



NEWS RELEASE

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Voluntary Youth Organisations debate key issues around faith and young people in society at the NCVYS annual conference 7 November, London

The NCVYS conference, **Faith, Hope and Charity**, will present an opportunity for participants to debate challenging issues around faith, young people and the work of voluntary and community organisations in this area. With policy affecting young people high on the political agenda, Phil Hope MP Minister for the Third Sector will outline the Government's commitment to recognise and support the contribution of faith communities' in developing young people, and contributing to greater social cohesion within our communities.

Susanne Rauprich, NCVYS's chief executive said:

'We welcome the Government's greater recognition of the role faith-based organisations have in 'strengthening communities' but barriers to accessing mainstream partnerships and funding still appear.'

'These organisations have often picked up on the most challenging tasks within their local communities, taking an active, leading role in community cohesion and development work. Faith groups have also played a significant role in working with marginalised young people who are at risk of potentially unsafe behaviour such as becoming part of a gang or carrying dangerous weapons.'

NCVYS members will come together to discuss issues such as what youth organisations need to do to make their services more accessible to young people from all faiths? How to access funding? To explore the role of the faith-based voluntary youth sector in community development? Does a faith based approach to youth work help or hinder the personal and social development of young people?

Susanne Rauprich continued:

'We recognize that issues around faith exist in a broader global context of a multi-faith, multi-cultural society and so impacts on all voluntary organisations working with young people. Faith in one form or another finds a space in everyone's experience.'

NCVYS will be launching its **Factor in Faith** programme on the day. The programme aims to promote a faith and culturally sensitive approach to youth work through a newly published guide and unique funding opportunities.

Phil Hope MP, will kick start the day of inspiring debates at 10.15. Angela Sarkis, chief executive of YMCA England, Harmander Singh, principal advisor to Sikhs in England, and Aviva Dautch, senior interfaith and education policy officer to the Board of Deputies of British Jews will make up an inspiring panel to lead the debate on faith-based and interfaith organisations work with young people. Ajmal Masroor from Communities in Action will also deliver a keynote address in the afternoon session.

A celebration of individuals who have significantly contributed to the voluntary youth sector will also take place on the day in the form of the **NCVYS Awards**. The awards, now in their second year, are open for nominations.

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Editor's notes:

1. The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) is the independent voice of the voluntary youth sector in England. A diverse network of over 170 voluntary and community organisations and local and regional networks, NCVYS has been working since 1936 to inform and influence public policy, support members to improve the quality of their work, and raise the profile of the voluntary and community sector's work with young people. For more information, visit www.ncvys.org.uk
2. The NCVYS Award celebrates and recognises the contribution that volunteers of all ages or paid members of staff have made to the lives of young people in their area, organisation and/or to the NCVYS network. The awards will take place annually. The criteria for the NCVYS awards are individuals who:
 - have made a key marked difference to the lives of young people and/or the NCVYS network locally, regionally or nationally;
 - have done things over and above the efforts required as part of their regular employment contract; and
 - could be a role model and whose efforts could stand as a model of good practice.

Last year Mick Cohen of Redbridge Conference of Voluntary Youth Organisation (RCVYO) was posthumously awarded for his lifetime achievement and contribution to the sector and Kate Parish, UK Youth Parliament was awarded for her commendable dedication to the development of UK Youth Parliament. www.ncvys.org.uk