



PRESS RELEASE: EMBARGOED UNTIL 11TH OCTOBER

Big Lottery Fund Bonus for South West Voluntary Youth Organisations

The Regional Youth Work Unit at Learning South West, in partnership with the South West Network of Voluntary Youth Organisations has been successful in achieving an award from Big Lottery Fund's BASIS Programme to develop its work to support voluntary youth organisations across the South West region.

The new project starts in January 2008 and will receive lottery funding for 5 years. This will enable the Regional Youth Work Unit to work with local voluntary youth networks to build capacity in the sector so that more young people can benefit from good quality youth work provision in their neighbourhoods, towns and cities.

The grant will help the Regional Youth Work Unit to provide information and advice to voluntary youth organisations, organise training events and produce guidance for good practice to broaden the range of opportunities available for young people aged 11-25, with the main focus on those aged 13-19.

Gill Millar, Regional Youth Work Adviser at Learning South West, said 'This is a real breakthrough for us in increasing our ability to work with voluntary sector colleagues. We will be able to appoint a full time Development Worker who will work to ensure that the offer that the voluntary sector makes to young people is challenging, creative and driven by young people's own aspirations. We are very grateful to Big Lottery Fund for giving us the opportunity to show how a regional approach can help to establish the voluntary sector as a genuine partner in the delivery of the local youth offer'

Mark Goodman of Voluntary Youth Service Devon speaking for the South West Network of Voluntary Organisations said 'We are delighted to be told of the Big Lottery Fund award. This will build on all the hard work and commitment from both the Voluntary Sector and the Regional Youth Work Unit over recent years in the South West. This is going to mean we can have an effective joined up partnership approach to regional infrastructure support for the youth sector through this new "Regional Youth Hub" which has to be a good thing for the Youth Sector and, in particular, young people here in the South West. We will now strive to ensure that this project gives the voluntary youth sector a real voice in the development and delivery of a range of services for young people in the South West region'.

The new post of Voluntary Youth Sector Development Worker has now been advertised, and details of it can be found on the Learning South West website: <http://www.learning-southwest.org.uk/web/Page3.aspx?PageID=106>
We expect to be up and running with the project by January 2008.

Note for Editors

The Regional Youth Work Unit has been established at Learning South West for almost 20 years. It works with local authority youth services, voluntary organisations and others with an interest in designing and delivering youth work in the region. The Unit also co-ordinates the UK Youth Parliament in the region, which acts as a voice for young people, to help them influence policies and practices that affect their lives. The Unit has been described as a 'Regional Hub' that brings together initiatives from national youth organisations and government departments with local youth work providers and commissioners. Its aims match those of its parent body, Learning South West: facilitating networks of good practice, increasing involvement of young people and learners, and helping to ensure that the youth workforce has the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to meet young people's growing expectations.

Embargoed until 11th October 2007.

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