

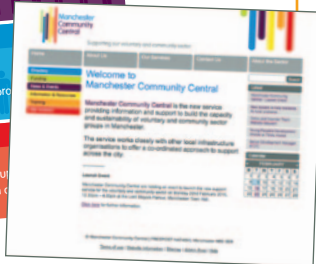


ISSUE 1 Spring 2010

Manchester Community
Central's quarterly news

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Community Central
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Supporting our Voluntary and Community Sector

Welcome

Manchester Community Central launched in January 2010 as the Infrastructure Support Service for the voluntary and community sector in the city.

We are now up and running with a dedicated staff team, a telephone line and a website all designed to help strengthen and support all the good work going on across the city. In this first issue you can find out more about what services we can offer and an explanation of "the voluntary and community sector".

This is only the start. Each issue will include news and ideas to get you thinking and explain how we're developing the support available to groups in Manchester. But what will make us different really depends upon you, our readers! We want you to tell us what you want to see: what would help you get even better at what you do? As Programme Manager I want to hear your views.

You can e-mail us on info@mcrcommunitycentral.org or go to our website www.manchestercommunitycentral.org We also have a freepost address so if you want to write to us you don't need a stamp.

Each issue I will give feedback on how we're growing this new service and what people are saying to us. So get the kettle on, have a read and don't forget - let us know what you think!

Tracey Rawlins, Programme Manager

Thank you to all who attended the launch of Manchester Community Central on 22nd February and for the comments we received. Feedback and responses are to be made available on the website and have been included in the weekly e-bulletin. Look out for Issue 2 of our newsletter which will feature an article dedicated to the responses and progress of Manchester Community Central.

About our service

Manchester Community Central is here to help voluntary and community groups in Manchester to make a difference and meet local needs. We bring together a whole range of resources, skills, ideas and services to ensure the local sector gets the support it needs.

Information Service

Our telephone line **0333 321 3021** is the first point of call for any Manchester group looking for support. Tell us what you need and we'll help you find the right support. The line is open from **10am to 4pm Monday to Friday** and until 8pm on Thursdays. (We've chosen an 0333 number as calls are charged at the same local call rate from a landline or a mobile phone: we think this is fairer to smaller groups and volunteers.)

We're putting news, updates, guides and toolkits on our website

www.manchestercommunitycentral.org

– a lot of the answers will be on there. If you don't have internet access, let us know when you call and if necessary we can post printed information to you.

You can also email us at **info@mcrcommunitycentral.org** to request support or to get our weekly e-bulletin.

Basic Support

If you need more than we can help with when you first contact us, we'll put you in touch with one of our Business Improvement Coordinators. They will talk through your needs with you and help you find a way forward. If necessary, a Business Improvement Coordinator can arrange to meet with you.

In-depth Support

For a limited number of groups with more complex needs, we will be able to provide a programme of longer term support in managing major organisational changes and development. This work by a Business Improvement Coordinator carrying out a **healthcheck** with you to assess your group's long-term needs. They will then co-ordinate a package of support which may include services from other infrastructure providers in Manchester.

About us

Manchester Community Central is not just another new organisation... it's a new service provided by a partnership formed by Manchester Alliance for Community Care (MACC), Voluntary Action Manchester (VAM) and Community Network for Manchester (CN4M), having taken over from Novas Scarman Group as of January 2010. We aim to build the **central** point where you can get in touch with all the resources available to groups in Manchester and support our local voluntary and community sector to thrive.

Funding Information

Always searching... but where to start?

We aim to provide the **central** place for local voluntary and community sector groups to get the support they need. A key to doing this is to work in partnership with other organisations who provide support.

Across Greater Manchester, organisations which support the local voluntary and community sector have been working together to develop a funding search facility, now known as GMFunding.net. The work to establish this has been funded through ChangeUp, the Government initiative to improve the quality of support that voluntary and community groups can access. Manchester Community Central has joined the partnership to enable this new service to be available in Manchester through our website.

To access the funding search go to **www.manchestercommunitycentral.org** and click on Funding.

The GMFunding service is FREE and has a number of useful features including:

- The latest published information on national government, trust and lottery funding.
- An online database containing details of over 5,000 funding schemes available in the UK from national and European sources.
- Information continuously researched and updated by staff at GrantFinder.
- An easy to use print function for detailed grant information.
- Links to useful online resources such as information sheets and fact packs.
- Details of local support organisations.

Training

There is a great deal of training available – but how to find the training you need? What if there was a central service which co-ordinates existing training opportunities in Manchester?

We aim to ensure that the training and learning needs of the voluntary and community sector are met by training providers, many of which are themselves local groups. A member of our team works on researching and co-ordinating training opportunities and putting it all together to give easier access to local, regional and national training.

All of this information goes into the training database on **www.manchestercommunitycentral.org** which you can search for training on topics including:

- Enterprise
- Finance
- Governance and Management
- Managing Risk
- Project Development and Planning for the Future
- Volunteering

If you can't find a suitable course, please contact the telephone information service on **0333 321 3021**.

We're also identifying gaps in training provision and working with providers to ensure the training groups need is available and affordable. If you provide training or would like to discuss working in partnership, please contact us.

Cheryl McAlister
Training Co-ordinator
training@mcrcommunitycentral.org

Our Role in “The Sector”

Manchester Community Central provides information and support to build the capacity and sustainability of the voluntary and community sector in Manchester.

What is the “voluntary and community sector”?

It's sometimes referred to as 'The Third Sector', the 'not-for-profit sector' or even 'the Civic Sector'. It consists of groups and organisations which are not-for-profit and not part of the public or private sector. What these groups have in common is that their activities are for the public benefit. They traditionally rely on the commitment of volunteers although it does not exclude paid staff. The sector covers a vast range of sizes and structures from large national organisations to local community groups.

Who do we work with?

Manchester Community Central is for voluntary and community sector and resident groups in the city of Manchester. This could include hobby or interest groups; tenants and residents associations; youth organisations; advice and support services; lobbying and campaigning groups; faith groups and groups representing local BME communities. Many of these but not all will be registered charities. It's hard to know how many groups there are but our estimate is there are around 4000 groups in Manchester.

Can you really help all those groups?

Of course, there's a limit to what we can do. We want to encourage groups to help themselves – so we're making available a wider range of resources: factsheets, funding searches and training opportunities. If a group needs someone to talk things through with and guidance to more practical help, the Manchester Community Central team can offer tailor-made basic and in-depth support. We'll also be looking at ways to connect up similar groups to enable shared learning and networking.

Get in Touch

Calls are charged at the same rate as a local call, whether made from a landline or mobile phone

Manchester Community Central
FREEPOST NAT4553
Manchester M60 3BR

Telephone Information Service 0333 321 3021
Email info@mcrcommunitycentral.org
Web www.manchestercommunitycentral.org

Our Website

Our website aims to be the online home of Manchester's voluntary and community sector.



There are resources and tools on the website to help you and your group, including:

- **Funding**
- **Training**
- **Useful guides and factsheets**
- **Sector news and events**
- **Voluntary and community participation**
- **An online directory of local organisations**

We will be continually updating and growing the website as we add further useful resources and information - so keep looking for the latest additions!