



Welcome

Chair's report



VA-L has undergone a year of unprecedented change, which has triggered a host of new developments, starting with Gary Headland stepping down as chair at the last AGM, myself being elected to that role, Richard Jackson taking over as our new

Chief Officer and followed by the many structural and policy changes which have subsequently been achieved.

It's to VA-L's credit that we have embraced these difficult times as an opportunity to re-invent ourselves and to redefine our role and what we offer to the sector. The Trustee Board have carried out a strategic review in consultation with staff and have formulated a clear vision which will take VA-L forward. We see the future where we work responsively in collaboration with our partners to develop and provide a range of demand-led services for a vibrant Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector in an ever-changing and challenging arena.

In short we have had a difficult but productive year, so I give my thanks and warmest wishes to our staff, the trustees, our partners and all those associated with VA-L and congratulate you all on your efforts in recent months. I am certain that the hard work, dedication and belief in VA-L which so many of you have shown over the past twelve months have enabled us to steer our way out of crisis, and into a period of stability and growth.

Vic Wyatt, Chair of Trustees

Chief Officer's report



As new Chief Officer my worries were many, but unfounded. VA-L has an excellent Trustee Board, a high level of trust and co-operation with key partners and crucially, a highly skilled and committed staff team. The

positive impact of these three areas on VA-L's future cannot be understated.

Rarely mentioned is also VA-L's trading arm -VA-L Trading - delivering highly successful, much needed services to the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS). They are self funding and an excellent example of how some of today's funding challenges can be tackled. We're not complacent but feel well placed to tackle any challenges that present themselves.

The wider VCFS remains somewhat in limbo. It's well documented that funding is becoming harder to access and consequently local strategic partners (from all sectors) are working hard to make opportunities more accessible to VCFS organisations. But the fact does remain that the VCFS is getting smaller and consequently the debate about meeting needs moves on. The Leeds Strategic Plan is where the conclusions to these discussions are summarised and prioritised so it's key that VCFS organisations understand how they can contribute. But rest assured that VA-L will continue to provide appropriate support and direction in order to lead the VCFS into a brighter future.

Richard Jackson, Chief Officer

Thank you

VA-L would like to acknowledge the generous support of the following: Fellowship House and Pontefract Lane Friends' Adult School Trust and Charles Brotherton

We would like to acknowledge the importance of our partnerships with:

Leeds City Council (especially Neighbourhoods & Environment; Adult Social Care; Leeds Library & Information Services; North West Area Management Committee and Team); Leeds Initiative; WYLDA (West Yorkshire Local Development Agencies); members of Leeds Infrastructure Consortium, Leeds BME Network and Leeds PSINetwork; GOYH (Capacity Builders); NAVCA; Volunteering England; fit4funding; WYCAS... and all our friends and colleagues in the voluntary, community and faith sector.

Projects & Services

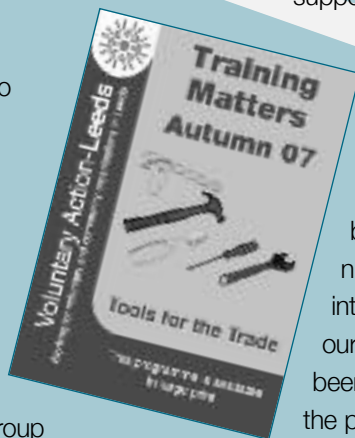
Training

High quality and relevant training is still one of the most vital services which our members and the sector need and appreciate. In 2007/08 over 600 people attended one of the 70 courses on offer.

This year we have worked with more partners than ever including Leeds City Council Adult Social Care Unit, Healthy Living Network Leeds, and the West Indian Centre & the Passion and Pride Project .

Our regular training programme 'Training Matters', covers a core range of skills and key areas of interest. In terms of general skills, courses like Minute Taking and Child Protection are always full every term.

Some notable additions during the year included: Plain Language Guide to Legal structures; Basic Substance Use and Alcohol Awareness; HIV and Hepatitis Awareness; Risk Assessment; Action Planning; Promoting your Group and Assertiveness.



Small Groups Development

The most effective community work often comes from local grass root organisations, with few or no paid staff. These are the groups that our Small Groups Development Worker is in constant contact with.

In total we responded to 446 requests for information and support, up over 20 per cent on the previous year. From this total 114 organisations accessed this service for the first time.

Twenty five organisations received training from the project over the year including information about charity registration, roles and responsibilities of trustees and policies and procedures.

Our continued efforts to make contact with groups from outlying areas proved to be successful with the largest number of new groups we worked with over the year coming from these areas. This was followed by groups providing services to children and BME groups.

Inner North West Funding Project

Providing support and advice to groups in Headingley, Kirkstall, Weetwood, Hyde Park and Woodhouse – the funding project aims to enable organisations supported to become more self-sufficient by enabling them to target and generate funds more effectively.

During the year 38 separate groups received individual support on funding applications and business planning, including a number of groups who received very intensive support as identified through our health checks. Over £140,000 has been brought into the area as a result of the project's support and advice.

Three newsletters were produced and distributed to over 250 groups and the project's monthly email funding bulletin reached over 60 groups each month.

“Sharon Knott has worked tirelessly in helping Al- Haqq Supplementary School to secure major funding, enabling nearly a hundred children to attend activities each week.”

Ibrahim Lorgat, Co-ordinator,
Al-Haqq, Supplementary School.

Volunteering

The Volunteer Centre at the Central Library is busier than ever, and by introducing our drop-in service last year we now have the capacity to see even more people. We now regularly see up to 20 potential volunteers a week and have also recruited more volunteers to help us.

We continue to be agents for Volunteering England, part of this involves the maintaining of the national online volunteer database www.do-it.org.uk. In total we advised 2,167 prospective volunteers and provided 533 volunteer opportunities for the Leeds area. We also gave one-to-one support to 86 organisation giving advice and support on their volunteer programmes.

Our Volunteer Managers Forum continues to be popular, enabling workers to keep regularly in touch. InVOLve workshops, run in partnership with voluntary groups across Leeds continue to promote volunteering to individuals and communities

We continue to promote volunteering to a wide range of people, this included five talks to schools and colleges throughout the year and work with Linkage Plus to encourage and support older volunteering within Leeds.

Keeping the sector informed

Our monthly e-news bulletin launched last year goes from strength to strength. Complementing our ever popular printed newsletter it keeps the sector up-to-date with the latest local and national news. The response has been fantastic with over 750 subscribers in our first eighteen months.

We relaunched our new look printed newsletter in February too with our new logo and more space for in depth features. We continue to offer our one-to-one Communications Workshops and 17 took place during the year.

“This morning’s one-to-one workshop, was immensely helpful to me. I managed to glean many useful tips and I hope I can now put them to good use. I am now looking at our website from a very different perspective. Very many thanks!”

Jane Johnston, Admin and Communications Officer, Mediation Leeds

The PSINetwork

The Physical and Sensory Impairment (PSI) Network (Leeds) continues to grow and now has 46 member groups.



In June, they held their ‘Towards Independent Living’ event which dealt with access to care services,

particularly in the light of changes in Leeds. In December, to celebrate the International Day of Disabled People, over 70 people attended an event on ‘Decent Work for All’.

In February, the Network in conjunction with Leeds City Council, organised a world record breaking attempt to hold the greatest number of wheelchair users on ice. Sadly they did not break the world record but 38 users and friends had great fun trying.

Payroll Services

Running a project or service can be challenging enough as it is, and the payroll service allows organisations to focus on what they do best – delivering services, and not worrying about P60s, P45s, pension contributions, sick pay, union subscriptions, annual returns and dealing with the Inland Revenue.

140 organisations used the service with over 850 employees on the payroll.

The service also allows you work out exactly what your payroll costs are for employing staff – helping if you are implementing full cost recovery systems.

Again, the cost of the service remained unchanged – providing excellent value for money.

“My job is made so much easier because of this resource... such a huge support - thank you.”

Liz Sunderland, Manager, Weekenders Club

Library and Funding Point

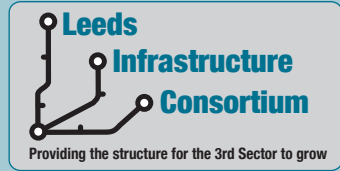
Carrying around 100 periodicals and nearly 2,000 books, the library is a valuable resource for local groups. Last year we dealt with over 120 enquiries – ranging from simple queries to complicated problems – the library also acts as a one-stop information centre. Eight new factsheets were published during the years - free to download from our website - including Disagreeing with a Decision and Business Planning.

Our Funder Finder online database located in the library, is still a popular way for groups to locate grants, receiving one-to-one training on using the system.

Leeds Infrastructure Consortium

The Leeds Infrastructure Consortium (LIC), a consortium of infrastructure support agencies facilitated by VA-L, went from strength to strength this year. The key piece of work was the functional review – looking at all the key

Infrastructure organisations in Leeds. The results from this study have built a comprehensive picture of what support is available to VCFS groups and will allow us to develop



shared services that better meet the needs of groups.

We also developed a shared needs analysis – with all members working together to assess the needs of front line groups – again in order to develop services that better meet the needs of groups.

The capacity project

Having your computer systems running, backed-up, secure and online, is now a key part of any project and this is where capacity really benefits the organisations it supports. Celebrating its tenth year, our experienced IT professionals provide training, site visits and phone support to its subscribers – this gives organisations the peace of mind, knowing that help is only a call away if their computer crashes or data is lost.

During the year the team supported 35 organisations over 47 sites through 687 support calls, hosted 80 domains with 370 email accounts and 170 training sessions.

The team now offers remote desktop support to the service which has proved to be very successful enabling them to log into your desktop computer from their offices, see the problem and solve IT issues instantly. The team is also currently looking at introducing a hardware recycling service to the project which we hope will prove popular.

Our annual report is also produced in large print and audio format please contact Voluntary Action-Leeds on 0113 297 7920 or email info@val.org.uk

Voluntary Action-Leeds, Stringer House, 34 Lupton Street, Hunslet, Leeds LS10 2QW

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VA-L is part funded by Leeds City Council through the Infrastructure Support Fund



Summarised Accounts

Consolidated statement of Financial Activities

For the year ended 31st March 2008.

Incoming resources	2008	2007
Incoming resources from generated funds:	Total Funds (£)	Total Funds (£)
Voluntary income:		
Grants and core funding receivable	187,187	198,971
Other voluntary income	11,406	12,218
Activities for generating funds:		
Commercial trading operations	87,313	84,535
Interest receivable	46,405	37,760
Incoming resources from charitable activities:		
Grants and similar income	96,116	253,579
Other income	90,416	78,267
Total incoming resources	518,843	665,330
Resources expended		
Costs of generating funds:		
Commercial trading operation	67,314	69,144
Charitable activities:	464,249	673,002
Governance costs:	15,320	14,885
Total resources expended	546,883	757,031
Net outgoing resources for the year	(28,040)	(91,701)
Gain on revaluation of investments	(21,236)	(2,820)
Total funds at 1st April 2007	847,139	941,660
Total funds at 31st March 2008	797,863	847,139

The trustees confirm that these summarised financial statements are a summary of information extracted from the full annual accounts, which were approved on 26 September 2008 by the Board of Trustees. These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. For further information the full annual accounts, the auditors report on those accounts and the Trustees' Annual Report should be consulted; copies of these can be obtained from Stringer House, 34 Lupton Street, Hunslet, Leeds LS10 2QW.

Balance sheet

For year end 31st March 2008

	Group		Charity	
	2008	2007	2008	2007
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets				
Tangible fixed assets	497,107	499,854	497,107	499,854
Investment - quoted	55,177	80,413	59,177	80,413
Investment - unquoted	-	-	2	2
	<u>556,284</u>	<u>580,267</u>	<u>556,286</u>	<u>580,269</u>
Current assets				
Debtors	22,503	50,458	70,716	43,380
Cash at bank and in hand	518,787	562,283	123,579	186,669
	<u>541,290</u>	<u>612,741</u>	<u>194,295</u>	<u>230,049</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(299,711)	(345,869)	(15,196)	(55,657)
Net current assets	<u>241,579</u>	<u>266,872</u>	<u>179,099</u>	<u>174,392</u>
Net assets	<u>797,863</u>	<u>847,139</u>	<u>735,385</u>	<u>754,661</u>
Unrestricted funds				
Free charitable reserves	66,694	75,125	66,694	75,125
Fixed assets reserve	497,109	499,854	497,109	499,854
Designated funds	143,827	106,000	143,827	106,000
Non-charitable trading funds	62,480	92,480	2	2
Restricted funds	27,753	73,680	27,753	73,680
Total funds	<u>797,863</u>	<u>847,139</u>	<u>735,385</u>	<u>754,661</u>

Registered Auditors

Thomas Coombs & Son
Century House
29 Clarendon Road
Leeds LS2 9PG

Bankers

Lloyds TSB Bank plc
6-7 Park Row
Leeds LS1 1NX

Registered Office

Stringer House
34 Lupton Street
Hunslet
Leeds LS10 2QW

Insurance Brokers

Bartletts & Co
Broadway Hall
Leeds LS18 4RS