging in the 'under the radar' parts of the sector. Civil society is at last showing some green shoots of revitalisation such as anti cuts campaigns, climate change movements and the Occupy movement, in many of which trade unions are working alongside social and community activists.

It is therefore quite helpful to stop thinking of the sector as an entity. We need to take much more account of the last category and the under the radar activity. This is probably where the key contribution of the sector to the role of civil society is most helpful.

Changes to funding

As the traditional flow of public funding goes into decline, the voluntary sector is looking elsewhere for money, forcing compromises. For example, large charities like Barnados, Nacro and Catch 22 have gone into direct partnerships with private sector corporate firms, such as Serco. These kinds of contracts have raised conflictual debate not least because global corporates have other unacceptable roles – such as arms manufacture, or, in the case of Serco, a reputation for abuse and malpractice in its detention facilities.

A current controversy is the DWP Work Programme which has hugely advanced the idea of the voluntary sector role as subcontractors to the private sector. Already the picture that is emerging is how poorly voluntary agencies fare in such arrangements. But the fundamental question is whether it is ever appropriate for a charity to work to maximise private sector profits?

Private philanthropy and partnering with the private sector is becoming much more entrenched, leading to increased interest amongst voluntary agencies in issues such as how to pitch your cause, on understanding the HR interests of the corporates in motivating staff, improving brand image and CSR rating.

Alongside this is the increased pressure to turn local voluntary sector organisations into social enterprises, with its focus on financialisation, development of niche markets and charging for services, previously free. All of which developments are driven by the fashion for commissioning and procurement, dominated by competition and the need for budget reductions, often implemented in rigid, technocratic, and apolitical ways.

The impact of these changes is clearly going to be very significant locally. Small groups are being pushed to turn into social enterprises and encouraged to build consortia to bid for public services against super charities and the private sector. But many now realise that this is unlikely to be a successful survival strategy. A parallel development is the individualisation of social care budgets intrinsic to 'personalisation'. This will also require organisations, including small local groups, to bid for social care contracts, which they are unlikely to win. Thus the subtle ecology of enabling support to such small groups developed over time will be destroyed.

There are other dilemmas. Some national charities, for example, have been offered contracts to set up a food banks. Does accepting such funding involve collusion in the dismantling of welfare state provision?

There is some solace to be found in the moves by some local authorities both to bring some services back in-house and to reinstate grant programmes. And in some

areas such as Suffolk, Barnet and Cornwall, plans for large-scale outsourcing are being knocked back.

Has the new Legislation brought this change about?

There is a clear link to the role of legislation in bringing about these very rapid changes. Although many of these changes began under New Labour, new legislation under this government has provided additional levers for outsourcing and has intensified the process. Reference to the 'private and voluntary sector' is a key thread in all this legislation. Along with this is the assumption that 'any qualified/willing provider' of public services, or the desirability of the 'right to challenge', are recurrent themes. Accompanying this is a pervasive antipathy to the public sector. Important policy statements and new legislation include, the Open Public Services White Paper (2011), Localism Act (2012), Public Services (Social Value) Act (2012), Health and Social Care Act (2012) and other legislation around housing and welfare benefits. In reality these approaches are highly centralising and not localising, and opening the floodgates to the corporate giants. Changes within the NHS, for example, will involve local hospitals competing against companies (e.g. Virgin Care recently won the tender for Devon County Council/ NHS Childrens Services) in this new health market.

Important in government policy is the promotion both of social enterprise and the 'spinning out' of public services into employee-owned mutuals. Examples from other countries such as Sweden (in the case of 'free schools') indicate how these moves lay the ground for private sector acquisition. In the UK, examples are now appearing (such as Central Surrey Health) of social enterprises losing out in tendering competitions with the private sector.

What we see in this legislation is actually a highly organised drive to create new markets in social services, health and education. A key role is to meet the need for easy, short term profits for the corporate sector alongside the ideological desire for a smaller state sector. But was the insistent inclusion of the voluntary sector in the legislation then merely to confuse and mislead the public? The voluntary sector press generally treats this raft of new legislation as an uncomplicated opportunity for the voluntary sector to potentially win a larger share of public service contracts, whilst fear of speaking out in a cuts environment, or ambitions among super charities, has largely silenced oppositional debate. Does this leave the voluntary sector as a rather gullible pawn in what is actually a much bigger process, a vigorous, wide ranging dismantling of the UK's welfare state in the interests of big business?

Civil society, Volunteering and the 'Big Society'

The 'Big Society' is a marketing man's way of sanitising the bad taste left by Thatcher's 'there is no such thing as society'. It also provides useful cover for the idea of the smaller state linked to current austerity politics and with it the final dismantling of the welfare state which we now see



happening. It marks a potential return to a Victorian philanthropic / charity-based post-welfare state.

Despite its emphasis on volunteering and implicitly replacing welfare state provision, Cameron's 'Big Society' rhetoric seemed to be widely embraced by many within the voluntary sector. In part it may have been seen (mistakenly) as a programme with potential sources of major new funding. But also the idea of 'Big Society', whether by design or accident, clearly seemed to resonate at a deeper level. Perhaps it is anxiety about social fragmentation or the need to re-assert the role of compassion and reciprocity in society. In other words the need to recognise that social care usually involves much more than even a well functioning welfare state can provide. We do need to nurture a welfare society as well as a welfare state but certainly not instead of it.

So the expanding role of volunteering is raising a range of ethical dilemmas as the state withdraws from welfare provision and rights and entitlements simply disappear. Clear boundaries around the role volunteers – avoiding substitution of labour whilst enhancing active involvement of citizens in developing services and campaigning, need to be clearly defined and adhered to.

The volunteering discourse tends however, to ignore the more political end of volunteering and social movement activity and its role in civil society, which means

more than the numbers of voluntary organisations or those employed in the voluntary sector. Civil society stretches across trade unions, political parties, faith groups and even the professions. It is the arena for contesting ideas and developing a voice in the political arena. In our own immediate context this means developing kinds of solidarity to oppose the impact of the legislation and its consequences.

All of these changes and challenges lead us back to power and the relationships of power. We need to consider:

- ❖ Our power to act – and what blocks us from acting. Is it a lack of trust and solidarity or the absence of a shared idea?
- ❖ Our power to speak - the voluntary sector was pretty silent when new legislation went through parliament earlier this year and there has been a lot of fear about ‘speaking truth to power’. However, debate has opened up more and this conference is itself witness to willingness to address these issues.
- ❖ Our power to think – it is difficult to think in the eye of a storm and to think ethically in the struggle to survive. But if we can’t think we are effectively being colonised by the hegemony of neo-liberal ideas and in danger of losing any sense of our values.

We also need to dig deeper into understanding how and why public institutions and private corporates occupy different ethical systems, and how market thinking has undermined or denigrated the idea of a public sector (as so much of the new legislation seeks to do) . In turn, this undermines the very idea of a welfare state. It is important to reassert the positive roles of a public service ethos and to avoid the mixing of the commercial role with that of public ‘guardians’. These are different moral spheres, the latter being crucial for the enactment of particular kinds of social relations as well as the site for the delivery of goods and services. If we allow our public institutions to be hollowed out, by the processes of ‘modernisation’ we will lose a vital focus for our collective aspirations and desires, a place where we can assert our belief in belonging, connection and entitlement.

Some Practical Steps

We need a pincer movement of top down support structures and bottom up activism. This would be assisted by better intelligence, for example, a Central Intelligence Unit jointly funded across the trade unions and voluntary sector specifically tracking the activity of the corporates. We could also benefit from punchy, easy to read pamphlets to help us all think about themes such as: why is a market in social services even being created; what the voluntary sector needs to

know about tendering; what can we learn from the past; or how should we be reviving the idea of democratic leadership.

We need working groups / seminars to think through how to publicise these ideas and relate them to the current context and experiences. And we need support networks that will help us in the difficult task of working across institutional boundaries.

Conclusion

We are living in the eye of a storm with some parallels between now and the early 90s. But the scale and depth of economic recession is much more severe and structural today. The shared networks that existed then, between the voluntary sector, trade unions and local government and academics, are also much less developed today. It's a consequence of more isolation and competition in the struggle to survive, but also sheer confusion in the face of the rapid changes in social policy. It is difficult to think through what is happening and confront the ethical dilemmas this poses for voluntary sector organisations.

I hope we have a good conference and can get to grips with some of this.

I have the sense in myself of a bit more energy and maybe something is happening.

Opening Plenary Panel Presentations

The following notes cover the key panel presentations made at the opening plenary session. You can view each of the presentations on YouTube at <http://tinyurl.com/botrlp4>



**Joe Irvin, Chief Executive
NAVCA:**

Despite David Cameron's attempts to describe the UK as a 'broken society', there is a strong tradition of community and voluntary action in the UK. 13m people volunteer on a monthly basis. There may well be a lot of problems in society but there a lot of people prepared to roll their sleeves up and get involved.

The community and voluntary sector is diverse, like the trade union movement, but there are common issues facing all of us. The three main challenges facing us are:
Cuts - A survey of our members, local infrastructure and support organisations, found cuts of 20 per cent this year and around 20 per cent last year. This is having a devastating effect at the same time that demand for services is increasing as a result of welfare reforms, cuts to services and effects of income squeeze.

Marketisation - There has been a major change in the relationship between the public and voluntary sector. Grants have been replaced by contracts, competitive bidding and payment by results, in a word 'marketisation'. There may be a role for contracts in some cases, but the way in which it is being designed is having a detrimental impact on small voluntary organisations. A leading example of this is the Work Programme.

Undermining of social infrastructure - While plenty is said about the need to invest in our economic infrastructure, less focus is given to the social infrastructure

of our communities. The people, relationships, networks, organisations and places such as community centres and communal buildings are all under duress. The loss of this infrastructure will have a huge impact on our communities.

What we can do to address the challenges:

Expose the facts - The Joseph Rowntree Trust's work on child poverty and the role that disability charities have played in raising awareness of the impact of welfare reforms on disabled people are good examples of the kind of things we can achieve.

Provide proactive support for people in need - for example, CVOs and charities can innovate to provide effective early interventions for people in need that make a real difference to people's lives but also save money and resources down the line.

Increase support to local voluntary organisations - The role that local infrastructure bodies play in supporting local community and voluntary groups should be promoted. This support is essential to maintaining a healthy sector, particularly among the 75 - 80 per cent of local groups that do not have access to public funding.

Trade unions and voluntary organisations working together - Trade unions and voluntary organisations share much in common. They rely on armies of volunteers and have shared



**Gail Cartmail, Assistant
General Secretary, Unite:**

Unite members in the not-for-profit and voluntary sector are facing huge difficulties in providing the services that people need due to funding cuts, renegotiating of contracts, downward pressure on conditions and job insecurity. This is a constant source of frustration and distress as they are unable to help people in need of the support their organisations aim to provide.

The three main challenges facing us are:

The Economy - The UK is back in recession with the longest slump and weakest recovery in modern times. This is a direct result of the government's failed austerity programme, driven by ideology. This is the industrial, political and economic context within which we are all operating and it is the central point to address. Unite wants to see a government that invests in growth, jobs and infrastructure. And a government that invests in our public services, with charities, community and voluntary organisations seen as well-resourced, value-added extras not on-the-cheap replacements.

Outsourcing - and, more specifically, privatisation lies behind the government's 'Big Society' narrative. It is seen both as a way of driving down costs and as a means of transferring public services to the private sector. Organisations from the voluntary and community sector, including employee-owned mutuals, can compete in the market for public services. But will they be able to compete effectively with large private sector operators?

Contracts are still largely decided on the basis of cost. Evidence from a study of the social care sector by the EHRC shows that local authority social care contracts were weighted on the basis of cost by 70 per cent. Only a third of providers said local authority rates were sufficient to provide and promote a 'human rights approach' to social care.

The voluntary sector workforce - As a result of cuts and competitive outsourcing, there is severe downward pressure on the conditions of the voluntary sector workforce. Staff costs provide biggest target for cost cutting. Workers in the sector are being faced with cuts to wages and allowances, renegotiated contracts and the constant fear of job losses.

What we can do to address the challenges:

Work together - at local and national level build a campaign in the political sphere to challenge the current orthodoxy that there is no money left and the only way forward is to slash public spending. Unite's community membership initiative is one way that trade unions are attempting to work more closely with community organisations, faith groups, councillors and others in civil society to challenge the myths and build an alternative political voice.



**Paul Farmer, Chief Executive,
Mind**

We need to stimulate further dialogue between all parts of civil society, between trade unions, voluntary groups and charities. It is good to see this dialogue gaining momentum. There are huge challenges facing all our organisations, members and beneficiaries and it is important to understand that many of our members and beneficiaries are the same people. We also need to ensure that the needs of people with mental health problems and disabilities are heard, particularly at this very difficult time.

The main challenges facing us are:

Employment - is increasingly fragile. The pressure on people with mental health problems to keep their condition hidden from their employer is growing. This means that those people are less able to secure the rights and protections offered in the workplace. Unions, employers and mental health charities should work closely together to ensure that maximum support is offered to those suffering from mental health problems in the workplace.

Employment is vital to mental well-being and the wider economic environment and lack of employment opportunities are placing people with mental health problems under increasing distress.

Inequality - The government's welfare reforms, both the content of individual reforms and their sheer volume, are having a detrimental impact on people with disabilities widening the gulf of inequality. Many disabled people live fragile lives with a complex array of support derived from different sources; a change in one area can mean the difference between employment, homelessness, hospital or home care.

How we can face these challenges:

Show innovation and resilience - Charities, voluntary and community groups will continue to show the innovation and resilience that has enabled them to survive restructuring and changes to funding over the years. Evidence from the 160 different local Mind organisations shows that the key to this is innovation, collaboration with other partners and a focus on the needs of beneficiaries.



**Andy Benson, Convenor,
NCLIA:**

There is much agreement between the different organisations represented across the voluntary sector but there are also differences which we need to acknowledge. The three main challenges facing us are:

The government - While the current government is an extreme manifestation, across the political establishment there is a consensus in support of global business and the rewriting of the post-war settlement. Key aspects of this include cuts to public services (especially those serving the most disadvantaged), marketisation and financialisation, the curtailment of civil liberties and the exclusion of dissent.

The Open Public Services White Paper makes clear that the commitment to outsourcing is ideological and policies such as the Right to Challenge in the Localism Act are designed to promote it. NCLIA supports effective, democratically accountable public services and believes that improvements can be made to public service delivery while retaining direct public management of those services.

The private sector - Private provision of public services is a threat to both those who use and work in public services. The government is set to intensify the process of outsourcing public services to the private sector.

The voluntary sector - The process of co-option of voluntary organisations as arms-length delivery vans for the statutory sector has been part of preparing the way for privatisation and the withdrawal of state services. Long established local

groups are undermined by poor commissioning regimes, domination by large national charities and complex contractual arrangements with private operators. Ill-defined terms such as 'social enterprise' are increasingly being used to describe this process.

NCIA believes the proper role for the voluntary sector is to develop new approaches to supporting people, provide complimentary support to public services and hold authority to account. Only an independent voluntary sector is able to do these things.

The good news is that thousands of groups and activists are now challenging the orthodoxes of the voluntary sector establishment and speaking out their opposition to what is happening.

What we can do to address the challenges:

Challenge the voluntary service sector - The view that voluntary service providers can act as replacements for statutory services needs to be challenged. Individual organisations and those who purport to represent the sector must be made accountable for their actions.

Be practical and specific – our activism must be tangible and linked to the hundreds of local campaigns related to specific rights, entitlements and services, specifically placing our effort within the context of those campaigns and building genuine local alliances around them.

Joined up action - Forge alliances between the different strands within the voluntary and community sector, between service providers and community activists, between voluntary organisations and trade unions, in order to challenge the current political narrative.

Morning Breakout Sessions

The following notes cover the key issues raised at the morning breakout sessions.

What is happening to the voluntary sector workforce?

Chair: Bronwen Handyside, Unite

Speakers: John Gray, UNISON
Hannah Reed, Senior Policy Advisor TUC

John Gray listed the main issues which he felt are facing the voluntary sector workforce, all of which have local economic impact:

- ❖ increasing the working week
- ❖ cuts in leave
- ❖ organisations trying to undermine TUPE
- ❖ cuts in redundancy benefit
- ❖ pay cuts of up to 30%
- ❖ widespread redundancies' and transfers as organisations competitively bid against each other
- ❖ increase in temporary contracts
- ❖ increase in bank and zero hour contracts
- ❖ Tax cheats and bogus self employment
- ❖ Volunteers taking the place of paid staff
- ❖ Increase in workloads for staff due to redundancies and recruitment freezes which leads to stress and cutting corners which has a knock on affect to service users
- ❖ Increase in eligibility from 1 year to 2 for unfair dismissal claims
- ❖ Upfront payment to lodge a claim
- ❖ Reduction in health and safety inspections

What needs to be done to address these issues?

- ❖ Need a genuine partnership with like minded organisations we can work with.
- ❖ Sector agreements on safeguarding, quality, price
- ❖ Members within the sector need to start working together better
- ❖ Need to address the lack of trade union recognition with some of the big providers
- ❖ Campaigning and better lobbying together

- ❖ Educate our members and public about a better economic model than austerity

Hannah Reed then discussed:

- ❖ Voluntary sector provides vital service to vulnerable members of society
- ❖ Massive cuts are putting these services and vulnerable service users at risk
- ❖ At a time when there is an ever increasing demand for advice services – these very services are also being cut
- ❖ Many services being forced to close or shrink substantially
- ❖ Growth in volunteers and unpaid interns
- ❖ Quality of services will inevitably suffer as will the moral of the workforce
- ❖ Voluntary organisations now have to competitively bid alongside large profit making organisations
- ❖ Voluntary sector organisations are having to compete on cost which means driving down cost of staff
- ❖ TUPE does not protect new staff being employed on transferred contracts which leads to the unjust situation of two groups of staff doing the same job on different pay
- ❖ Many organisations trying to avoid TUPE obligations and Commissionaires are putting organisations under pressure to bid under realistic levels
- ❖ Organisations are arguing that they can only win contracts by undercutting pay and conditions and using this as an ‘ETO’ reason
- ❖ The government is considering on weakening TUPE even further and a consultation document will be published soon
- ❖ The TUC will be setting out an agenda to further enhance workers rights

Public Services and Civil Society – Commissioning, Procurement and Outsourcing

Chair: Leah Levine (ex) Local Government Officer

Speakers: Adrian Barritt, Adur Voluntary Action
Jane Foot, Independent Policy Adviser

The workshop included people from local anti-cuts groups, health campaigners, unions, local Labour party, think tanks and more. Everyone was united in wanting to find a way to “do something” urgently about the disastrous privatisations and cuts already happening and which will deepen next year. Health and social care privatisation were particularly highlighted partly because of the number of health campaigns represented, but these were also linked with the benefit cuts.

Information was a key issue for campaigners. Freedom of Information legislation does not cover private contracts, and commercial confidentiality is being used to make it impossible to find out about the details of the terms of privatisations. We also need more information about the details of the legislation, and about what other campaigns are doing. It was suggested that some kind of central intelligence unit should be set up. We also spoke about the need to cultivate and support moles and whistle blowers – or even just sympathisers – within NHS, councils and private organisations undertaking the contracts. Such a unit could provide somewhere safe for them to send their information.

We debated the need for alliances with local Labour activists, trades councils, unions, local authorities, and others and the challenges involved. There were different views: while some were very wary and critical, others argued for moving beyond a cosy “comfort zone” and to avoid being pitted against others who are also opposed what is going on. It was suggested that we need to be open about our disagreements, including for example whether or not voluntary sector groups should get involved in contracting – through consortia, for example – and whether we should take part in consultative /governance structures in the NHS, as hospital governors, members of local LINKs or others.

What can we do? We agreed that our main focus should be to campaign around April 2013 when even more disastrous cuts in benefits and in health and social care will be implemented. We should:

- ❖ Try to set up some kind of central intelligence unit and also publicise where information is already available;
- ❖ Nationally, raise awareness of the impact of the cuts through publicising many individuals’ stories – presenting them as “heroes not victims”;
- ❖ We should try to get a co-ordinated national effort on this, perhaps organised and supported by the trade unions;
- ❖ Find ways to get the media interested;
- ❖ Locally, our campaigns should be built in alliance with a wide range of supporters which might including sympathisers working within the NHS or local authorities, and also councillors where possible;
- ❖ It was also suggested that we should look at opportunities for direct action.

The future for community organising

Chair: Becky Wright, TUC

Speakers: Jane Holgate, University of Leeds
Pilgrim Tucker, Unite
Matt Danaher, UNISON
Matt Scott, Community Coalition

Jane Holgate:

Faced with the reality of vast amount of workers not unionised, there is a need to involve community groups as another point of purchase. Jane is studying the relationships between 3 broad based community organisations and trade unions - London Citizens (UK), the Sydney Alliance (Australia) and Sound Alliance in Seattle (USA) - there are key stages and models of working together to achieve common goals. Ideological, structural and cultural issues need to be addressed and clear in these alliances to build effective campaigns, relationships and engagement. Trade unions may benefit from looking at the way these alliances successfully operate and place these to the heart of its own organising strategies

- ❖ London citizens - Set up by faith groups (two thirds membership) and joint direct working action with trade unions focussed on one outcome for workers and community groups - the Living Wage campaign
- ❖ Seattle Sound Alliance - majority of trade unions (two thirds membership) to build an alliance with community/faith groups “working in action”
- ❖ Sydney Alliance - Set up by trade unions (third membership) work showed that building closer links before joint working action was crucial in building trust in relationships

Matt Scott:

Community organising (CO) is a much used phrase - what actually is it? Matt's view is that CO is based around government sponsored attempts to promote community action to win campaigns with little sustained support or resources. This is in contrast to a community development (CD) focus on grassroots democratic control. Community Development and Community Organising have similar roots, but the government's emphasis on community organising may risk losing the good work done by the UK's 20,000 community development professionals. What we need to think about is what does this mean for community work at the smallest

neighbourhood level? We need better resourcing to create horizontal alliances through collaboration

It's good that political parties and trade unions are engaging and mobilising in community organising at membership level – capacity building and community tools are key - Big Society concept lacks the radical driver to join up these three groups (political parties, trade unions and community organisations)

Pilgrim Tucker:

In contrast to Matt, believes that Community Organising, rather than Community Development, has the role and ability to organise and empower democratically at the grassroots level and it is not right to juxtapose Community Development as more embedded in state controlled community actions and Community Organising as anti- state opposition. UNITE has been working with diverse and marginalised sections in the community to demonstrate how community and trade unions have a joint agenda to ensure that public services serve the right interests.

Caution is needed as to how community groups currently respond to the localism agenda. In particular the open public services agenda is manipulating the ethos of community groups as part of the governments drive to cut public services. Unions involved in community organising must not be split by the false dichotomy of public services 'bad' and community services 'good'.

Matt Danaher:

Community organising is about relationships being built in and between organisations, communities and workplaces. Trade unions have a lot of power to promote community coalitions. In this, trust and long term relationships are more important to keep coalitions working rather than any one group trying to promote their own individual agenda.

Examples of how UNISON have been working with community groups has been demonstrated through the anti-privatisation of police campaign where police staff union members have been working with anti-racist groups, civil liberties groups, mental health groups and user groups united to stop the privatisation. At the same time, we also need to remember that G4E workers are in unions and need to be engaged with community campaigners.

Floor discussion points:

- ❖ Trade unions need to assimilate migrant labour and community issues without dominating the agenda

- ❖ Need to emphasise that there is no real differences between trade unions and community groups as they operate along common principles of respect and inclusivity despite having different organising structures
- ❖ People still don't understand what trade unions are about but they know what a tenant group, youth club, residents association or neighbourhood watch is. They identify with these groups as they see them directly affecting the quality of their lives and know that these groups locally care for them.
- ❖ Trade unions need to relate to these groups locally in order to embed their values locally
- ❖ It is important that marginal groups are not left behind in community and trade union alliance
- ❖ The Locality project showed that listening to local people is key to winning their support and involvement. People know what the issues and problems are locally but they don't know how to access resources to empower themselves with solutions. Trade unions need to fill this resources gap and listen more and help empower local people
- ❖ We need to campaign against work cuts and workforce issues as part of community campaigning
- ❖ Need to raise peoples entitlement expectations rather than defeatism to help mobilise people
- ❖ Trade unions who don't act sensitively can put people off as their way of organising is not the same as community groups and if they dominate people leave. We need more education and honesty about how to maximise equal outputs for all groups and trade unions engaged
- ❖ Also need to distinguish between community groups and voluntary groups
- ❖ The debate over Community Development and Community Organising is irrelevant and redundant. What we need to focus on is uniting to stop the government and contracting authorities handing over large public contracts to big powerful companies rather than smaller community and voluntary organisations. These big companies are more interested in profit than developing communities
- ❖ Competitive business is not interested in building authenticity and relationships in the community and a by - product of their competitiveness is

the fragmentation and breakup of communities. Need more meaningful 'businesses'

- ❖ In summary, Jane argued for organising, leadership, training, common language, sustainability and 'power for the common good'.
- ❖ Matt looks for a broad based social movement, for a sharp critique of community organising and community development and for exposure of Government approaches and practices in local communities.
- ❖ Pilgrim stressed that community members are also workers and this is the common starting point, we need to relate to community members in and out of work and the unemployed, young people need to be engaged and migrant labour issues need to be addressed.

Matt wants to find the balance between what people want to do and what trade unions want to do, sees the trade unions role as to assist community groups understanding the wider political picture and providing political education. This must come after community alliance and not before. There must be a co-relationship between political education and community experience and if we get the balance right, then we all get better communities.

Social Enterprise: Friend or Foe?

Chair: Penny Waterhouse, NCIA

Speakers: Lucy Findlay, Social Enterprise Mark
James Beecher, Stroud Against the Cuts

Participants were a mix of people already running/involved in social enterprises, those looking into it and those wanting to resist the whole idea. Some professed effective and valued use of the social enterprise model; others felt themselves being drawn into privatisation by moving away from grants and some had been actively fighting against privatisation policies.

No consensus emerged from the discussion which struggled with questions like:

- ❖ What is meant by 'social enterprise' – particularly in light of a) government statements to the effect that it is whatever the Secretary of State decides it is; and b) a government definition to be announced in the near future?
- ❖ How do I get started as a social enterprise, especially given how complex and time-consuming bidding for contracts can be?

- ❖ Are there issues regarding legal status which need to be taken into account in setting one up?
- ❖ Are social enterprises a real and acceptable alternative source of funding for voluntary sector organisations and what are the risks here? “I feel I’ve already sold out. I don’t want to sell out any more”
- ❖ Is a social enterprise just another form of privatisation – and so:
 - ❖ another way of removing the state from public services even where it is doing well;
 - ❖ removing key assets from public control;
 - ❖ undermining local and democratic accountability and control through local authorities;
 - ❖ handing over the power of definition of ‘need’ and ‘good’ to philanthropic, non-accountable bodies?
- ❖ What protections can be developed against social enterprises being used as privatisation by another name? In the present political contexts can such protections – such as that offered by the Social Enterprise Mark – be effective (enough)?
- ❖ Shouldn’t we just focus on ‘delivery’ and worry less about organisational form? Or, if we do that, do we just leave the door open for more and more services to be removed from democratic accountability?
- ❖ Where might investment in social enterprises come from? Could some of it be from individuals/organisations willing to take a lower return on money being used for social good, especially in their own localities? Might this not offer a more responsive funding regime than relying on taxes with all the centralisation and rigidities that often come with state-funded services?
- ❖ (How) does the need to generate profit (even when called surplus) affect the culture of an organisation? How is the balance struck between this expectation/requirement and an organisation’s goals re its beneficiaries?
- ❖ In thanking participants for this debate, the facilitator suggested that the field needs more of these straight-speaking conversations about what is really going on regarding social enterprise; possible ‘falsities’ in the use of words and how far they are being used as a smoke screen for the government’s wider public services policies. Beyond that, we also need a wider debate on

what kind of ‘commonwealth’ we want, where public services sit within that, how to provide them and the impact of privatisation on these aspirations.

Coping with Cuts – Surviving and Resisting

Chair: Kingsley Abrams, Unite

Speakers: Sue Marsh, Diary of a Benefits Scrounger
Gary Aldridge, Campaign for a Fair Society

Gary explained that the Campaign grew out of anger about the way that government cuts in services and benefits are focussed on disabled and other vulnerable groups of people, seen as the least likely to be able to protest effectively. The Campaign wants power and control to shift to citizens, families and communities – “Not the ‘Big Society’ window dressing. We want real change - that recognises every member of society as a full citizen with support they need to live a full life, with meaning and respect.”

Sue’s tale is based on her own experience as a woman with a lifelong disabling illness trying to cope within the current so-called support system. Outsourcing public services simply outsources the austerity, without saving money and by enriching private ‘provider’ companies to offer inadequate services. Seen as having only ‘moderate needs (provision is restricted to ‘high needs’) Sue is on her own, as are most sick and disabled people. Her blog was her attempt at resistance and a record of her frustration. Its success is a testimony to the power of social media. The Spartacus Report details the lies the government is telling to push through their cuts. But more is needed to get the stories out there.

The discussion that followed focussed on difficulties of survival, practical experiences of resistance, and how we can campaign more effectively. This included points about:

- ❖ The folly and uselessness of getting involved in sub-contracting;
- ❖ The power of specific action focussing on tangible issues like child poverty, pushing genuine alternatives (credit union rather than commercial bank), using celebrities, imaginative small scale actions, all of interest to the media;
- ❖ Campaigners should ensure that people being interviewed are confident and well briefed. Reporters are just as happy to present a negative picture as a positive one, so they shouldn’t get the chance.
- ❖ Using the commercial media to reach out to all those members of the community who are not Guardian readers is important

- ❖ At the same time being wary of the media, owned by millionaires with vested interests;
- ❖ The need for the trade unions too to look for imaginative actions when, say, strike action was going to affect vulnerable people.

Afternoon Breakout Sessions

The following notes cover the key issues raised at the afternoon breakout sessions.

Caring in our Communities: Lessons from Mental Health and Social Care

Chair: Patrick Vernon, L.B. of Hackney Councillor

Speakers: Barry Pickthall, Don't Cut Us Out campaign
Elizabeth Bayliss, Social Action for Health

Personalisation

The introduction of personalisation is a major issue within mental health and social care provision. Though the drive behind this derives from ideas of personal control and justice, there are big difficulties emerging in practice. These include the opportunities for local authorities to make cuts to care packages whilst passing responsibility for the risks and effects of this to the service user. It is also much easier to begin to introduce charges where services were previously free.

Personalisation often doesn't work for high levels of need or high value services. The changes can damage relationships between community organisations and local people and, on a wider scale, undermines the whole idea of collective responsibility for the care of vulnerable people.

The cuts and their effects

Cuts are a false economy and will lead to higher costs in the future. They are also grossly unjust – there is plenty of money out there, but there is a lack of political will to distribute it fairly. We need to challenge the ideology and keep in mind both the big picture (such as the shift from earned to unearned income for the rich) and what is happening at local level to inform our action. We need to work to create a 'shield' so that organisations cannot get picked off by stopping their funding.

The dilemmas for voluntary groups that are service providers

Charities that become providers (via state funding) are compromised and find it difficult to campaign; even trying to be a 'critical friend' to the statutory sector doesn't work – your funding gets cut anyway. Direct campaigning activity is needed but so is money for these organisations. Some people involved in the big charities are there for their own careers and it's the small grassroots community groups that are making the difference by campaigning. However, it can be powerful to draw together groups of people with shared interests, create the space for charities and campaign groups to find each other and speaking out more powerfully. We need to look for movements on the ground, amongst local people and support the resurgence of opposition.

The role of the unions

From the TU side there is a more fragmented workforce, poor levels of membership in both private and voluntary sectors and organisations are moving themselves away from and out of national collective bargaining. The result is more workers (and their clients) being made more vulnerable. At the same time, with respect to fighting the cuts and other damaging changes, the TUs are in a prime position to make a difference.

For the future

The big demand is to create an alternative society and different ways of running things, using money in different ways. At the same time, it's not all about money; it's about justice and fairness. We need to highlight the false economy and the long term cost of the cuts. We need to get disparate groups working together in an independent forum for greater impact. Maybe also we need to stand for political office if others don't represent us properly!

Localism: Threats and Opportunities

Chair: Ian Adderley, UNISON

Speakers: Bob Colenutt, Northampton Institute of Urban Affairs
Robert Beard, NAVCA

This breakout session concentrated on new legislation included within the Localism Act, focussing on what impacts different parts of the legislation might have on communities and how community and local voluntary organisations might respond.

Key points raised in discussion were:

- ❖ There is a significant gap between localist rhetoric and provision within the Act.
- ❖ The parameters of local devolution are tightly prescribed, both in terms of the autonomy of local authorities (the Act provides over 60 new powers to central government) and power to local community groups.
- ❖ An example of this is the development of Neighbourhood Plans. While attempting to give powers to local communities over the use and development of land, a number of limitations have been put in place about the application and use of these powers that is acting as a deterrent to community engagement.
- ❖ There are few new resources or obligations to support community development or to empower disadvantaged members of the community to engage more effectively and local community and voluntary infrastructure that might perform this role is being decimated by cuts.
- ❖ There are serious concerns that Neighbourhood Forums and local referenda may be tools to give more voice to those with power and influence in the community.
- ❖ The Community Right to Challenge was seen by some as a means to hold local services to account. However, most saw it as a lever for more marketisation of services with no safeguards in place for community organisations to benefit, the likely outcome being further divestment of services to large national charities and private sector operators.
- ❖ While there was recognition of the limitations, some provision within the Localism Act, e.g. Neighbourhood Plans and Forums, did offer a locus for some community organising. It was up to relevant groups to make the machinery work for local communities.
- ❖ The Public Services (Social Value) Act, which obliges Local Authorities to consider social, economic and environmental criteria, when procuring services was seen as a similarly limited but potentially useful piece of legislation, as long as unions and community groups could organise to help shape the agenda.

- ❖ Overall, on the ground there was much distrust of the localism agenda which was seen as tightly controlled, limited in scope and practice and potentially intensifying marketisation of public services.
- ❖ Many of the stated benefits of the legislation would be undermined by the loss of resources, expertise and capacity both within the local public and voluntary and community sectors.

Is the Work Programme working?

Chair: Richard Exell, TUC

Speakers: Dr Ian Greer, University of Greenwich
Liz Rutherford, Single Homeless Project

The experience of Single Homelessness Project was that they had delivered many employment services under other programmes (New Deal, etc) and had accepted a sub-contractor arrangement under the Work Programme. However, many people on JSA had multiple and complex needs. They withdrew from the scheme because the programme and fee structure was geared towards helping the easiest to get into work; assumptions were too simplified; it became clear that they would need a huge client referral base to cover costs and cash flow. Other voluntary groups have also now taken the step to withdraw and recently it has emerged that some have gone out of business as a result of their participation in the programme.

Overall, the voluntary sector role in the programme is highly problematic - do these agencies 'subsidise' the regime; do they accept that participation (as sub-contractors) involves them moving into a segment of the private sector; the ethos of 'helping people' is compromised by pressures from the private sector to spent as little time as possible with clients.

Comparative research in UK and internationally shows three main problems with welfare to work programmes - commissioning, co-ordination problems and the cuts, with resources being focussed on those who can be helped into jobs. Plus the backcloth is the 'punishment ethos' directed towards people who have access to benefits. The programme in France seems to work better as it focuses on areas with high levels of unemployment and low skills base; services are often devised by local people and local communities unlike the UK; there has been longer time to embed the programme and achieve buy-in from key stakeholders. There are weaknesses too in this programme. However, here is a case study that was not used by those responsible for developing the programme in the UK.

Wider issues were raised including:

- ♣ We need to challenge the notion that work is good for everyone and that monetary value can be placed on those not in work. Whilst work is good for many people, for others it is not a viable option.
- ♣ We need to challenge the language of commercialisation – use of the word ‘customer’ for example within the WP, also found in other sectors, such as housing associations.
- ♣ What is the level of demand for labour – very little of this managed? This is a fundamental problem behind programmes to find and place people in work.
- ♣ Is the Work Programme a good or bad thing? Strong personal experiences were expressed suggesting that the Work Programme is based on many unfair and sometimes abstract interpretations of what constitutes work, what constitutes disability, ability to work, the concept of the 'benefit to all of employment' which often go unchallenged.

Where now for Youth Services?

Chair: Bernard Davies, In Defence of Youth Work

Speakers: Don McDonald, Youth Worker
Michael Bell, Youth Worker
Ian Richards, Youth Worker

Key issues facing youth work today:

- ❖ Many Councils moving to commissioning of youth services
- ❖ Large charities acting like predators and private business involvement has been seen across the country
- ❖ Tender process give bids to those not directly involved in that Community resulting in less connection with the community they are working with
- ❖ Workers having to compete for funding and hours to the point where there is worker to worker, and project to project competition
- ❖ Less people delivering more work
- ❖ The nature of statutory youth work changing from open access voluntary engagement to targeted provision

- ❖ Constant undermining of JNC salary and terms and conditions

What needs to be done?

- ❖ Where whole community has been involved in campaigning, young and old together, there have been successes
- ❖ Derbyshire – youth services gone back in-house
- ❖ “In Defence of Youth Work” and “Chose Youth” campaigns continue
- ❖ Example of a workers cooperative for youth service (but pay rates are very low)
- ❖ Many youth workers unhappy with working situation and find it difficult to resist changes but still trying to challenge in their own organisations

Information, Advice and Advocacy – can we still deliver?

Chair: Penny Waterhouse, NCIA

Speakers: Ros Lucas, Migrant Resource Centre
Steve Johnson, Chief Executive, Advice UK
Ruth Hayes, Director, Islington Law Centre (in personal capacity)

The main points raised were:

- ❖ Demand is going up at the same time as funding is disappearing. But advice services have always had to cope with poor and variable resources, so the current cuts are familiar to this sector. Services will continue simply because they will.
- ❖ Access to advice can be literally a matter of life and death. Especially brutal is the disappearance of all Legal Aid support for welfare benefits cases from next April.
- ❖ Joining up at local, as well as national, levels will be a way to have greater force in resisting cuts to rights and to services e.g. to influence local authority decisions on their response to the abolition of the national council tax benefit scheme, an issue with both local and national implications.

- ❖ At least one local authority (Islington) has realised that commissioning doesn't always work and is returning to a grants-based approach.
- ❖ Commissioning is such an inadequate system that it won't last as a model. And, with respect to advice services, private companies are already realising that there is no money to be made here, so will stop bidding for contracts.
- ❖ Advice services need to be more assertive in negotiating contractual terms and conditions (or say 'no' to the money), including telling the commissioners/funders what is required, though it was recognised that many advice service managers are too timid to do this
- ❖ Some advice services are looking at charging for some services (immigration advice for example) where clients are wanting to, and can, pay. This income can then pay for free advice.
- ❖ Advice organisations are most likely to survive where they ensure they have diverse funding sources and are prepared to be innovative . It may also be appropriate to maximise the use of volunteers (volunteers have long been used in advice services).

TUC and Volunteer England Protocol

Given concerns raised about the nature of volunteering and the potential use of voluntary labour as a substitute for paid employment, we were asked to publish a copy of the TUC and Volunteer England protocol that helps set out some guidelines on this issue.

A Charter for Strengthening Relations between Paid Staff and Volunteers: Agreement between Volunteering England and the TUC

This Charter sets out the key principles on which volunteering is organised and how good relations between paid staff and volunteers are built. It has been developed jointly by Volunteering England (VE) and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and has been endorsed by the wider volunteering and trade union movements.

Its starting point is that volunteering plays an essential role in the economic and social fabric of the UK. It is estimated that some 22 million people volunteer each year, contributing around £23 billion to the economy.

Volunteering helps build social capital and community cohesion and plays an important role in the delivery of key public services. Volunteering is also good for the volunteer: it helps improve health and wellbeing and provides opportunities for individuals to acquire skills and knowledge that can enhance career development or employment prospects.

This Charter demonstrates the value and importance that both organisations place on voluntary activity and the time, skills and commitment given by volunteers.

This Charter recognises that voluntary action and trade unionism share common values. Both are founded on the principles of mutuality and reciprocity, leading to positive changes in the workplace and community. The trade union movement itself is built on the involvement and engagement of volunteers.

Volunteering England and the TUC acknowledge that on the whole, relations between paid staff and volunteers are harmonious and mutually rewarding. They can, however, be enhanced by good procedures, clarity of respective roles, mutual trust and support.

This Charter sets out the key principles to help underpin good relations in the workplace. These principles should be used as a guide by individual organisations to develop more detailed policies and procedures which reflect local needs and circumstances. This should be done, wherever possible, between local union representatives, employers and volunteering managers.

Paid work is any activity that is undertaken at the direction of an employer and is financially compensable

Volunteering is freely undertaken and not for financial gain; it involves the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community.

Charter Principles

- ❖ All volunteering is undertaken by choice, and all individuals should have the right to volunteer, or indeed not to volunteer;
- ❖ While volunteers should not normally receive or expect financial rewards for their activities, they should receive reasonable out of pocket expenses;
- ❖ The involvement of volunteers should complement and supplement the work of paid staff, and should not be used to displace paid staff or undercut their pay and conditions of service;
- ❖ The added value of volunteers should be highlighted as part of commissioning or grant-making process but their involvement should not be used to reduce contract costs;
- ❖ Effective structures should be put in place to support and develop volunteers and the activities they undertake, and these should be fully considered and costed when services are planned and developed;
- ❖ Volunteers and paid staff should be provided with opportunities to contribute to the development of volunteering policies and procedures;
- ❖ Volunteers, like paid staff, should be able to carry out their duties in safe, secure and healthy environments that are free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, violence and discrimination;
- ❖ All paid workers and volunteers should have access to appropriate training and development;
- ❖ There should be recognised machinery for the resolution of any problems between organisations and volunteers or between paid staff and volunteers;
- ❖ In the interests of harmonious relations between volunteers and paid staff, volunteers should not be used to undertake the work of paid staff during industrial disputes.

This Charter stands between Volunteering England and the TUC as a statement of principles and good practice. It is also a model for use by individual unions, volunteer involving organisations in the public, third and private sectors and other bodies in discussions around the use of volunteers.

Volunteering England and the TUC have produced some case studies, examples of local agreements and practical ideas to help trade unions and organisations. We have also set out some of the legal background relating to volunteering. These are available at www.tuc.org.uk/volunteering

Conference Attendance List

Kingsley	Abrams	Unite
Ian	Adderley	UNISON
Gary	Aldridge	Campaign for a Fair Society
Carl	Allen	UNISON Black Workers Group
Joe	Alsford	Training for Work in Communities
Frances	Anderson	Just Democracy UK
Kate	Angus	Action Duchenne
Nik	Antoniades	Shelter
Ruth	Appleton	Sante Refugee Mental Health Access Project
Annette	Ashley	Women's Resource Centre
Hilary	Barnard	HBMC
Adrian	Barritt	Adur Voluntary Action
Elizabeth	Bayliss	Social Action for Health
Nigel	Bayton	PCS
Robert	Beard	NAVCA
James	Beecher	Stroud Against Cuts
Sandra	Beeton	Association of Panel Members
Rabia	Belatoui	
Dr Morris	Bernandat	NHS Consultants' Association
Lee	Billingham	UNISON
Peter	Bird	Wandsworth Against Cuts
Kevin	Blowe	Aston Mansfield
Paul	Bromley	Society of Radiographers
Ali	Brown	Labour Research
Steve	Burak	Occupy Movement
Fiona	Campbell	Policy and Practice
Iane	Chambers	Training for Work in Communities
Karen	Chouhan	Equanomics
Roger	Clark	St Vincent's Centre
Ruth	Cohen	
Bob	Colenutt	Northampton Institute for Urban Affairs
Elizabeth	Cotton	Middlesex University
Matt	Danaher	UNISON Community Organiser
Bernard	Davies	In Defence of Youth Work
Celia	Davies	
Sophie	De Melo	Action for Prisoners' Families

Tania	de St Croix	Voice of Youth
Linda	Derrick	Wycombe Labour Party
Paul	Dixon	Broadband, Fuel Poverty & Community Assets
Liliana	Dmitrovic	People's Republic of Southwark
Michelle	Drummond	The Big Lottery
Panikos	Efthimiou	
Andria	Efthimiou-Mourdant	Activist
James	Ellis	UNISON
Carolyn	Emanuel	Socialist Health Association
Michael	England	
Shane	Enright	Amnesty International UK
Kathy	Evans	Children England
Lucy	Findlay	Social Enterprise Mark
David	Floyd	Social Spider
Paul	Foley	North West UNISON
Jane	Foot	Independent Policy Adviser
Dave	Forman	Defend Council Housing
Eileen	Francis	Unite
Patrick	French	Socialist Health Association
Atsushi	Fujii	University of East London
Mary	Gardiner	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council
Rahel	Geffen	Disability Action Islington
Vivien	Giladl	Socialist Health Association
Lilas	Gilies	Wandsworth Older People's Forum
Ravinder	Gill	UNISON
Katy	Goldstraw	Manchester Metropolitan University
Mike	Gordon	Mike Gordon Consultancy
Eugene	Grant	Scope
Christopher	Graves	Tudor Trust
John	Gray	UNISON
Dr Roger	Green	Goldsmiths College, London University
Andy	Greene	Disability Action Islington
Dr Ian	Greer	University of Greenwich
Cllr Christine	Hamilton	Labour - LB Enfield
John	Hancock	Prison Officers Association
Bronwen	Handyside	UNISON
Louise	Hardwick	University of Liverpool

Ruth	Hawthorn	London Citizens
Ruth	Hayes	Islington Law Centre
Vivienne	Hayes	Women's Resource Centre
Rebecca	Hedges	Catholic Social Action Network
David	Henshaw	London Citizens
Cat	Hobbs	Own It
Jane	Holgate	University of Leeds
Nozmul	Hussain	Community Foundation
Carol	Jacklin Jarvis	Open University
Maz	Jeffrey	UNISON youth worker
Dave	Johnson	UNISON
Steve	Johnson	Advice UK
John	Kelly	Worthing Borough Council
Peter	Kenyon	Bootstrap Company
Paul	Kershaw	Unite (housing workers branch)
Helen	Kersley	New Economics Foundation
Daniel	Key	People's Kitchen Dalston
Sally	Kosky	Unite
Natasha	Langridge	Real Democracy
Denise	Lenihan	PCS
Claudine	Letsae	Real Democracy
Leah	Levanne	
John	Lipetz	
Prof Ann	Lloyd Keen	University of Bedfordshire
Emma	Louisy	Islington Law Centre
Ros	Lucas	Migrant Resource Centre
Robert	MacGibbon	Keep our NHS Public
Vibeka	Mair	Civil Society
Jamie	Major	Unite
Emma	Mamo	Mind
Gavin	March	Community Organiser
Stella	Maris Semino	Roskilde University
Janice	Marks	Federation for Community Development Learning
Sue	Marsh	Diary of a Benefit Scrounger / Spartacus Report
Liz	Martindale	Ledford Estate Tenants Association
Don	McDonald	Youth worker

Susan	McDowell	
Deirdre	McGrath	London Civic Forum
Bryan	Merton	Park Lodge Project
Keith	Mogford	Skills - Third Sector
John	Morris	Housing Consultant
Suzanne	Muna	Unite (housing workers branch)
Dave	Munday	Unite
Ursula	Murray	Birkbeck College, University of London
Paul	Noon	Prospect
Kevin	Nunan	Voluntary Action Camden
Rita	O'Brien	Whitstable Against Cuts
Esther	Page	
Bryn	Pass	RSPCA
Joe	Penny	New Economics Foundation
Nicholas	Perkins	
Barry	Pickthall	Don't Cut Us Out
Cheryl	Pidgeon	UCATT
Emma	Plouviez	Voluntary Action Westminster
Tom	Pollard	Mind
Dr Natasha	Posner	Socialist Health Association
Ian	Richards	Youth worker
Mike	Richmond	Nugent Care / UNISON
Mike	Roberts	LGA Labour Group
Allison	Roche	UNISON
Sarah	Ruiz	Newham Voluntary Sector Consortium
Liz	Rutherford	Single Homelessness Project
Cllr Larry	Sanders	Green Party - Oxfordshire County Council
Jan	Savage	Keep our NHS Public
Matt	Scott	Community Sector Coalition
Razia	Shariff	Third Sector Research Centre
Sarah	Sheriff	Muslim Community Helpline
Eileen	Short	Defend Council Housing
Sharon	Singleton	Nottingham Community Housing Association
John	Slade	Co-operative Party
Julia	Slay	New Economics Foundation
Andy	Soar	Action Duchenne
Angela	Spence	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council
Hugh	Stultz	Big Lottery Fund

Carole	Sturdy	Voluntary Action Westminster
Nazreen	Subhan	National Coalition for Independent Action
Frances	Sullivan	National Coalition for Independent Action
John	Sweeney	UCATT
Steve	Sweeney	Cambridgeshire UNISON
Denise	Taylor	Regional Action West Midlands
Joe	Taylor	National Community Activists Network
Guy	Taylor	
David	Thompson	Diocese of Arundel and Brighton Pastoral Team
Phillippa	Thompson	Independent Living Association
Chris	Todd	Barking & Dagenham CVS
Pilgrim	Tucker	Unite Community Organiser
Julian	Vaughan	Blackfriars Advice Centre
Harry	Wallington	
Chris	Walsh	Wise Owls Employment Agency
Penny	Waterhouse	National Coalition for Independent Action
Peter	Watson	Unite
Simon	Watson	UNISON
Helen	Williamson	Age UK
Alan	Wyle	National Association of Community Run Shops
Wanda	Wyporska	Association of Teachers and Lecturers



Please contact Maxine@moarcommunities.com about organising your next conference