

## **Press Release – For Immediate Use**

### **National Partnership endorses the Audit Commission's call for Children's Trusts to improve voluntary and community sector engagement**

(London, 3 November, 2008) "It's no surprise really," commented David Tyler chair of the Community Sector Partnership for Children and Young People (CSPCYP). David was responding to the Audit Commission report (*Are we there yet?*), published last week (29 October 2008), that representatives from the voluntary and community sector (VCS) felt the least valued and influential member on Children's Trusts. "We are pleased that the majority of Children's Trusts have VCS representation, but we are disappointed that despite recommendations reaching back to last year, they do not feel that they are engaged in an equal way and that the distinctive contribution of their Third Sector colleagues is not valued or understood."

Last year, the partnership published *Talking Trusts*, which set out straightforward recommendations encouraging Children's Trusts to adequately plan and build the capacity of voluntary and community organisations so that they can be involved in or represented at all stages, especially small organisations that are doing critical work with children and young people on the ground.

Written from the perspective of the VCS and drawing on its vast expertise, this publication provides recommendations around active engagement, representation, effective funding, operational coordination and infrastructure development. The CSPCYP therefore welcomes and endorses the recommendations to engage and support VCS representatives made by the Audit Commissions review this week. In response to the recommendations made by the review, David Tyler added:

"It is essential that voluntary and community organisations are engaged, supported and valued in Children's Trusts if the Government's vision for a more integrated service for children and young people is to be achieved. If not, we risk losing some of the sectors most valuable services and innovative projects, often accessed by the hardest to reach young people. Working with the VCS is an opportunity for Children's Trusts arrangements to focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and the communities in which they are based and making the Government's vision of England as the best place in the world to grow up a reality for all".

ENDS

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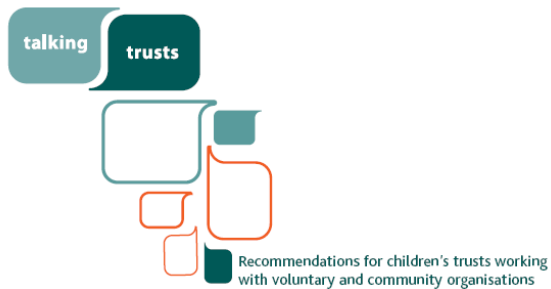
**Notes for Editors:**

- David Tyler, Chair of the CSPCYP and Chief Executive of Community Matters is available for interview and press enquiries at Community Matters on **020 7837 7887**
- The Audit Commission report – *'Are we there yet? Improving governance and resource management in children's trusts'*, published, 29 October 2008; available online: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports/NATIONAL-REPORT.asp?CategoryID=&ProdID=17AEBDA5-657E-4ef7-80BB-92214D4C04FF>
- The Community Sector Partnership for Children and Young People (CSPCYP) aims to influence the children and young people's policy and practice agenda, both nationally and through members locally, to ensure that community sector organisations are able to play their full role in the local planning and delivery of services for children and young people.
- "Talking Trusts – Recommendations for children's trusts working with voluntary and community organisations" was published in 2007 by the CSPCYP (see image below). The publication is free to download at: [http://www.communitymatters.org.uk/projects/youth\\_development\\_project/talking\\_trusts.pdf](http://www.communitymatters.org.uk/projects/youth_development_project/talking_trusts.pdf)
- The *Talking Trust* recommendations are divided across six areas of active engagement; representation; effective funding; operational coordination and infrastructure development and aim to help children's trusts engage with VCS.
- The CSPCYP is a strategic partnership of seven key national infrastructure organisations:
  - Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) is active in promoting the interests of rural communities. It also acts as the national umbrella organisation for 38 Rural Community Councils throughout England
  - British Association of Settlements and Social Action Centres (bassac) is the national network of multi-purpose community based organisations, dedicated to tackling the causes and effects of poverty, exclusion and discrimination.
  - Community Matters is the National Federation of Community Organisations with over 1,200 member organisations across the UK. We play a key role in promoting and supporting action by ordinary people in response to social, educational and recreational needs in their neighbourhoods and communities.
  - National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) is the national voice for local voluntary and community sector infrastructure in England. Their 360 members work with 140,000 local community groups and voluntary organisations which provide services, regenerate neighbourhoods, increase volunteering and tackle discrimination
  - National Council for Voluntary Child Care Organisations (NCVCCO) is the umbrella body for Children's charities in England; working with central, regional and local government to strengthen relationships and cross sector working for the benefit of children, young people and families
  - National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS\_ is the independent voice of the voluntary youths sector in England; working to inform and influence public policy., support members, and raise the

profile of the voluntary and community sector's work with young people.

- Rural Youth Network (RYN) is a national network of voluntary, community and statutory organisations which aim to make a difference on the issues that affect young people and those who work with them in rural areas through a framework of support, learning and exchange of good practice.

### Image of Talking Trust Publication – Front Page



[www.communitymatters.org.uk](http://www.communitymatters.org.uk)