



ISSUE 2 Summer 2010

Manchester Community
Central's quarterly news

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Community Central
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Supporting our
Voluntary and
Community
Sector

Update

Hi there, and welcome to the Summer Issue of the Manchester Community Central Newsletter.

We have had a busy three months since the last edition, having received more than 300 enquiries from people using our Information Service and thousands of visits to our website. Our Business Improvement Co-ordinators have been out and about across the city working through more than 100 requests for support with issues including governance, planning and understanding responsibilities.

With the recent changes in Government, there are undoubtedly some challenging times ahead, many of us are already spinning several plates. Read on for a summary of "Thinking The Unthinkable", a recent event we held to get us all focussed on planning for the future.

We have added lots of new resources to the website so keep checking it for updates, including a report on our launch event in February.

And finally as I said previously, this newsletter really should be about you. We have featured the first of our case studies on groups who have accessed our service. Have you had a success you want to share? Have you learnt something we all should know? Get in touch!

As ever the voluntary and community sector in Manchester is hosting numerous events across the Summer again - don't forget to collect your evidence (photos, stories, feedback comments) to show what a fantastic difference you are all making!

Here's hoping the sun shines!

Tracey Rawlins, Programme Manager

More about Manchester Community Central

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 make sure the local sector gets the support it needs.

Manchester Community Central is for voluntary and community sector and resident groups in 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 BME communities.

Our most regular enquiries are often about funding, training or setting up a group, but we've received calls and emails with all sorts of questions.

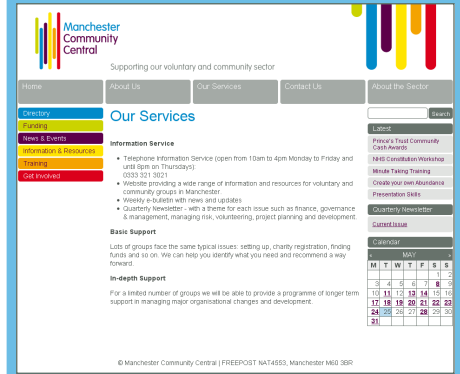
If you are considering setting up a group then you can find all the relevant information on the website. There is also a funding search facility and news on training courses and events. If you need extra help then call the information line.

Useful resources such as guides, toolkits and funding information are all available online at www.manchestercommunitycentral.org and information is provided through our dedicated telephone line **0333 321 3021** where we aim to help with enquiries or we can refer you to a Business Improvement Co-ordinator for additional help.

The support line is open from **10am to 4pm Monday to Friday and until 8pm on Thursday**. Calls are charged at a local call rate from mobiles and landlines.

You can also receive a weekly bulletin or request support if you send us an email to: info@mcrcommunitycentral.org

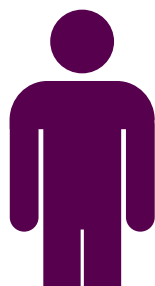
Our Website



The Manchester Community Central website contains a diverse range of resources and information relevant to the voluntary and community sector, including:

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

You can also request our weekly ebulletin, which contains a summary of recent website articles in an easy to read format.





Training Needs QUESTIONNAIRE

We have produced a pull out section of this newsletter as part of our regular supplement sections to provide a more detailed look at specific areas of the voluntary sector. This issue is training and we have a training needs questionnaire for you to pull out, complete and return to help us best match future training opportunities to your organisation's need.

What we can do:

Strong and healthy organisations need well-trained staff and members to operate effectively.

We co-ordinate existing training opportunities across Manchester that will help develop and strengthen your organisation as a whole. Part of this co-ordination involves making sure that the needs of the voluntary and community sector are met and we can bridge any gaps in provision that have been identified.

Common training needs from the questionnaire will be listed on our website with the opportunity for you to register your interest in attending courses. For example if lots of you tell us that you need help with Grantfinder then we will attempt to arrange suitable training to meet that need.

The information that you provide will also allow us to understand what the barriers are to accessing training, and we will work with groups and training providers in addressing these issues.

What you can do:

Please take five minutes to complete the questions on the following pages, pull out this supplement, put it into an envelope and send to the FREEPOST address below.

Or you can complete the questionnaire online at www.manchestercommunitycentral.org

Post completed surveys to:

Training Co-ordinator
Manchester Community Central
FREEPOST NAT 4553
Manchester M60 3BR

If you would like to be contacted by the Training Co-ordinator and be added to the Manchester Community Central database please complete the details below.

This information will not be passed to any third parties.

Name

Address

Email

Website

Telephone

Mobile

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

(Tick as many boxes as appropriate)

What kind of organisation do you work for?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary and community group | <input type="checkbox"/> Registered charity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Branch of national charity | <input type="checkbox"/> Statutory organisation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Enterprise | <input type="checkbox"/> Unincorporated group |
- Other (please specify) _____
-

What is your role in the organisation?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paid employee | <input type="checkbox"/> Trustee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Informal helper | <input type="checkbox"/> Committee member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer | <input type="checkbox"/> Manager / supervisor |

Do you normally attend internal training organised through your organisation, or external training outside your organisation?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internal | <input type="checkbox"/> External |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

On average, how often do you attend training?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly | <input type="checkbox"/> Every couple of months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a year | <input type="checkbox"/> Never |

When would you like to access training?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daytime on weekdays | <input type="checkbox"/> Evenings on weekdays |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weekends | |

What makes it difficult for you to access training?

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of time | <input type="checkbox"/> Location | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of confidence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain of relevance | <input type="checkbox"/> Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Inconvenient time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cost of attending | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of information | <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain of level |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of childcare | <input type="checkbox"/> None | |

Other (please specify) _____

■ Does your organisation have a budget for training?

Yes

No

■ Which style of course would you find most useful?

One day course

Training at networks or forums

Training in your organisation

Other (please specify)

Half day course

Accredited courses

Taster sessions

■ What would make training more appealing?

Receiving a certificate

Relevance

Practical workshops

Other (please specify)

Interactive sessions

Recognised qualifications

Cost

■ Where would you most like to see training delivered?

Community venues

Colleges

Other (please specify)

City centre venues

In-house

■ Have you visited the training section on Manchester Community Central website?

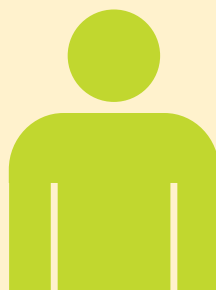
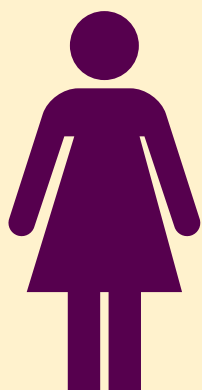
Yes

No

■ Do you have any suggestions for any improvements to the training section of the website?

Yes (please specify)

No



Which of the following would you most like training in?

Please tick as many boxes as appropriate

Enterprise

- Commissioning processes Developing readiness for new funding opportunities Tendering processes

Funding

- Writing funding bids Lottery funding Resource management
 Monitoring and Evaluation Developing a funding plan Book-keeping
 Introduction to fundraising Grantfinder training

Governance and Management

- How to form a group Policy development Quality standards
 Human resources Employment issues Managing change
 Committee development Strategic planning Effective meetings

Managing Risk

- Health and safety Food hygiene Safeguarding
 Fire safety Volunteer and service users Risk management
 First aid Safeguarding children (child protection)

Project Development and Planning for the future

- Business planning Equality and diversity
 Performance management and quality assurance Developing partnerships

Volunteering

- Working with volunteers Volunteers and the law Recruitment and selection of volunteers

Other

Please let us know of any other specific training needs which you have identified.

Thank you - Please return the completed questionnaire to the **Training Co-ordinator** at:

Manchester Community Central

FREEPOST NAT4553

Manchester M60 3BR

Funding

Funding can often be a main topic of conversation and concern for voluntary and community sector organisations.

Our website has a dedicated funding page and links to the GMFunding search facility, which has more than 5,000 schemes from UK and European sources and the information is regularly updated to reflect the latest government, trust and lottery funding.

The funding database is free to access and there's just a short registration form to complete before you begin your search.

Visit www.manchestercommunitycentral.org to access the GMFunding database and if you need extra support with funding applications or help using the funding search, call our Information Telephone Service: 0333 321 3021.

Training

There are many training and learning opportunities in the voluntary and community sector and the Manchester Community Central website gives you a wide range of training information in one place.

It features a searchable database of courses including; finance, enterprise, governance, and volunteering among others. The website also includes details on upcoming training opportunities and a calendar showing forthcoming courses.

A four page training needs questionnaire is included in this newsletter, if yours is not here someone's probably already filled it out and sent it back. To complete online visit www.manchestercommunitycentral.org

Case Study

Many of the people and organisations that call us receive the information they need over the phone but some people require additional help and they are referred to one of our Business Improvement Co-ordinators.

Irene Woods from the Welcomers Group called us because the local church hall the group uses was in danger of closing down due to a lack of funding.

Irene's group had been using the hall free of charge for over two years for putting on activities for retired local people. The church hall, St Dunstan's in Moston, needed to start charging rent for use of the facilities in order to become self funding and prevent closure.

The Welcomers Group wanted to continue using the hall and needed to contribute a year of rent up front to make sure the hall could stay open. Irene told us that she contacted Manchester Community Central because 'none of the other places that had funded her organisation could help'.

She called the information line and was referred to a Business Improvement Co-ordinator who got in touch with details of two potential funders and Irene is now working on the application.

Asked if she would recommend the service Irene replied, "yes I would, I feel very positive about it, and it's good doing it face to face rather than just having to fill in forms."

For more information about the Welcomers Group call Irene on 0161 653 1121.

Thinking The Unthinkable

What do you do if the unthinkable happens and your funding gets withdrawn? Manchester Community Central held one of a series of events in an attempt to help organisations plan for the coming changes and to start thinking about what to do before it's too late.

The event at the Mechanics Institute attracted a good turnout with a wide range of voluntary sector organisations represented, keen to discuss and debate strategies and potential opportunities.

The uncertain future for many frontline and infrastructure organisations showed in the level of interest in these events across Greater Manchester over the past few months.

Changes to Government and the spending cuts that seem inevitable, look set to drastically change how many groups operate within the sector and may well force organisations into competing or collaborating for funding.

Back to basics?

There were several key messages raised during the morning presentations including don't panic, think or swim, and consider all the options - even going back to basics.

We also learned about positive experiences in Manchester of mergers, our legal obligations and the implications of TUPE and redundancy when bidding for or losing contracts. The organisation Blue Orchid, who support social enterprises, gave an overview of possibilities for income generation.

The afternoon group workshops discussed three questions around funding cuts, future opportunities, and the role of infrastructure organisations.

Lots of time was given to networking and talking to other participants and this was seen as one of the most valuable elements of the day.

For those of you who haven't been able to attend one of the Thinking the Unthinkable events, there are notes from the presentations and other resources all available online at www.manchestercommunitycentral.org

Do you want your own copy of this newsletter?

If you're reading this in a library or at another organisation and you would like to receive your own version of the newsletter then email info@mcrcommunitycentral.org and we'll put one in the post and include you on future newsletter mailings.

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

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Email info@mcrcommunitycentral.org

Web www.manchestercommunitycentral.org