

### **On a Mission ( Interlink November 2009)**

“The third sector can improve public services by being involved in their design and commissioning.” The Third Dimension - A strategic Action Plan for the Voluntary Sector Scheme (November 2007)

Recent national policy in Wales has consistently underlined the important role that the third sector has to play in the planning and development of public services. It is widely recognised that third sector agencies:

- Deliver essential services
- Are key to reaching and engaging citizens
- Champion the voice of service users, patients and carers in the planning and delivery of services

However, commissioning is complex and there can be barriers to effective third sector involvement, including a lack of clarity, cohesion and consistency. This in turn is not good for public service planning and delivery.

### **Commissioning Policy Development Project in Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr Tydfil**

In order to overcome the barriers to effective third sector involvement in commissioning, Interlink and VAMT (Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil) in partnership with the local authorities and NHS agencies successfully applied to the Big Idea Fund in 2009 to undertake a commissioning policy development project. This has resulted in the appointment of a project officer with the primary focus of developing a funding and commissioning/ service planning and procurement code of practice and toolkit for public and third sector organisations across the two county boroughs. The code of practice and toolkit will lead to:

- Improved commissioning and procurement arrangements
- More citizen-centred public services delivered on a “who does what best basis”

The project will be overseen by a multi-agency steering group and will maintain links with thirds sector networks and local strategic partnerships throughout.

### **Value Added Facts**

A big challenge for third sector organisations in relation to commissioning is to describe and quantify the value and vitality of the contribution that local organisations can make to enhancing public services. Information that would be useful for this project and for your own organisation is to know more about the added value that your organisation brings to its area. Please have a go at completing the 10-point Value Added Facts questionnaire, which you can download from Interlink’s website and return to me at [Margaret.mclaughlin@vamt.net](mailto:Margaret.mclaughlin@vamt.net) Tel: 01685 353920

Please also get in touch if there is any aspect of the project you would like to discuss with me.

Margaret McLaughlin- Commssioning Policy Development Project Officer