

**Greater Merseyside ChangeUp  
Third Sector Directories Research (North West Region-wide)  
July 2010**



**Table of Contents**

1. Introduction and rationale	Page 2
2. Executive Summary and conclusions	Page 3
3. Methodology	Page 3
4. Appendices	
4.1. Appendix 1, Mapping of Voluntary Sector Directories, ACEVO	Page 4-21
4.2. Appendix 2, Commissioner's Feedback Report, UCLAN	Page 22-36
4.3. Appendix 3, Appropriate Methods and Systems, The IT Zone	Page 37-59

**This research was funded by Capacitybuilders and commissioned by the 5 Counties Partnership.**



## 1. Introduction and Rationale

Greater Merseyside ChangeUp was commissioned by the 5 Counties Partnership to undertake research into Third Sector Supplier Directories. The research incorporates details on the current situation regarding use and development of supplier directories in the third sector, requirements of commissioning and procurement professionals in the public sector, and appropriate IT systems available for those third sector organisations considering producing a directory.

Commissioning has become the major form in which Local Authorities and other government institutions distribute money to the third sector and the private sectors.

Growing evidence suggests public sector commissioners are keen to acquire up-to-date and accurate information about third sector organisations who potentially could be service providers. Increasingly, anecdotal evidence indicated that commissioners and procurement officers are particularly interested in third sector service provider directories. It is hoped that this research will raise awareness of the current third sector supplier directories in use for public sector commissioners and procurement professionals, provide definitive evidence from commissioners as to what they require from a directory and be used as a guide for third sector organisations considering producing a directory, by providing practical advice as to the systems and methods that could be used to produce a directory.

Directories can provide a sourcing tool for commissioners and providers to help increase the range and number of organisations who can contribute to service delivery. They can identify and promote local, sub-regional and national providers of services, increasing their visibility to commissioners and other providers, facilitating opportunities for collaboration, new partnerships, innovation and sharing of good practice. Directories can be open to all providers, large and small, from the third sector who currently provide, or are interested in providing services to the public sector and could also be used by members of the public looking for services to support their needs, for example those with 'Direct Payment' responsibility for their own social care needs budget.

The research was split into three distinct tasks:

- 1) An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of directories currently in use or development in the third sector.
- 2) An investigation into the needs and requirements of public sector commissioning professionals.
- 3) A report built on the information gathered in phases 1 and 2, providing details of a variety of methods and systems which could be used to produce a third sector supplier directory.

### ***Acknowledgements***

The writer would like to thank the 5 Counties Partnership for commissioning the delivery of the research; Liam Cranley, Association of Chief Officers of the of Voluntary Sector (ACEVO); Sally Ann Bate, University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN); Peter Dunn, IT Zone and the public sector commissioning and procurement professionals for invaluable feedback and assistance.

## 2. Executive Summary and Conclusions

- Overwhelmingly, public sector commissioners supported the development of third sector supplier directories- they are seen as a highly useful and effective aide to commissioning processes.
- Commissioner's want online searchable directories giving as much information as possible whilst taking care not to duplicate full Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) information being gathered as part of other processes.
- There are a variety of different types of directories in existence, with differing remits, e.g. listings of services by theme or geographical boundary- this is usually determined by the funding body.
- Local infrastructure organisations (LIO's) manage the vast majority of directories- the preferred method of production for LIO's being online.
- Commissioners and procurement officers recognised that LIO's were the most effective and efficient bodies to develop and manage directory content.
- Although Commissioners recognised that the production and maintenance of online supplier directories required financial investment, they were unable to commit to providing such investment, particularly given the current state of public sector scrutiny, proposed cuts and change at strategic and government level.
- There are a variety of different IT systems which could be used to produce an online third sector supplier directory- this report identifies 4 in detail that are being used to effect.
- The cost of producing and managing a directory varies depending on the scope, size and remit of the directory project.

## 3. Methodology

Three separate research tasks where undertaken as follows:

1) ACEVO carried out research in the form of telephone and face to face interviews to map third sector supplier directories currently in use or development.

The full report and findings, including methodologies used can be found in Appendix 1, page 4-21.

2) UCLAN coordinated a focus group in May 2010 involving public sector commissioners and procurement officers from across the North West, to identify their needs and requirements in relation to third sector supplier directories.

The full report including detailed feedback from the focus group event and methods used can be found in Appendix 2, page 22-39.

3) The IT Zone, using information gathered from tasks 1 and 2, produced a report and practical guide into the IT systems which could be used to produce a third sector supplier directory.

*The full report including **practical planning guide** can be found in Appendix 3, page 40-62.*

## 4. Appendices

### 4.1 Appendix 1, Mapping of Voluntary Sector Directories, ACEVO, March 2010



## Mapping of Voluntary Sector Directories for the Five Counties Partnership March 2010

### Table of contents

1	Introduction and Background .....	5
2	Executive Summary .....	5
3	Methodology.....	8
4	General Findings .....	8
4.1	Content and design .....	8
4.2	Functionality .....	10
4.3	Management of Directory .....	12
5	Analysis: Strengths and weaknesses and quick wins.....	13
5.1	Strengths and weaknesses .....	14
5.4	Quick wins.....	17
6	Conclusion and options .....	17
	Appendices.....	18

# 1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 ACEVO was commissioned by the Five Counties Partnership to conduct a mapping exercise of voluntary and community sector (VCS) directories currently in use in the UK. The purpose of this exercise is to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of VCS directories.

This report has been prepared as the first of three stages of the Five Counties Partnership proposal to investigate the current and future development of third sector supplier directories.

The research was carried out by Liam Cranley, Head of the ImpACT Coalition, during March 2010.

- 1.2 The objectives of the study are:

- To select a sample of directories currently in use in the UK;
- To analyse content, functionality and management.

- 1.3 The key aims for this study are:

- To identify the strengths and weaknesses of VCS directories, specifically those that have been produced to catalogue suppliers and services provided by locality and or theme.

- 1.4 The key outcome sought for this study is:

- A greater understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of VCS directories.

## 2 Executive Summary

This section sets out the broad findings of the research; it serves as an illustration of the VCS directory 'landscape' in the UK. Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of directories can be found in [Section 5](#).

The research found that:

- There are five types of directory:
  1. generic online or printed directory managed by an local infrastructure organisation (LIO);<sup>1</sup>
  2. generic online or printed directory managed as part of local authority information services;
  3. generic online directory with a separate brand and online presence managed by an

---

<sup>1</sup> A 'generic' directory contains basic contact and organisational details of local VCS groups and organisations.

LIO;

4. multipurpose online directory that lists events, information and support managed by an LIO or partnership of LIOs;
  5. thematic online or printed supplier directory produced specifically for a local authority or Primary Care Trust and managed by an LIO.
- What type of qualitative information is included in the directory, specifically quality awards, directly affects the size and scope of the directory, and therefore the type of organisation that can be included in it. For further discussion on this issue, see [Section 6](#).
  - Generic directories serve two functions. Directories serve as a supplier directory for local authorities and as a service directory for the public and other VCS organisations.
  - Very few directories serve one function for a single audience, for example, as a supplier directory for health care commissioners. This research uncovered only two directories that can be strictly classified as thematic ‘supplier’ directories.
  - No single directory scores consistently high for content and functionality; however, a number of innovations in design were identified.
  - Directories are funded in three ways. Directories can be funded by unrestricted income (LIO); by ChangeUp; by a local authority, and in a few instances, by a Primary Care Trust (PCT).<sup>2</sup>
  - Directory information is managed by either an LIO or a local authority information service. In both scenarios there is always a strong relationship between the LIO and the local authority, and information is shared freely between the two.
  - Content is updated by the organisation responsible for managing the directory. However, there are a small number of LIOs that ask VCS organisations to submit their own information online.
  - The internet is the preferred method of delivery. A minority of LIOs still produce a printed version, but environmental sustainability, ease by which it can be updated, cost, and the ability for users to update their own details are cited as the main reasons for hosting directories online.

---

<sup>2</sup> ChangeUp has so far funded the production of online directories covering a sub-region, as opposed to a single borough or district. Each directory is managed by a ChangeUp consortium.

- Directories score poorly in relation to accessibility. Very few offer alternative access options for blind people, people with dyslexia and non-native speakers of English.
- LIOs and local authorities do not set rigid directory registration policies. Operating within the geographical boundaries of the directory is the only registration policy common to all directories.
- Directories tend to cover the same area as the organisation that manages it, for example, NAVCA's directory is nationwide, while Voluntary Action Leicestershire's directory covers Leicestershire. However, there are a number exceptions to this rule, with LIOs choosing to work in partnership with each other to deliver a directory for a broader geographic area, usually a sub-region.

### 3 Methodology

The research was based on discussions with the Jayne Lloyd, Project Manager for Greater Merseyside ChangeUp Merseyside, examination of relevant data, and telephone interviews with infrastructure personnel responsible for producing and managing VCS directories.

The methods used in the research were:

- Desk review and analysis of current VCS supplier directories;
- Development of questions for semi-structured interviews;
- Development of information frameworks to capture mapping data;
- 1:1 semi structured telephone interviews with four VCS directory managers.
- Draft research report;
- Final research report.

#### 3.1 Research Categories

This assignment was divided into three primary research categories. Each directory was subjected to a series of questions from each of the categories below:

##### Content and design

- What geographic area does it cover?
- What kind of information about organisations does it contain?
- Does it include a quality rating function?

##### Functionality

- What type of format is it available in?
- What kind of search criteria does the directory use?
- How accessible is the directory?
- Does the directory offer users the opportunity to provide feedback?

##### Management of Directory

- Who is responsible for managing the content?
- What principles govern the registration process?
- How is the directory funded?
- How often is it updated?

### 4 General Findings

This section brings together both qualitative and quantitative findings to present an overview of how current directories are compiled and managed. I have endeavoured to present the information in a way that will facilitate further discussion.

#### 4.1 Content and design

- 4.1.1 **Geographical remit** Research findings suggest that LIOs and local authorities limit the geographical scope of their directories to the area they operate in, usually a borough,

district or city. In a handful of instances, LIOs work in partnership to deliver an online directory that covers a wider geographical area, usually a sub-region, such as *Support for Groups* (Brighton & Hove).

- 4.1.2 **Organisational information** The primary function of VCS directories is to provide basic information (contact details, purpose of organisation, services offered and beneficiaries served) about local voluntary and community groups for the public and local authorities. This is reflected in the research, with only one of the directories analysed providing significant qualitative and quantitative information beyond that of basic information.

Table 1 below illustrates what kind of information is prioritised by LIOs.

Type of information contained in directories	Percentage of directories that include information
Contact details	100%
Purpose of organisation	88%
Geographical remit	50%
Beneficiaries served	44%
Services offered	38%
Lists quality awards	25%
Available facilities	13%
Number of staff	6%
Income and expenditure	6%
How the organisation is funded	6%

Table 1

*Here to Help: A Catalogue of Voluntary and Community Sector Providers*, produced by Halton Voluntary Action and St Helens Council for Voluntary Service and Greater Manchester Council for Voluntary Organisations' (GMCVO) Third Sector Health Care directory provide exceptions to this rule by including significant qualitative and quantitative information about VCS groups and organisations (*Here to Help*, in particular, includes detailed information about organisational capacity, operational activities, and service user engagement).

The marked difference is accounted for by the specific audience for and function of these directories.

While the majority of directories provide basic information for a wide audience (public, other VCS groups, local authority), Halton and St. Helen's *Here to Help* and GMCVO's Third Sector Health Care directory were produced specifically for healthcare commissioners to assist the commissioning process. Both were discreet pieces of work funded by and produced in partnership with their local PCTs. GMCVO's Third Sector Health directory was funded by the Association of Greater Manchester PCT's, which shows collective recognition of the importance of supporting the third sector to collect and promote this type of information.

- 4.1.3 **Qualitative rating system** Only GMCVO's Third Sector Health Care directory and Halton and St Helens' *Here to Help* includes a qualitative rating system, which sets out the level of compliance to healthcare quality standards. Again, this is explained by the specific function of the directory, namely, to provide commissioners with the relevant information to be able to make qualitative assessments of prospective service deliverers.

## 4.2 Functionality

4.2.1 **Format** Websites are the preferred format for directories. A number of organisations reported producing an additional hard copy of their directory.

4.2.2 **Search function** The search functionality of online directories varies. Most directories offer only a rudimentary search function and predefined sub-sectoral categories, yet some offer well designed, user friendly search functions and advanced search functions.

The table below sets out the most common online directory search functions.

Search function	Percentage of online directories that include search function
By keyword	92%
By services offered/theme	85%
By location/post code	62%
Alphabetically	54%
By beneficiaries	38%
Help button/function	23%

Table 2

*Support for Groups* in Brighton & Hove provides a good example of a user friendly search function. It boasts a brightly coloured basic search box on the homepage with the title 'I want support with...' This is complimented by a more advanced search function that is presented in a simple tab format, with four tabs displaying the various search functions: Search, A-Z, Services Provided and People Served.

23% of online directories analysed provide a help function to assist users in getting the most out of their search. Assistance ranges from basic LIO contact details (usually an email address) for anyone encountering, through to a dedicated webpage to explain how to use the advanced search function.

4.2.3 **Accessibility** Accessibility breaks down into two categories: public access and access for equality and diversity groups.

All of the directories surveyed are publicly accessible and do not require users to register their details.

A low proportion of directories offer alternative access options for users with specific accessibility requirements. The table below sets out the accessibility options currently available to directory users and the level of availability

Accessibility option	Percentage of directories that offer alternative accessibility options
Large font	31%
Alternative colour schemes	15%

Languages <sup>3</sup>	8%
Browse Aloud software for blind	8%

Table 3

Of the directories surveyed, Voluntary Action Leeds and Voluntary Action Leicestershire make a concerted effort to cater for users with specific accessibility needs.

Voluntary Action Leeds offers guidance and advice for blind users on how to download and use Browse Aloud software, a software package that converts website text into speech, while Voluntary Action Leicestershire has invested in software that allows all its web pages to be viewed in alternative colour schemes, thereby making it easy for the page to be read by anyone with dyslexia. For more information on how to design a website that does not exclude dyslexics visit <http://www.dyslexia.com/library/webdesign.htm>

4.2.4 **Branding and identity** Directories are presented in a number of ways. A directory may take one of the following forms:

- *A service offered by an LIO or consortium that does not have a separate web presence or brand.* Voluntary Action Leicestershire and Plymouth Third Sector Consortium are good examples of organisations that do this well.
- *A function of a local authority information service.* A directory may either be produced exclusively by the local authority (see Elmbridge Borough Council), or through collaboration with an LIO(s). See Leeds Voluntary Action, Edinburgh Compact and Conwy Community Directory for reference. Local authority directories produced in collaboration with an LIO contain a greater amount of information and are generally more user friendly.
- *A basic branded directory with a separate web-presence managed by an LIO or a partnership of LIOs.* These types of directories can vary in quality of branding, visibility and traffic; see Blackpool Third Sector Directory and VCS Directory York and North Yorkshire for reference.
- *A multipurpose directory that lists events, information and support for a wider area managed by an LIO or a partnership of LIOs.* These directories tend to be well branded, well produced and frequently used. For particularly good examples see Reading Voluntary Action Directory and *Support for Groups* (Brighton & Hove).
- *A supplier directory produced for a specific audience.* The style and content of these types of directories are heavily influenced by their intended audience. A supplier directory serves a specific function for one audience. As a result, these directories are

---

<sup>3</sup> Conwy Community Directory offers an option to view content in Welsh. This was not recorded as an alternative language option because it is a national language of Wales.

stronger on functionality than branding.

4.2.5 **User feedback** Only two of the directories reviewed during the research stage have dedicated user feedback functions: Voluntary Action Leicestershire and Conwy Community Directory. Both organisations offer users a simple rating function and a feedback comment box. Conwy Community Directory stands out by offering a dedicated user feedback function.

### 4.3 Management of Directory

4.3.1 **Primary purpose of directory and audience** The primary purpose of directories as reported by LIOs is to provide basic contact details for a wide audience: the public, other VCS organisations and local authorities.

Directories serve as a guide to local services for the public, a resource to identify potential partners by other VCS organisations, and as a supplier directory by commissioners.

4.3.2 **Partnerships** There are two common partnership models for directories: LIO partnerships, often in the form of a ChangeUp consortium, and a local authority and LIO partnership.

4.3.3 **Funding** Directories are funded in one of the three ways illustrated in the table below.

Funding source	Percentage of directories funded by each source of funding
Unrestricted income	41% <sup>4</sup>
Local authority or PCT	30%
ChangeUp	29%
Other	0%

Table 4

- *Unrestricted income.* The majority of LIOs meet the costs of producing and managing a directory with unrestricted income. Those LIOs interviewed reported that their directories are viewed by stakeholders as one of their standard services that should be offered free of charge to users.

The running costs of online directories are kept to a minimum by maintaining them in-house. Online directories are usually maintained by an ICT officer or an information officer.

- *Local authority.* Some local authorities (See Leeds and Wakefield council websites for examples) fund, produce, manage and host online directories. In effect, this is simply the sharing of information between a local authority and an LIO.
- *Primary Care Trust.* PCTS have funded supplier type directories to assist their

<sup>4</sup> The proportion of directories funded by unrestricted income is significantly higher than 41%. This figure is representative of the research sample only, which includes a variety of directories for comparison purposes only.

commissioners in the commissioning process. For more information on PCT funded directories see section [4.1.2](#)

- *ChangeUp*. ChangeUp has funded several consortia to produce directories that cover a larger geographic area than traditional directories, usually a sub-region. For examples of ChangeUp funded directories, see *Support for Groups* (Brighton & Hove), VCS Directory (York & North Yorkshire) and Plymouth Third Sector Consortium.

4.3.4 **Content management** Content is updated in three ways: by an LIO, by the local authority, usually the information services department, and by users. The main considerations relating to content management responsibilities are capacity (time required to update content) and frequency of update (how often the data needs updating).

4.3.4 **Registration procedure** The registration procedure for directories is basic. The one requirement common to all directories is that organisations must operate within the geographical boundaries of the directory to be included.

## 5 Analysis: Strengths and weaknesses and quick wins

This section analyses the strengths and weaknesses of directories and makes recommendations for 'quick wins'.

The first part presents the strengths and weaknesses in a way that will facilitate further discussion (phase two of the scoping exercise). The analysis of strengths and weaknesses is presented here in narrative form to make the information easy to digest. However, for further discussions it might be helpful to categorise the strengths and weaknesses under the following headings:

- Perception (Public, users, VCS groups)
- Implementation
- Knowledge and skills
- Financial sustainability
- Environmental sustainability
- Time constraints
- Cost and value for money
- Logistics
- Professional relationships

All of the strengths and weaknesses presented in this report fall under one or more of these categories.

The second part presents a list of 'quick wins'. These quick wins are based on best practice and some of the innovative approaches uncovered during the course of this research. Each quick win included in this document meets three criteria: one, it's not controversial; that is,

stakeholders will easily agree on the benefits of the proposed activity; two, it can be easily implemented; and three, it adds value to the directory.

## 5.1 Strengths and weaknesses

This section provides analysis on the strengths and weaknesses of directories, and lists potential 'quick wins'.

### 5.1.1 Content and design

#### 5.1.2 Geographic remit

*Strengths* Current online directories that cover a large geographic area give greater choice and improved access to organisations to their users. Bringing together information about VCS groups and organisations into one place presents greater opportunities for partnership working between the voluntary sector across a wider area.

*Weaknesses* LIOs and consortia report that producing a directory for a large area (a sub-region or larger) entails logistical challenges; namely, coordinating a large group of stakeholders, managing their expectations, and collecting and maintaining information. Poorly performing or disgruntled partners could lead to delays in production or a potential gap in the information presented by the directory.

#### 5.1.3 Qualitative information

*Strengths* Including a greater amount of organisational information in a directory, especially qualitative information, is attractive to commissioners. Public sector commissioners use the additional information to aid the decision making process when procuring services. Offering such a service to commissioners has won funding for two supplier type directories included in this study.

*Weaknesses* Current supplier type directories focus on a specific sub-sector or theme (health care, for example), and use a quality system specifically designed for the health care sector, which allows commissioners to compare performance and compliance of different health care organisations (see Halton's *Here to Help*). This system can only be scaled up to regional level if the focus remains on health care. For more on this discussion, see [Section 6](#).

#### 5.1.4 'Amazon style' user rating

*Strengths* Providing a function whereby service users and commissioners can rate the services they have used or commissioned offers a wealth of qualitative information with little effort. It forces service providers to be truly accountable and provides them with an incentive to improve services.

*Weaknesses* This system is open to abuse by competitors, and therefore must be trialed extensively and constantly monitored and moderated. It may also be difficult to attract comments; however, providing users with an incentive to submit comments may remedy this situation.

This research did not uncover any directories currently using this rating system.

### 5.2.1 Functionality

#### 5.2.2 Format: Hard copy Vs online directories

*Strengths* Hard copies provide a resource for those who do not have access to the internet or are not computer literate.

*Weaknesses* LIOs report increasing external pressure by local authorities and voluntary groups to reduce their environmental impact.

Following initial investment in ICT software to produce an online directory, organisations report a reduction in overheads by removing print and design costs.

LIOs stress that their printed directories have a short shelf-life: they have to update and reprint them at least once a year. Alternatively, online directories can be updated on a continuing basis by either the LIO or the directory users.

#### 5.2.3 Multipurpose website

*Strengths* Current multipurpose websites, such as *Support for Groups* (Brighton & Hove) and Reading Voluntary Action Directory, act as a central hub of information for a sub-region. As such, they attract a greater volume of traffic than most directories and may offer advertising opportunities in the future.

*Weaknesses* The success of multipurpose websites is contingent on building critical mass, both in terms of attracting organisations to contribute information (events, courses, resources) and in the number of users who access it. Building critical mass may take considerable time and effort at the outset.

#### 5.2.4 Search function

*Strengths* Current user-friendly search functions make it easier and quicker to access information. If commissioning the production of an online directory, specifying a search function with better functionality will be reasonably easy to implement and will not drive up costs significantly.

#### 5.2.5 Accessibility

*Strengths* Improving accessibility widens access to services by hard-to-reach groups.

*Weaknesses* Improving accessibility options can often be expensive. For example, translating documents into several languages will incur significant costs.

#### 5.2.6 User feedback

*Strengths* Those organisations that proactively seek user feedback on their directories are able to evaluate their service and improve it accordingly.

*Weaknesses* Depending on the volume of feedback, replying to each submission may increase an organisation's administrative workload. This could be remedied by producing a standard template response that can be tailored to each submission.

### 5.3.1 Management

### 5.3.2 VCS managed content

*Strengths* Allowing users to update their own content reduces the administrative burden on the organisation responsible for managing the directory. User managed content can be kept up-to-date as and when the users organisational information changes. In effect, it creates a live database.

*Weaknesses* Users may input incorrect information. A solution to this problem is to issue automated letters or emails requesting verification that the information submitted is correct.

Users might not submit information. Clearly stating the benefits of submitting and maintaining organisational information is a possible solution to this problem. [Wakefield Council](#) adopts this strategy.

### 5.3.3 LIO managed content

*Strengths* Content managed by an LIO can be easily updated and checked for errors.

A directory managed and maintained by an LIO can be synchronised with an internal database to produce data that can be used for marketing and communication purposes.

*Weaknesses* Maintaining a large directory can be time consuming and may place an additional administrative burden on current workloads.

### 5.3.4 Local authority managed content

*Strengths* Content managed by the local authority reduces administration for an LIO and keeps costs to a minimum.

*Weaknesses* LIOs lack control over data. An LIO cannot take advantage of the strengths outlined in section 5.3.3

### 5.3.5 Unrestricted funding

*Strengths* Funding a directory through unrestricted income gives an LIO complete control over how the information is presented, how the directory is designed, and how the data is used.

*Weaknesses* Depending on the specification, creating a directory can be expensive. For example, an online directory that provides detailed information about VSC organisations and includes exceptional functionality is likely to incur significant costs.

### 5.3.6 Public sector funding (local authority or PCT)

*Strengths* Securing funding from a local authority or PCT to produce a directory is an acknowledgement of the important role that LIOs play in the local voluntary and community sector; it helps to build positive relations between an LIO and the local public sector. In addition, the practical benefit of funding a directory through a public sector body is a reduction in production costs for the LIO.

*Weaknesses* A local authority or PCT may wish to exercise greater control over the design and content of the directory. While this will not necessarily lead to conflict, it may reduce the number or type of organisations included in the final directory.

### 5.3.7 **Generating income from advertising revenue**

*Strengths* Advertising (products, services, jobs) can provide an additional source of unrestricted income for an organisation.

*Weaknesses* The ability to generate income from advertising depends on critical mass, attracting enough repeat visitors to a website. To achieve this will require scale, probably a regional reach, and will entail significant input by staff and additional marketing of advertising opportunities.

## 5.4 **Quick wins**

This section sets out recommendations for online directories, which are reasonably easy to implement, but at the same time will add value.

- 5.4.1 Ask users to alert the lead body to out-of-date or incorrect information. Provide users with a dedicated email address for this service.
- 5.4.2 Embed Google maps to guide online users to the location of organisations listed in the directory. This is a helpful tool for users and is inexpensive to implement. See [Reading Voluntary Action Directory](#) for a good use of Google maps.
- 5.4.3 Include an accessibility statement outlining your commitment to equality and diversity groups.
- 5.4.4 Include a search function that allows organisations to be searched by generic quality awards (IIP, ISO9001, PQASSO).
- 5.4.5 Establish contact with other consortia that have undertaken similar projects. Voluntary Action Leeds has recently created a joint database with Leeds Voice, and *Support for Groups* is developing a Common Database Project for VCS groups and organisations in Brighton and Hove.
- 5.4.6 Include a user rating function for each page. For example, the smiley face system used by [Voluntary Action Leicestershire](#). This will provide valuable feedback on functionality and usefulness.
- 5.4.7 Make it easy to submit feedback by offering a comment box on each webpage. This will generate more comments than a general feedback form.
- 5.4.8 Involve users when designing and piloting the directory. This will ensure that the final product is user friendly.

## 6 **Conclusion and options**

This research shows that the most significant challenge facing the Five Counties Partnership scoping exercise is to establish the feasibility of scale. To this end, deciding what type of qualitative information is included in the directory will affect the size and scope.

If a thematic quality standard award, such as the Core Healthcare Standards, is applied to a directory, any attempt to scale up to regional level will necessarily exclude those organisations that do not work within healthcare and cannot be measured by this award. Conversely, a

directory that identifies organisations that have been awarded generic quality awards (ISO9001, PQASSO, Investor in People) does not discriminate against any VCS organisations.

As a result of this research a number of options have been identified.

1. **A single VCS directory for the North West** One directory that includes all VCS organisations within the North West. The directory identifies those organisations that have achieved generic quality awards.
2. **A single VCS directory for each sub-region or county** Multiple directories that include all VCS organisations within several sub-regions, most likely divided by each of the five counties. For example, this might include Cheshire VCS Directory. The directory identifies those organisations that have achieved generic quality awards.
3. **A single directory for the North West for each VCS sub-sector** This would mean multiple thematic directories that include all organisations that work in particular sub-sector within the North West. For example, this might include a North West Directory for Health & Social Care. Each directory would include the relevant quality award for that sub-sector.
4. **A single directory for each sub-region or county for each VCS sub-sector** This would mean multiple thematic directories that include all organisations that work in particular sub-sector within a sub-region. For example, this might include a Cheshire Directory for Health & Social Care. Each directory would include the relevant quality award for that sub-sector.

## Appendices

- 1 List of directories included in research
- 2 Questionnaire for semi-structured interviews

Appendix 1: Directories reviewed during research:

- Blackpool Third Sector Directory
- Conwy Community Directory
- Edinburgh Compact
- Elmbridge Borough Council: VCS Directory
- Greater Manchester Council for Voluntary Organisations (GMCVO): Third Sector Health Directory
- Halton Voluntary Action and St. Helen's CVS: Here to Help: A Catalogue of Voluntary & Community Sector Providers
- Inverness CVS: Third Sector Art, Sport and Culture Directory
- Leeds City Council: VolSec Directory

- Leeds Voluntary Action and Leeds Voice: Connect Database (Currently in development)
- National Association of Voluntary and Community Action
- Plymouth Third Sector Consortium
- Reading Voluntary Action Directory
- Scottish Council for Voluntary Service: VCS Database
- Voluntary Action Sheffield
- Support for Groups: Brighton & Hove
- Third Sector Cumbria Directory
- VCS Directory: York & North Yorkshire
- Voluntary Action Leicestershire
- Voluntary Action Westminster Directory
- Wakefield Council Voluntary Directory

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire used to conduct semi-structured interviews

### **Purpose**

1) What best describes the main purpose of the directory?

- a) To provide basic contact details
- b) To provide a qualitative assessment of services offered by local third sector organisations
- c) Other (Please state)

2) Who is the primary audience for the directory?

- a) Local authority
- b) Public
- c) Other voluntary sector orgs
- d) All of the above
- e) Other (Please state)

3) Who uses it most?

- a) Local authority
- b) Public
- c) Other voluntary sector orgs
- d) Not sure
- d) Other (Please state)

### **Management**

4) How was it originally funded?

- a) Local authority or Primary Care Trust (PCT)
- b) Unrestricted funding
- c) ChangeUp
- d) Trust or foundation
- e) Central government
- f) Other (Please state)

5) Is it financially sustainable? If the answer is 'yes', how have you made it sustainable?

6) How frequently is it updated?

- a) Live/updated by users
- b) Less than every month
- c) Less than every 6 months
- d) Less than every year
- e) Less than every two years

7) If updated by users, on average how often do they update their profiles?

- a) Less than every month
- b) Less than every 6 months
- c) Less than every year
- d) Less than every two years

### **Accessibility**

8) Are there any barriers to accessing the directory that you would like to overcome?

### **Review**

9) What has worked best for your directory?

10) What would you change/do differently?

**Liam Cranley**  
**Head of ImpACT Coalition**  
**ACEVO**  
**1 New Oxford Street**  
**London**  
**WC1N 1NU**  
**T: 020 7280 4938**  
**E: [liam.cranley@impactcoalition.org.uk](mailto:liam.cranley@impactcoalition.org.uk)**

## 5.2 Appendix 2, UCLAN Report from Shaping Third Sector Supplier Directories Event, May 2010



### FEEDBACK REPORT FROM THE 'SHAPING THIRD SECTOR SUPPLIER DIRECTORIES' FOCUS GROUP EVENT HELD 17<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2010

#### **Introduction**

Lancashire Business School at the University of Central Lancashire was commissioned by the Five Counties Partnership to host a north-west based focus group for commissioners and procurers of public sector services. The purpose of this event was to use the findings from the ACEVO report 'Mapping of Voluntary Sector Directories for the Five Counties Partnership' to consult with a focus group of Commissioners and procurement officers and explore & gather feedback on Third Sector Supplier Directories.

The focus event was held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2010 in Preston. The focus group consisted of 9 attendees - 3 Commissioners representing 2 PCTs, 5 representatives from councils and 1 representative from the NWDA.

The event was entitled 'Shaping Third Sector Directories' and included presentations from Professor Chris Heginbotham on 'Really Engaging the Community: Commissioning with and from the Third Sector' and Debbie Dalby, Chief Officer of Halton Voluntary Action showcasing the 'Here to Help' supplier directory commissioned by Halton & St Helens PCT.

The event also included a session using an interactive response system to collect and analyse delegates' responses to questions informed by the ACEVO report. Delegates were not given a copy of the ACEVO report before the session so that they were not influenced by the findings. Copies of the ACEVO report were issued at the end of the event.

#### **Key Feedback**

1. Overwhelming support for the development of supplier directories
2. Want an electronic version giving as much information as possible but it should not overlap too much with PQQ info
3. Must be searchable by services offered and geographical area covered
4. LIOs are seen as the most effective and efficient bodies to develop and manage directory content

5. Ideally want either a single VCS directory for each sub-region or county or a single directory for the NW for each VCS sub-sector
6. Commissioners and procurement officers in attendance were positive about the idea of financially supporting the development but not able to commit any funding at this time
7. Support for an annual, easily updated PQQ facility via a portal

### **Summary of interactive response system data**

#### **Type of information required:**

Over 3 questions delegates were asked what type of information they would require from a directory and asked to rank these in order of importance. 15 potential info types were identified from the AVECO report and delegates were also asked for any other info they may want. Due to the constraints of the interactive system (i.e. max 9 options) the 15 potential types of information were offered and ranked in 2 groups.

From the first list of potential types of information required, contact details, services offered, purpose of the organisation, beneficiaries served and geographical remit are the most important. For some delegates geographical remit is used as a first line sensor. Quality awards were seen as less important at this stage as this differs depending on what is being bought and if they are current.

From the second list of potential types of information required the focus of importance in this group of choices was on track record of delivery, operational delivery capacity and available facilities.

Legal status was not chosen at all and areas such as track record of delivery were given as low importance as delegates stated that they would carry out a PQQ exercise with each organisation and this would cover all these areas.

There was discussion about government plans to introduce annual PQQs via a portal that could be updated by organisations and would include prompts for update when for example insurance renewal was due. This idea appeared popular with delegates.

When asked about other types of information they required responses were;

- Policies – strong drive to link with organisations that have similar policies to ours e.g. sustainability, finance
- Ideas for services – demonstrating previous ideas for innovation
- If part of consortia – i.e. already demonstrating they can work in partnership
- Categorisation of organisations – SHA working on a regional database of health organisations e.g. mental health, continuing health care etc. Would be useful to link in with Local Authorities and have some communality of categorisation
- Any plans the organisation has in the pipeline
- Capacity for new business
- DUNs reference number

#### **Directory Type and usage:**

When asked what directories currently in use do you prefer responses here were split across 4 of the categories.

The generic managed as part of LA info services option was only chosen by PCT and NWDA representatives. One PCT representative also chose the thematic supplier directory for specific LA or PC managed by LIO option.

The Local Authority representatives were split across 3 options - Generic online separate brand managed by LIO, Multipurpose online listing managed by LIOs and Thematic supplier directory for specific La or PCT managed by LIO.

When asked 'Why do you prefer these directories?' responses were:

- Something is better than nothing!
- No NW directory available at this time
- Didn't know others existed
- Would interface with our own systems
- Ease of use
- Want sector specific
- It doesn't include irrelevant info
- Not limited to just LA
- LIO has infrastructure to manage and update
- CVS best place to keep up to date

During the discussions a request was made to have the facility to download info from the directory in Excel to use within their organisations.

When asked if they routinely use commercial supplier/provider directories in the procurement of services responses were Never 22%, Occasionally 56% and Regularly 22%.

There was some discussion on definition and feedback indicated that occasionally was taken as 2-3 times in a year and those choosing the regularly option were both representing Councils.

This was then followed by a question concerning what proportion of procurement spend is made using these supplier/provider directories. Responses were Nil- 33% of delegates, Up to 10%-56% of respondents and 11-25% -11% of respondents.

The 11-25% option reflects care streams in Cumbria. Overwhelmingly very little proportion of procurement spend is made using these supplier/provider directories

When asked if ideally they would prefer directories to be Thematic e.g. listing providers of health related services or General/linked to geographical boundaries responses were 44% for the 1<sup>st</sup> option and 56% for the second.

A fairly even split across the 2 choices and no significant differences in preferences between PCT and Council representative responses.

### **Electronic Directories**

When Commissioners were asked if ideally would you prefer directories to be Paper based or Electronic all delegates chose the electronic option but in further discussion there was a lot of support for having a paper version as well of at least some info when launching the database (e.g. glossy versions) and maybe for updates or special editions.

On the question of how electronic directories how should information be searched overwhelmingly delegates wanted to be able to search by services offered. Responses to the other options (keyword, postcode or beneficiaries) were very split over 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> choices. No significant differences in the choices from PCT and Council representative responses.

On the question of if accessibility issues that need to be considered in electronic directories, plain English and formatting were overwhelmingly the most important factors for the delegates.

Delegates were then asked how importantly they view seeking user feedback on electronic directories and rate this on a scale of 1-100. All delegates were supportive of directories seeking user feedback. The majority of the responses rated the importance of this at between 40-75/100 i.e. significant but not an absolute must.

### **Quality standards information**

When asked how important is it to know if suppliers have quality standards and/or details of level of compliance and asked to rate that on a scale 1-100% the majority of delegates rated this as significant i.e. the majority of responses rated this at over 60%. Again there was discussion here about it being part of PPQ.

Commissioners were then asked which quality standards their organisations recognised - IIP and ISO9001 are the most recognised. They were asked for any others that were of importance and responses were;

- Care Quality Commission
- Depends on product e.g. kitemark
- ISO14001

### **Directory management and development**

When asked how and by whom should the directory content be managed Commissioners and procurement officers responses were that they did not want a regional or national body to manage content and thought that LIOs would be the most effective and efficient.

When given options of how the directory could be developed in the North West and asked to rank them in importance, first choices were mostly for a single VCS directory for each sub-region or county or a single directory for the NW for each VCS sub-sector. A single directory for the NW was the first choice for 1 delegate and the most popular 2<sup>nd</sup> choice. There was discussion about the cost of maintenance.

Commissioners and procurement officers were then asked if directories are developed for sub-regions or sub-sectors should they be developed so that they could be combined in the future if required. All were in favour of this option.

On the question of current and future development of directories requiring financial support and if Commissioners and procurement officers are willing/able to support this responses were 33% saying yes but would need to look at where funding may come from and 67% yes would like to but not sure if can fund. Points from the wider discussion were;

- Hard to justify cost when being asked to cut budgets
- It should be funded from a central body or RDA
- Regional Sustainable Procurement board – maybe ERDF funding could be used?
- Discussion re the possible opposition from voluntary sector colleagues and the cultural change that will need to happen alongside the development of a directory

### **Attendees:**

Peter Case-Upton, Liverpool PCT  
Wendy Clarke, Knowsley MBC  
Sharon Cornwell, NHS Cumbria  
Tommy Crawford, Sefton MBC  
Gillian Hampson, Rossendale Borough Council  
Carol Jennions, St Helens Council  
Suzanne Lofthouse, NHS Cumbria  
Jane Moran, North West Development Agency  
Sylvia Richardson, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council  
Also Present:  
Debbie Dalby, Halton Voluntary Action  
Martin Preston, Greater Merseyside ChangeUp  
Jayne Lloyd, Greater Merseyside ChangeUp.

Apologies:  
David Smith, Lancashire County Council  
Chris Gay, Burnley Borough Council  
Sarah Dewar, Liverpool PCT

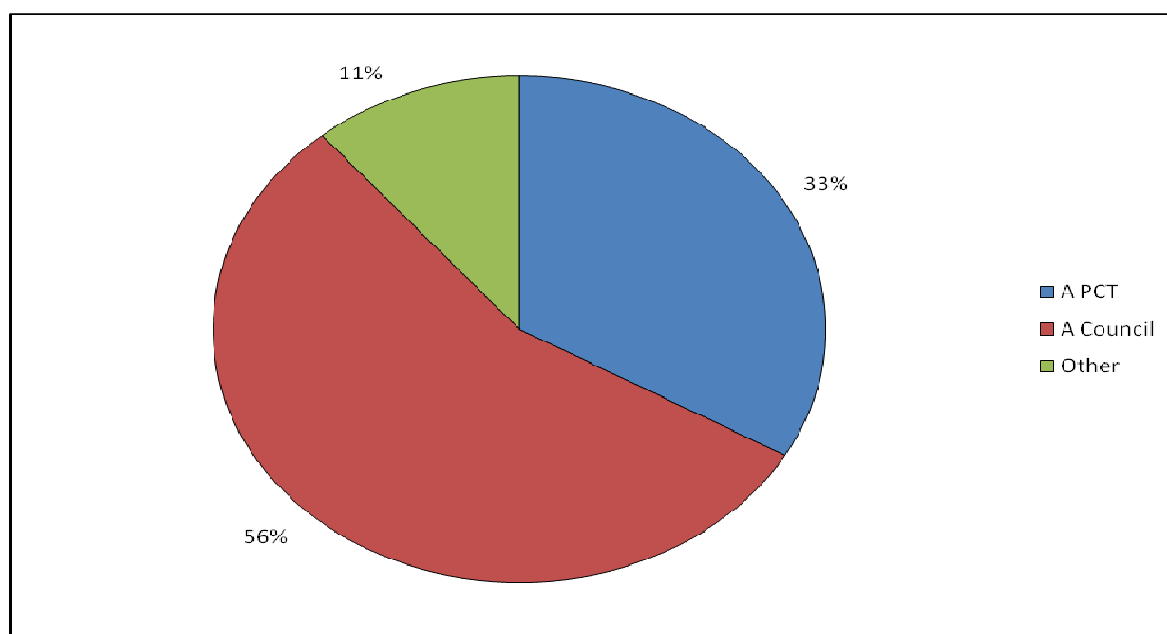
Feedback Report compiled by Sally Bate, Enterprise Manager, Lancashire Business School,  
University of Central Lancashire – May 2010

---

## Detailed Analysis from Interactive Session on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2010

Delegates were asked:

1. Do you represent?



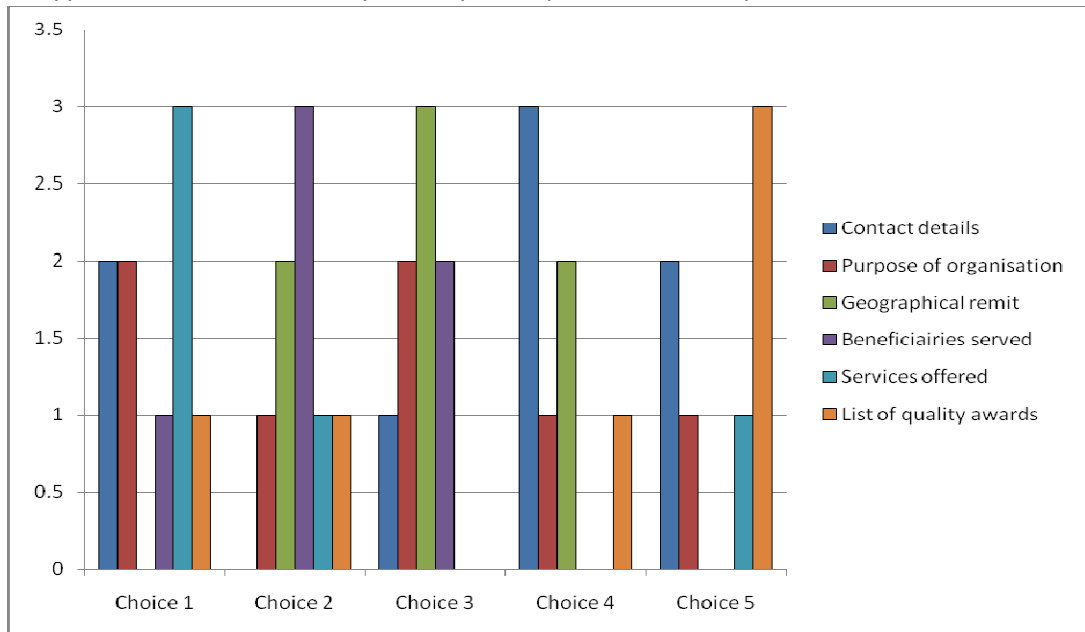
5 Councils and 2 PCTs were represented. The other is a representative from the NWDA

2. Are you representing a particular sector of public sector services? – if so please specify or put general

Overall responses were for general representation rather than just one sector

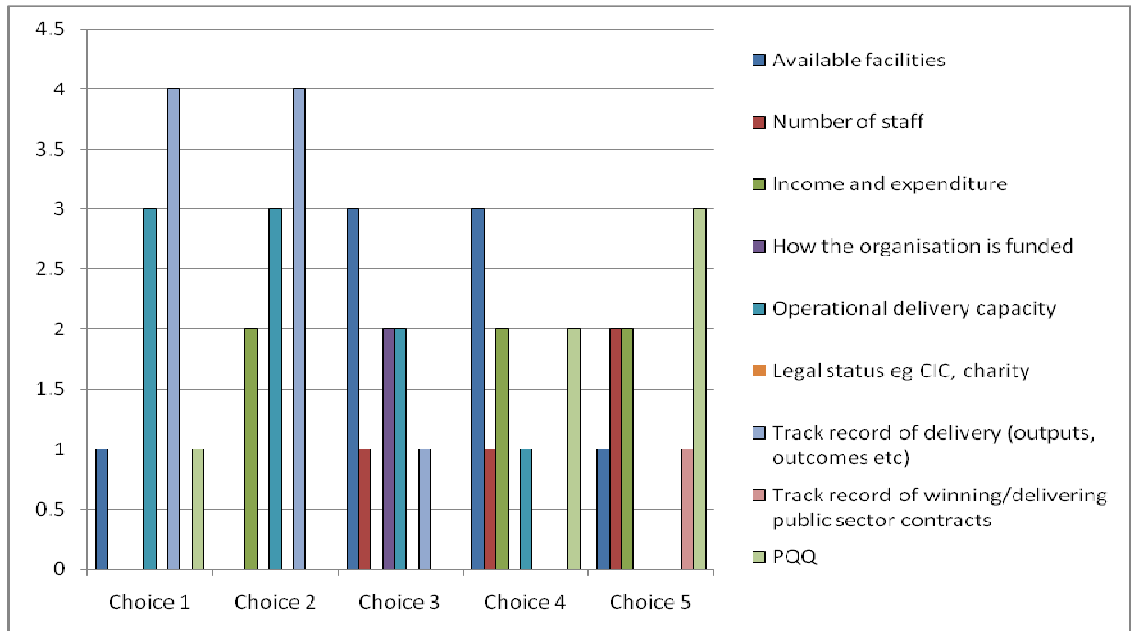
Questions 3, 4 & 5 are concerned with the type of information delegates would like in directories. Q 3 & 4 provide some examples for them to choose from and then Q 5 allows them to add areas they think should be included. There have to be parameters on how much information can be provided so delegates were asked to choose and prioritise the most important for them in Q 3 & 4

3. What type of information do you require – please rate importance?



Contact details, services offered, purpose of the organisation, beneficiaries served and geographical remit are the most important. For some delegates geographical remit is used as a first line sensor. Quality awards were seen as less important at this stage as this differs depending on what is being bought and if they are current.

4. What type of information do you require – please rate importance?



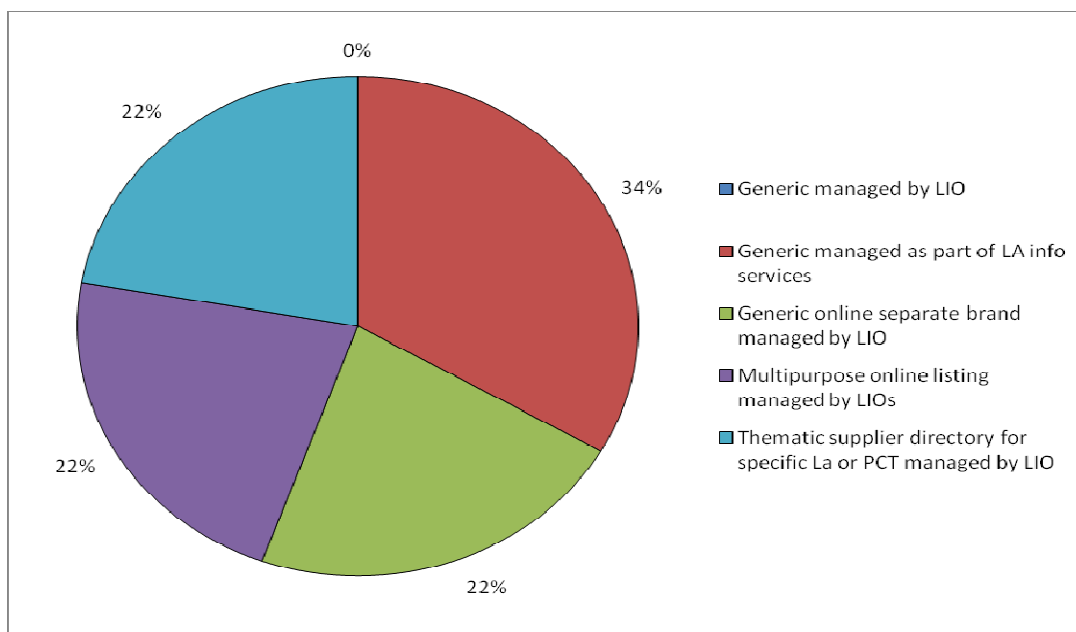
Focus of importance in this group of choices was on track record of delivery, operational delivery capacity and available facilities.

Legal status was not chosen at all and areas such as track record of delivery and were given as low importance as delegates stated that they would carry out a PQQ exercise with each organisation and this would cover all these areas. There was discussed about government plans to introduce annual PQQs via portal that could be updated by organisations and would include prompts for update when for example insurance renewal was due. This idea appeared popular with delegates.

5. Is there any other type of information you require from directories?

- Policies – strong drive to link with organisations that have similar policies to ours e.g. sustainability, finance
- Ideas for services – demonstrating previous ideas for innovation
- If part of consortia – i.e. already demonstrating they can work in partnership
- Categorisation of organisations – SHA working on a regional database of health organisations e.g. mental health, continuing health care etc. Would be useful to link in with Local Authorities and have some communality of categorisation
- Any plans the organisation has in the pipeline
- Capacity for new business
- DUNs reference number

6. What directories currently in use do you prefer?



Responses here were split across 4 of the categories.

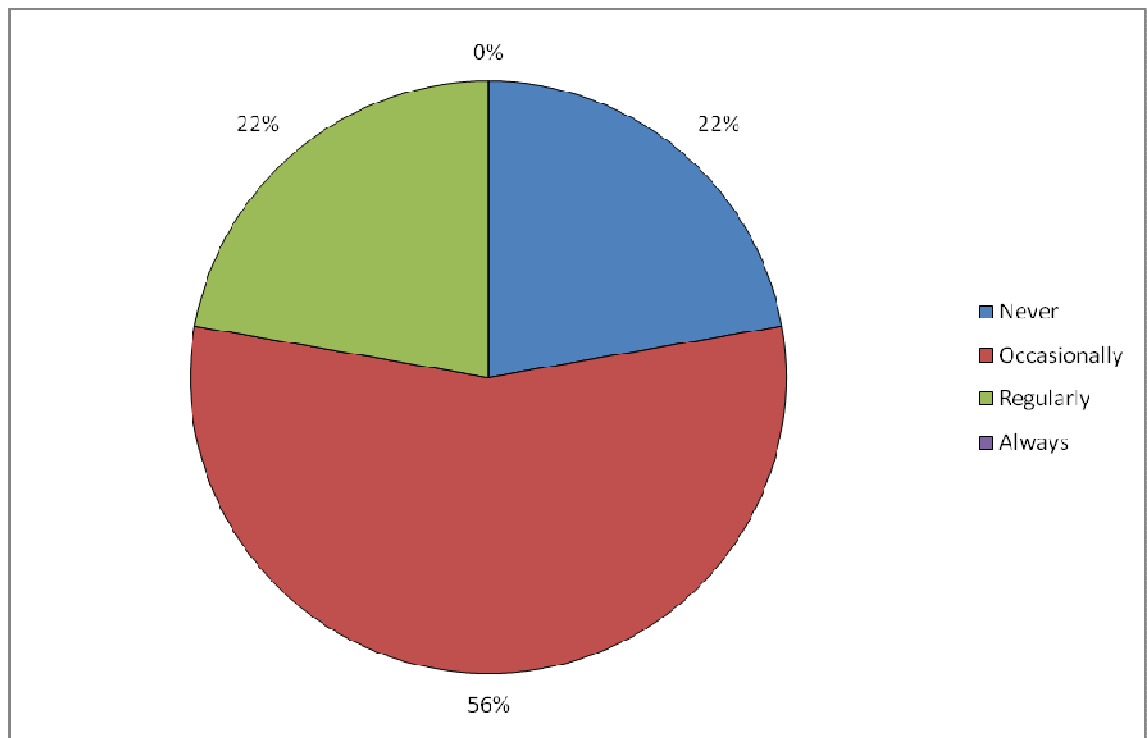
The generic managed as part of LA info services option was only chosen by PCT and NWDA representatives. One PCT representative also chose the thematic supplier directory for specific LA or PC managed by LIO option.

The Local Authority representatives were split across 3 options - Generic online separate brand managed by LIO, Multipurpose online listing managed by LIOs and Thematic supplier directory for specific La or PCT managed by LIO

7. Why do you prefer these directories?

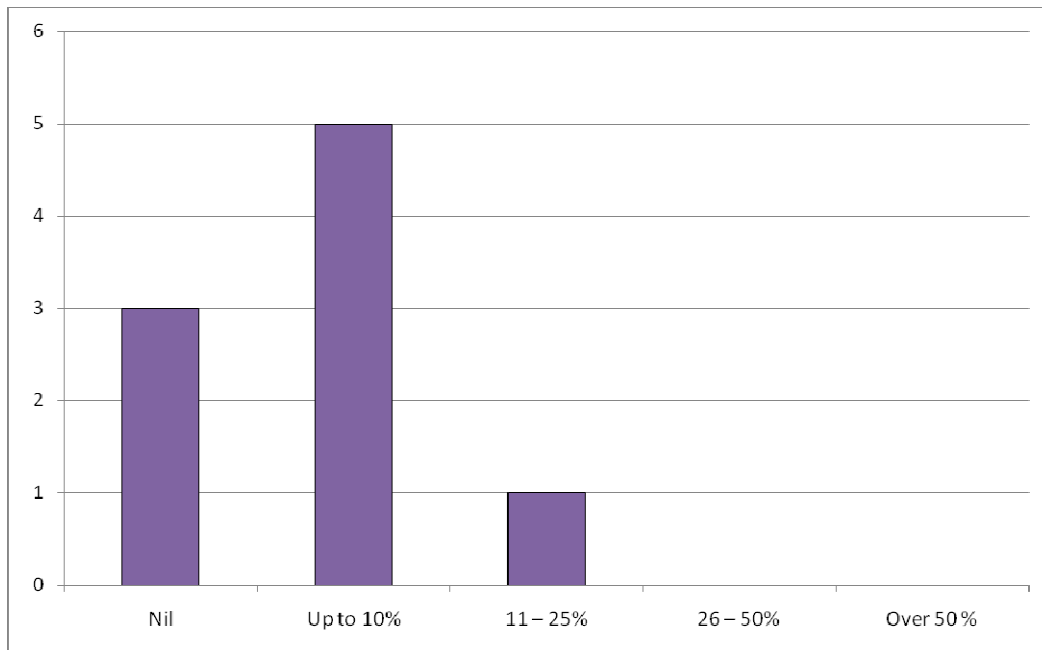
- Something is better than nothing!
- No NW directory available at this time
- Didn't know others existed
- Would interface with our own systems
- Ease of use
- Want sector specific
- It doesn't include irrelevant info
- Not limited to just LA
- LIO has infrastructure to manage and update
- CVS best place to keep up to date
- During the discussions a request was made to have the facility to download info from the directory in Excel to use within their organisations

8. Do you routinely use commercial supplier/provider directories in the procurement of services?



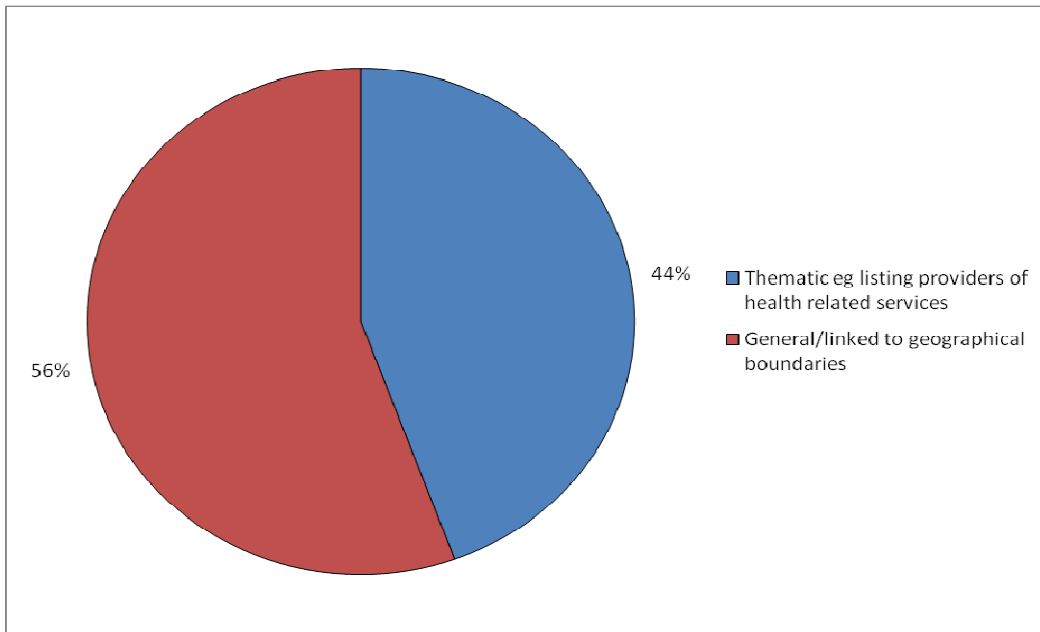
There was some discussion on definition and feedback indicated that occasionally was taken as 2-3 times in a year and those choosing the regularly option were both from Councils

9. What proportion of procurement spend is made using these supplier/provider directories?



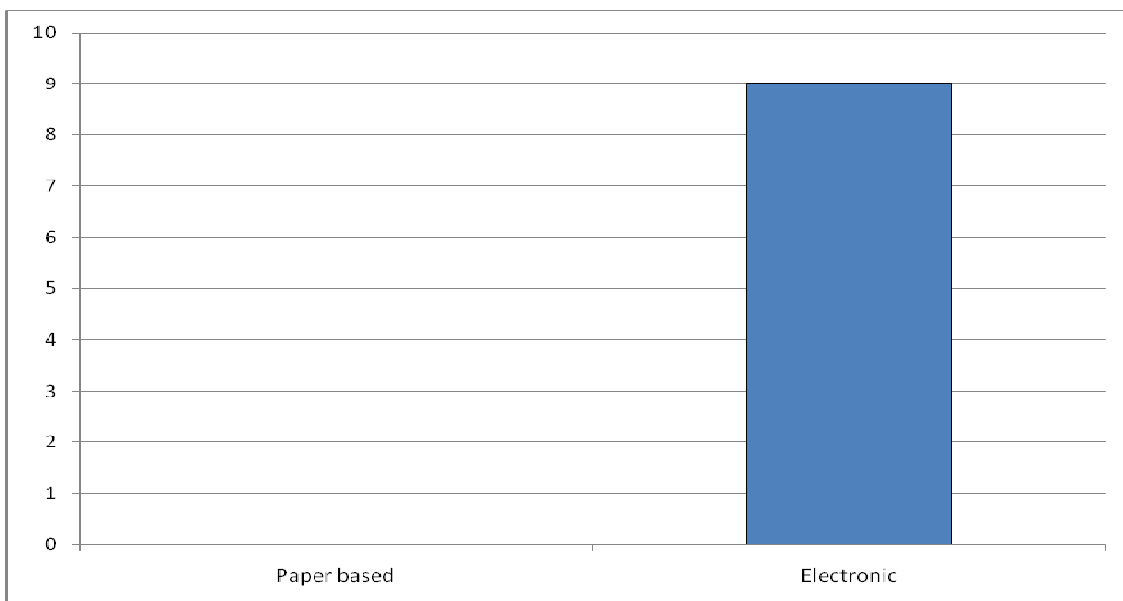
The 11-25% option reflects care streams in Cumbria. Overwhelmingly very little proportion of procurement spend is made using these supplier/provider directories

10. So ideally would you prefer directories to be



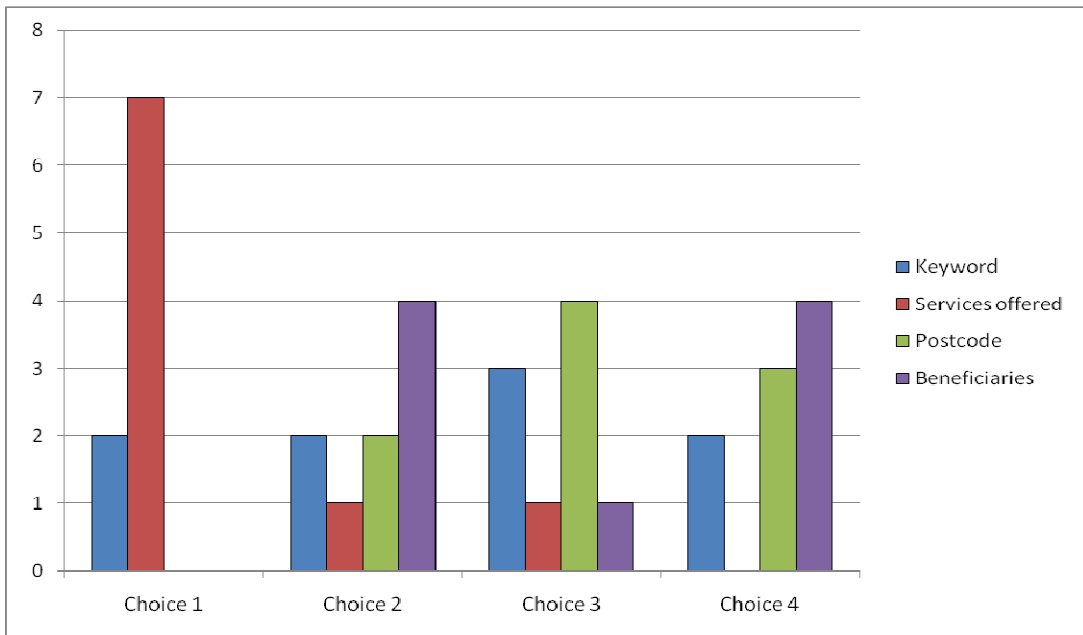
A fairly even split across the 2 choices and no significant differences in preferences between PCT and Council representative responses

11. Again ideally would you prefer directories to be



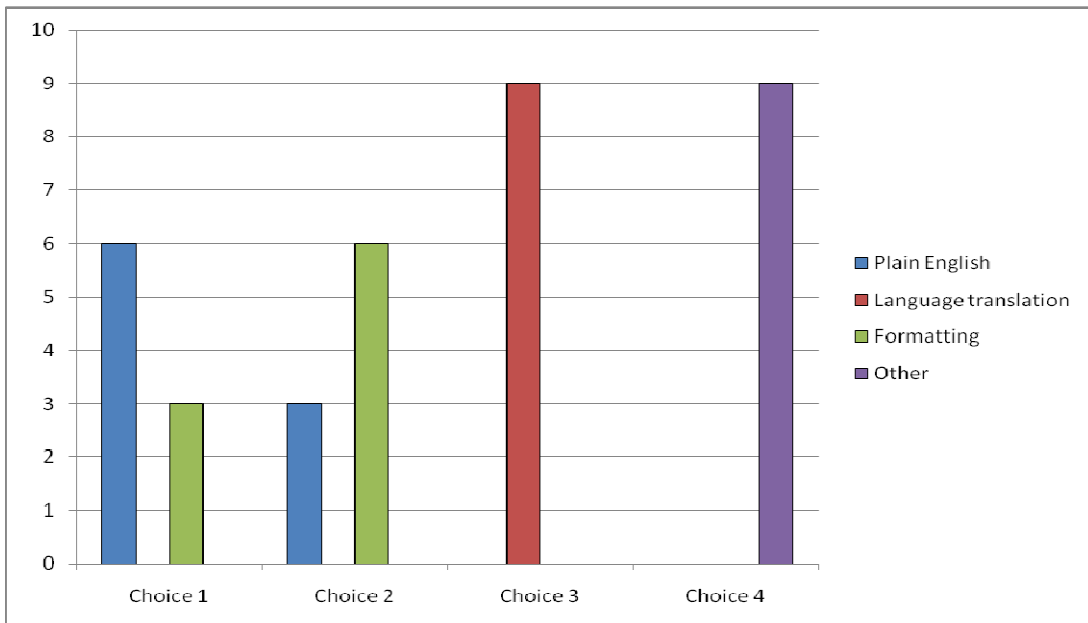
All delegates chose the electronic option but in further discussion there was a lot of support for having a paper version as well of at least some info when launching and maybe for updates or special editions

12. On electronic directories how should information be searched?



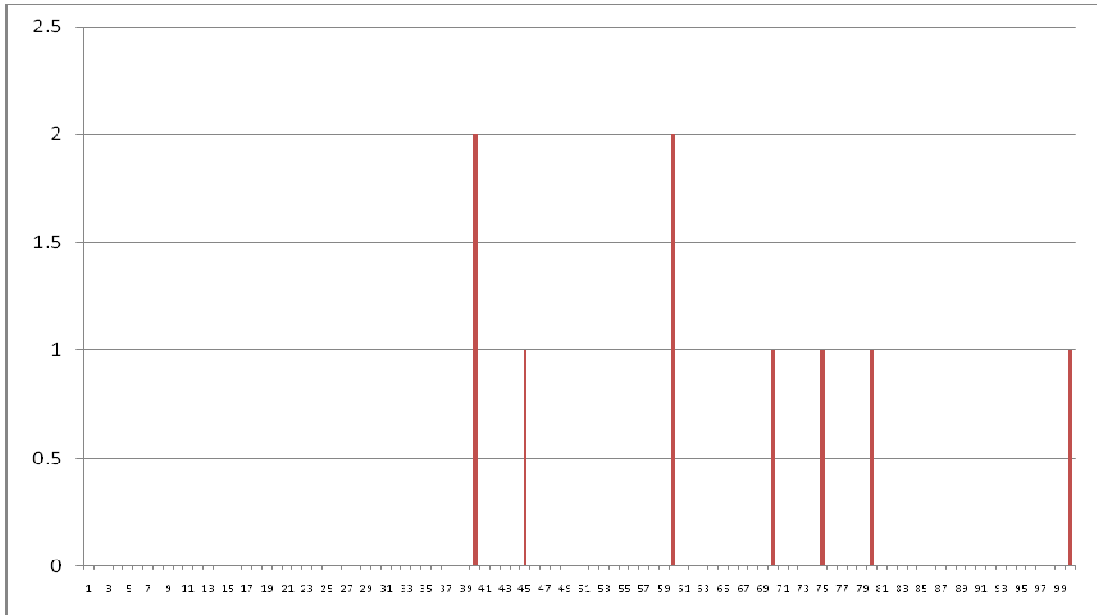
Overwhelmingly delegates wanted to be able to search by services offered. Responses to the other options were very split over 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> choices. No significant differences in the choices from PCT and Council representative responses

13. On electronic directories what accessibility issues need to be considered?



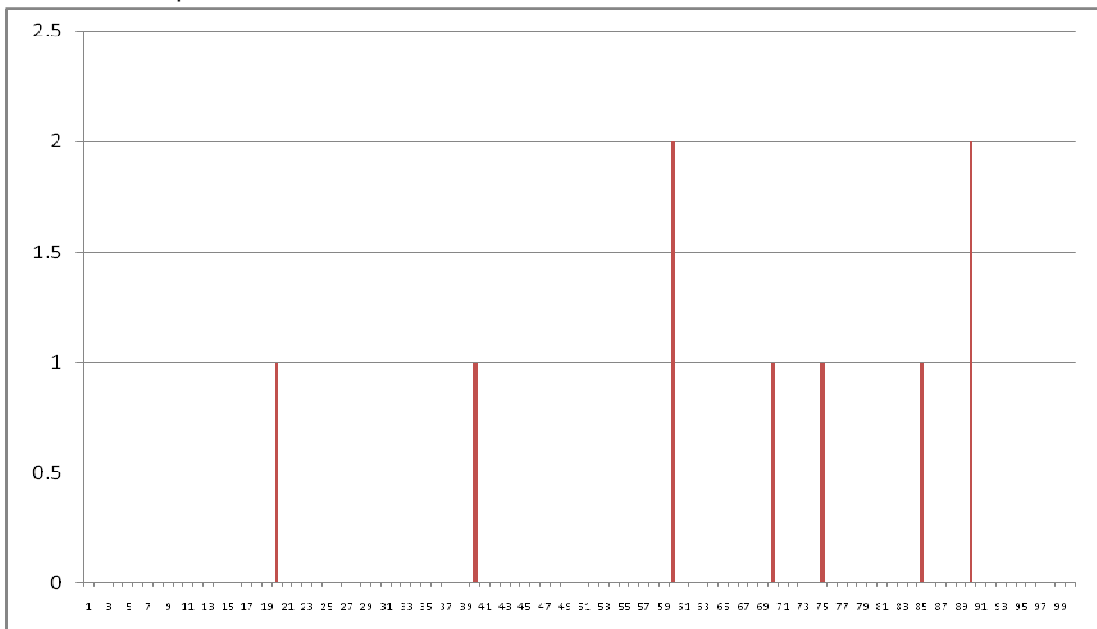
Plain English and formatting were overwhelmingly the most important factors for the delegates

14. On electronic directories how important is seeking user feedback?



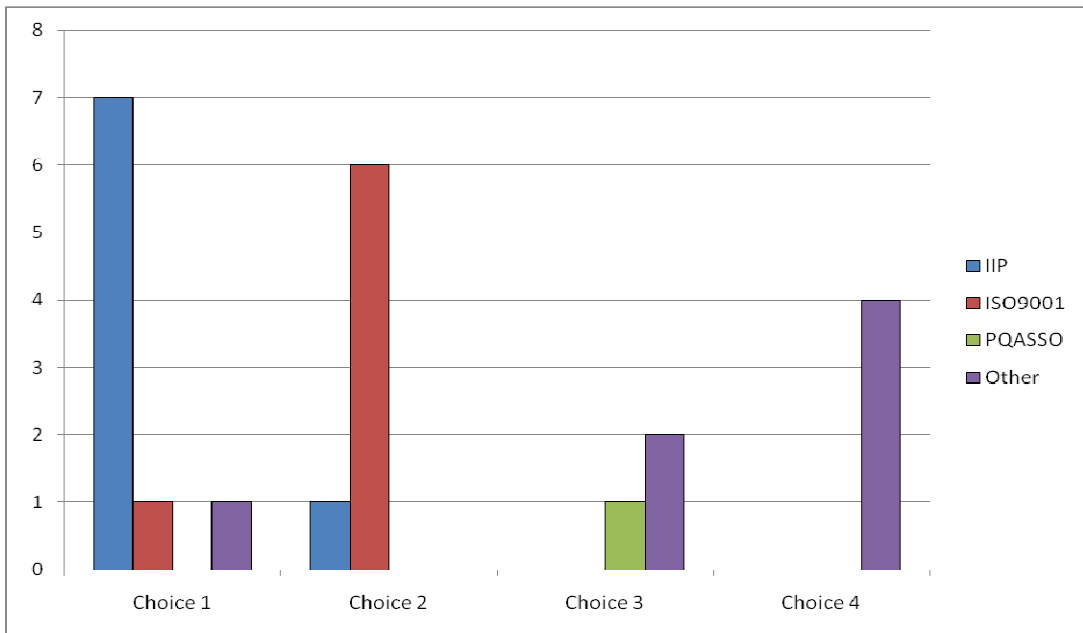
All delegates were supportive of directories seeking user feedback. The majority of the responses rated the importance of this at between 40-75/100 i.e. significant but not an absolute must

15. How important is it to know if suppliers have quality standards? And/or details of level of compliance?



The majority of delegates rated this as significant i.e. the majority of responses rated this at over 60%. Again there was discussion here about it being part of PPQ.

16. Which quality standards do you recognise?

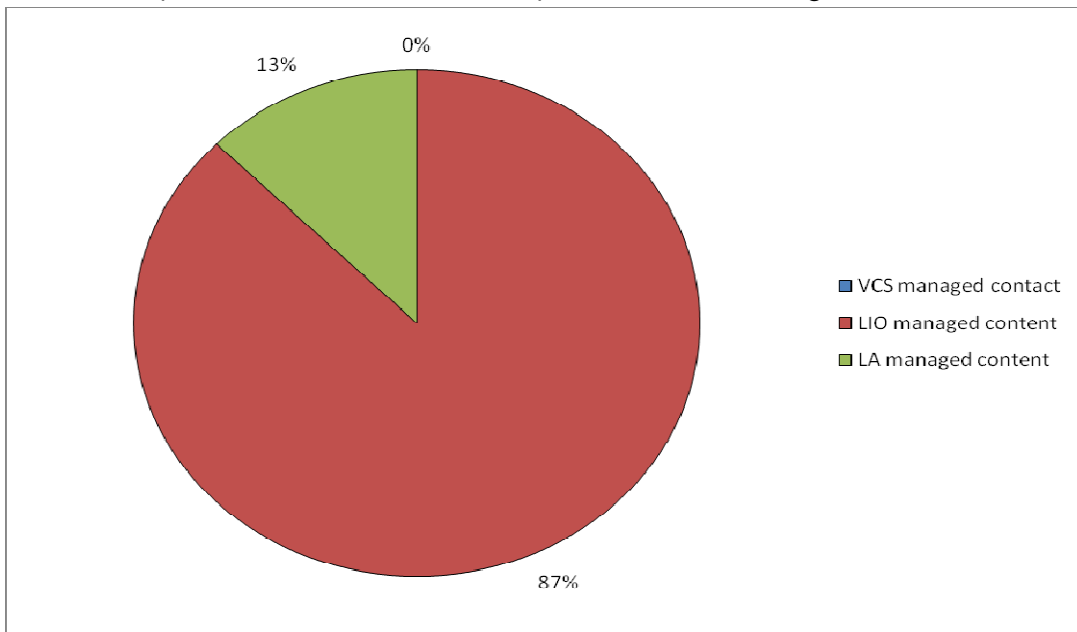


IIP and ISO9001 are the most recognised

17. If you indicated other quality standards please state which

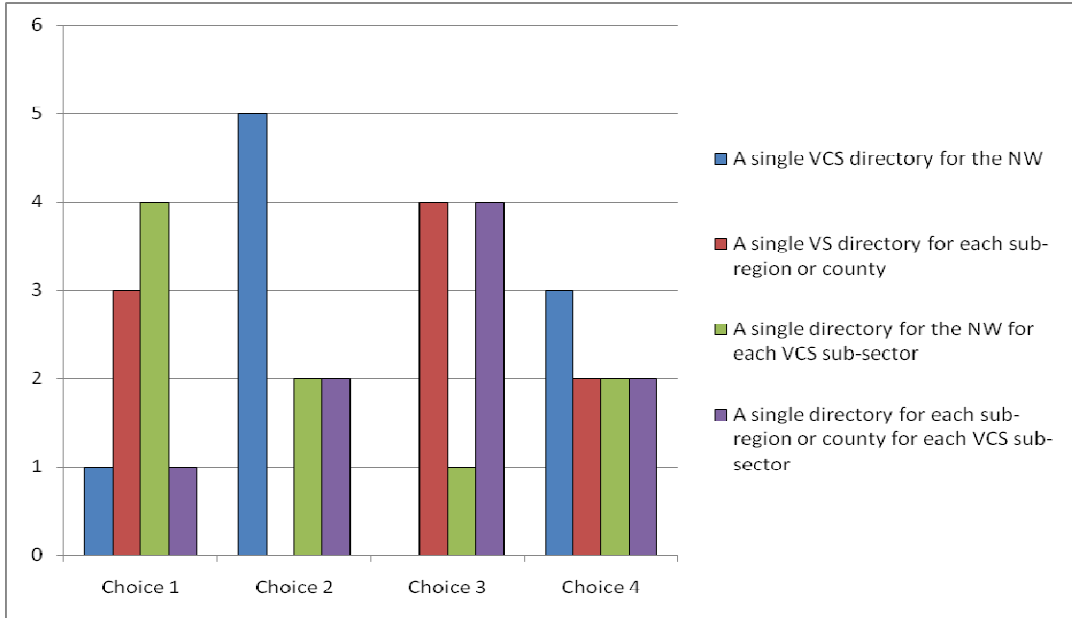
- Care Quality Commission
- Depends on product e.g. kitemark
- ISO14001

18. How and by whom should the directory content be managed?



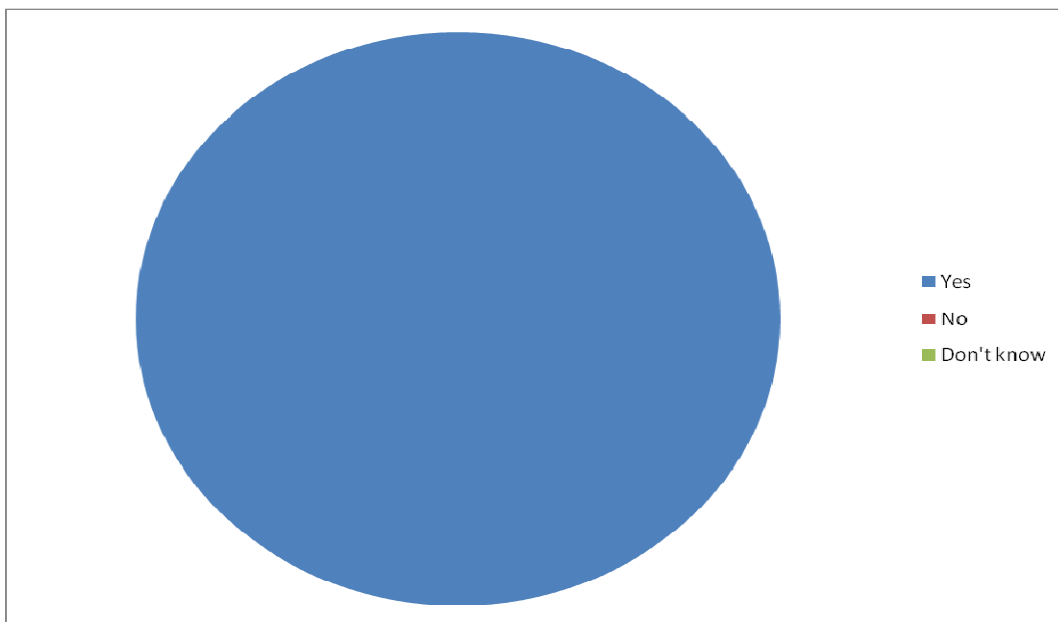
Delegates did not want a regional or national body to manage content and thought that LIOs would be the most effective and efficient

19. So which option would you prefer for the NW?

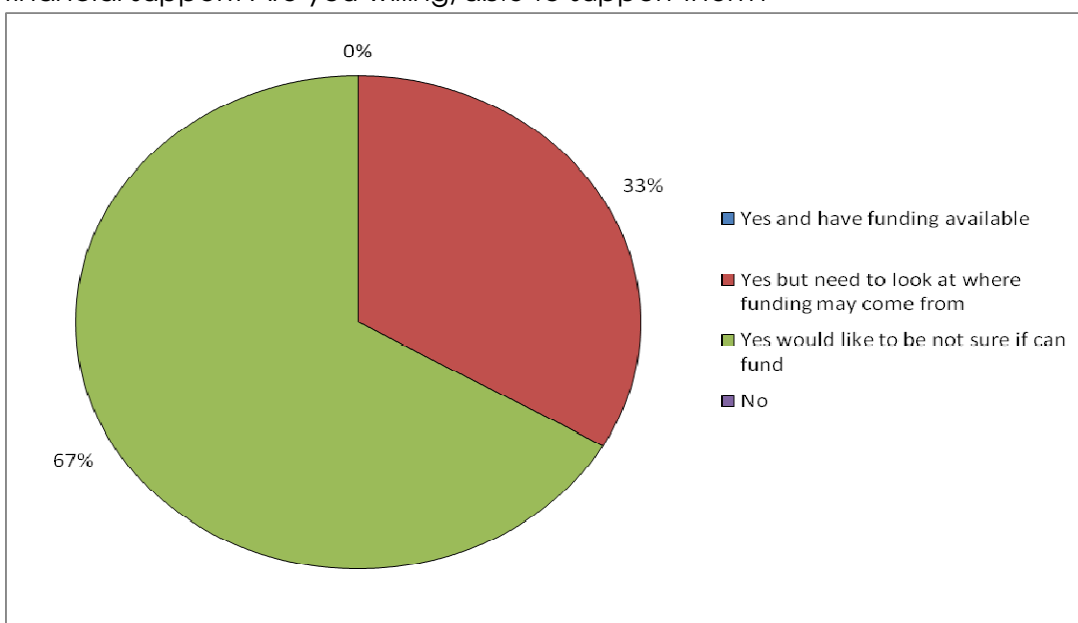


First choices were mostly for a single VCS directory for each sub-region or county or a single directory for the NW for each VCS sub-sector. A single directory for the NW was the first choice for 1 delegate and the most popular 2<sup>nd</sup> choice. There was discussion about the cost of maintenance.

20. If directories are developed for sub-regions or sub-sectors should they be developed so that they could be combined in the future if required?



21. Current and future development of developments of directories will require financial support. Are you willing/able to support them?



- Hard to justify cost when being asked to cut budgets
- It should be funded from a central body or RDA
- Regional Sustainable Procurement board – maybe ERDF funding could be used?
- Discussion re the possible opposition from voluntary sector colleagues and the cultural change that will need to happen alongside the development of a directory

**5.3. Appendix 3 IT Zone Report into the methods and systems that can be used to produce third sector supplier directories.**



*1<sup>st</sup> Floor Chapel House  
5 Shawbridge St  
Clitheroe  
Lancashire  
BB7 1LY*

## Contents

Contents.....	38
Introduction .....	39
Key Objectives: .....	39
Clarity / Key Definitions. ....	39
Overview of Initial Mapping. ....	40
Summary of Commissioners requirement.....	41
Conclusion of task 1 & 2 reports.....	41
Potential database tools. ....	42
Existing resources & information. ....	42
Develop a new directory application. ....	43
Joomla 1.5.X (1.6 imminent stable release).....	43
Drupal 6.X (version 7 alpha 1 available) .....	44
WordPress (version3).....	44
CiviCRM (version 3.X).....	45
Potential project cost. ....	46
Tool section.....	46
Project cost. ....	47
Conclusion. ....	48
Appendix 1 - Potential Directory Tools.....	49
Appendix 2 – Resources .....	53
Appendix 3 - The Directory Project Process. ....	56
Stage 1 – The team.....	56
Stage 2 – Current data collection system .....	56
Stage 3 - Planning.....	56
Stage 4 – Functionality.....	57
Stage 5 – Database solutions.....	58
Stage 6 – Configuration.....	58
Stage 7 – Testing .....	58
Stage 8 – Data Transfer (if applicable) .....	59
Stage 9 – Training.....	59
Stage 10 – Implementation / go live.....	59
Stage 11 - Review .....	59

## Introduction

The IT Zone (NW) CIC was commissioned by the Five Counties Partnership to undertake research into and produce a report on the methods which could be used to produce supplier directories for the third sector.

This report follows on from:

A report by The Association of Chief Officers of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO), March 2010, which mapped the third sector directories currently in use or development, and the findings of a focus group of public sector commissioners and procurement officers facilitated by the University of Central Lancashire (UCALN) in May 2010, which identified the requirements of commissioners in relation to supplier directories produced by the third sector.

The role of the IT ZONE was to analyse the information from both reports to identify current systems by third sector organisations which could be adapted to include a supplier directory function and to look at resources that could be used to build supplier directory applications fit for purpose.

This report has been conducted using telephone interviews, access to national technical networks, existing reports, white papers and many years technical experience of database development in both the private and third sector.

### ***Key Objectives:***

1. To identify from current directories the technology used.
2. To investigate the functionality of suitable technologies that can be used to construct third sector supplier directories.
3. To identify directory technologies that will meet the identified needs of commissioners to assist them with procurement and commissioning processes.
4. To ascertain the suitability of directory tools for third sector infrastructure organisations / Five Counties members.
5. To provide guidance for Five Counties members when considering a directory solution.

## Clarity / Key Definitions

As this report will focus on the technical tools for a directory system I thought some initial clarification on terminology may help.

### **DIRECTORY –**

***A list of names, addresses etc., of specific classes of people or organizations, often in alphabetical order or in some classification; A structured listing of the names and characteristics of the files on a storage device.***

[en.wiktionary.org/wiki/directory](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/directory)

## **DATABASE –**

*a collection of data; information stored, typically in electronic format. It may contain bibliographic, numerical or other data, generally structured so that it can be sought and retrieved automatically.*

[www.library.tudelft.nl/tulib/glossary/index.htm](http://www.library.tudelft.nl/tulib/glossary/index.htm)

## **CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CMS) -**

*A Content Management System (CMS) is a piece of software that runs on a server.*

*Typically a database application, a CMS makes it easy to publish and administrate*

<http://typo3.com/What-is-a-CMS.1351.0.html>

The terms directory and database are in the simplest term and the context of this report the same entity. This report will use the term database to define the tool used to create the directory system. As the UCLAN report identified that overall, commissioners prefer online systems, the word 'tool' will be used to describe the computer software online solution that is fit for purpose.

## **Overview of Initial Mapping**

The initial mapping of existing directories by ACEVO identified a wide variety of directories that had an average / below average score in functionality, poor accessibility and are in general limited to geographical areas supported by LIO's. The report states that the Internet (online) is the preferred method of delivery via a web site user interface so for the purpose of this report we will focus on Internet technologies.

ACEVO's report looks into the funding influence on the sample directories currently being used. Further investigation would be interesting to identify if the funder limited the directories to geographical remit and / or the functionality / accessibility elements in terms of the defined target audience of limitation of funding; or if in fact it was a limitation of the 'tool' used to create them. It was interesting to note that a paper version was also produced and desirable by commissioners. It is noted that printed directories can be costly and outdated quickly but may serve to have some contribution to accessibility for those who are digitally excluded. It may also aid marketing the directory at launch events, and at events/meetings which do not have online facilities.

The report looked at the 'ownership' element of the directories; most were owned by the organisation responsible for management. The report also mentioned basic registration process but did not differentiate between registration of contributors' public access or restricted access for commissioners. Depending upon the tool used, training would be essential for all organisations who wanted to add content, and some moderation would be advisable.

The report highlighted search methodology in current directories. It looks at functionality, ease of use and feedback. This is a critical element in database selection; It is important to focus on the information you want to get out of a database to ensure the data collection process captures if effectively.

The quick wins looks at Google maps, accessibility statements, create common directories through partnerships, feedback pages and the engagement of stakeholders in the project, all feasible and achievable with the right tool.

## Summary of Commissioners requirement

This was a very interesting report looking at what the commissioners (funders / users) want from a directory, and in some cases what they don't want.

All commissioners who were asked wanted an electronic directory but also supported having a paper version, as they thought this would help with launching and ongoing promotion of the directory. They felt it important not to duplicate any PQQ information and that an annual PQQ portal update would be good.

Discussions on data collection identified the type of information commissioners expected to see in an online directory. This highlighted some additional requirements to some of the directories examined in the ACEVO report and in contrast raised questions on the need to retain other data elements.

There is clearly no 'one size fits all' approach to the geographical / thematic / generic purpose for a directory but with regards to accessibility (considering the target audience – commissioners) there was overwhelming support for plain English. The delegates were also in favour of a user feedback system.

The issue of quality standards was discussed and some indicated that this was part of a PQQ process. Directories could simplify this element by stating they have a quality standard and the PQQ would identify specific standards and those relevant to the tender requirements.

The commissioners did not want regional / national bodies to manage content in directories; they felt LIO's were better placed. The discussion on geographical coverage was split but the consensus was that some commonality would be desirable so that directories could consolidate data for greater analysis, for example across local authority geographical boundaries. This raised the question about funding and although the delegates agreed such projects required financial investment, there was some uncertainty about budget cuts and the ability of public sector commissioners to fund this type of activity.

## Conclusion of task 1 & 2 reports

It is clear from both reports that an online (electronic) directory of service providers is the desired option of public sector commissioners and procurement officers, and that some existing directories to some degree cater as a supplier's directory. It would also appear that most directories currently in use would require some modifications to bring them in line with the requirements of commissioners.

The data collection, geographical coverage, thematic categorisation etc, is / should be defined by the funder. This directory specification may also influence the language / terminology used, (e.g. Halton and St Helen's Here to Help Directory was commissioned by the local health trust and is centred on the local health trusts' strategic plan). The commissioners wanted some way to identify 'capacity to deliver' and wanted the ability to download data for further analysis. Some consideration / discussions are necessary as to the format / method to measure capacity and the purpose to have data downloaded (considering Data Protection Act Principles).

Consideration into the potential to provide a directory for multiple users, for example commissioners and service users is needed to identify the language and data views suitable to the target audience. The potential to have central data with different views should be an important factor when selecting a suitable database tool.

The issue of accessibility was an issue highlighted in ACEVO's report but not highlighted as an area for great concern at the commissioner's focus group. This would be a topic for further discussion if the directory focussed on multiple audience engagement, as the specific nature of service users potential disabilities would need to be identified to ensure the correct accessibility functionality is considered in the directory application.

## Potential database tools

### Existing resources & information

When considering producing a directory application you may wish to start by looking at what you already have in terms of web site presence and any data collection you currently do. If you have a web site look at the tool used to create it and investigate the functionality of that tool against what functionality you / the commissioners / the funders require. If you already collect / capture and store data electronically you may explore if this data can be used for a directory application, remembering to consider the Data Protection Act on how to collect and process data.

[http://www.ico.gov.uk/for\\_organisations/data\\_protection\\_guide.aspx](http://www.ico.gov.uk/for_organisations/data_protection_guide.aspx) ).

The commissioner's focus group stated that they would want an online directory, so the initial point of contact (the gateway) would be a web site. There is no requirement for your web site and the directory to use the same development tool unless you wish your current web site provider to continue to develop / maintain the directory. There could be a case to build an independent directory application that could incorporate the design and feel of any current paper based directory in existence while leaving your web site with its organisation design / identity.

It is possible to use Internet connectivity to access a directory application that is not publically accessed via a conventional web site. Remote access and terminal services is a complex issue that is beyond the scope of this report. For more information contact your network support organisation or the North West ICT Champion at GMCVO.

When considering a database tool to produce a directory in addition to the functionality requirements you should consider long term sustainability by looking at ownership and licensing. Some of the tools listed in appendix 1 have been developed specifically by individual companies / organisations and are subject to annual licence fee. While this may be acceptable it will lock you into that organisation for any future developments, support, hosting etc; the tool will be owned by the organisation but the content will be yours, this relationship will make it impossible to move the directory to another hosting / support organisation.

One final consideration before looking at potential tools is to investigate if your organisation currently has member's details in an electronic format- you may not want to duplicate this information when developing an online directory. It is good practice with any database tool to only have information stored once; data stored twice can become a problem in validation when details are updated. With an existing electronic database there are a couple of choices;

- For the database to published online and with for example restricted data views developed or
- For the database to output a report that can be published online

In either case consideration must be given to the functionality identified in the ACEVO's report specifically with regard to searching.

## ***Developing a new directory application***

It has been highlighted in both the ACEVO and UCLAN reports that the desired option would be for LIO's to have ownership of any online directory application. Ownership is being taken as total control over the tool used and the content, which lends itself towards Open Source Software.

The following four tools have been used to create an online directory. They focus on open source software tools / solutions so that an LIO can take physical ownership of the directory structure and the content. The advantages and disadvantages take a view of LIO's making an initial informed decision and long term view of total ownership (i.e. do you want to minimise ongoing costs after development by having total control over the site or do you want to devolve some administration to a developer under a maintenance contract?)

### **1) Joomla 1.5.X (1.6 imminent stable release)**

This tool was used to create [www.here-help.info](http://www.here-help.info) (St Helens CVS & Halton VA) health commissioners directory. Joomla is the largest content management system (CMS) in the world with well over 200,000 communities using the tool (including Harvard University). It was developed from Mambo (another CMS tool) and use PHP and MYSQL as the database element of the tool and has more than 10 years history developing community web applications. This tool can produce the web site 'gateway' and the directory content.

#### **Advantages:**

- Free Open Source Software (FOSS) – no annual licensing and can transfer both structure and content to other developers / support / hosting organisations.
- Will build both the directory application and web site gateway.
- Highly customisable – wealth of templates and plug-in module to expand the functionality of the site to commissioners & ACEVO's requirements (scalable).
- Templates can be 'off the shelf' / customised or specifically developed – designed to look like paper version.
- Easy administration panel for LIO's to maintain the directory.
- Easy addition / editing of content.
- Unlimited number of records (may be limited by hard drive space on web server / hosting company – but can upgrade package).
- Large bank of developers for future directory developments.
- Dedicated administration panel, registered and special access control levels.
- Conforms to W3C standards.
- Content can be managed by date (date content live / date content removed)

#### **Disadvantages:**

- Customising Joomla from an 'out of box' installation requires specific skills, which is true about all database tools.
- Although the software is free it will cost for the directory to be developed.
- Will require additional plug-ins / modules may cost (c.\$20.00 each)
- To be secure the software must be upgraded and new version released and must be hosted on a web server with good security in place (not just the cheapest).
- Joomla 1.5.X has limited 'access control levels' (ACL) which may be an issue if complex access levels required.

## 2) Drupal 6.X (version 7 alpha 1 available)

This is another content management system very similar to Joomla and the second most popular CMS tool used globally. Used by GMCVO to produce Third Sector Health Services Directory (<http://www.thirdsectorhealth.org.uk/>). Developers have historically preferred this CMS over Joomla due to its greater scope on ACL. The White House use Drupal for some of its campaigning. Another robust CMS with over 10 years of deployments.

### Advantages:

- Free Open Source Software (FOSS).
- Will build the web site gateway and directory application
- Fully Customisable (many have same plug-ins as Joomla).
- Large community of developers to add functionality to the directory.
- Stable, reliable and robust.
- Wealth of free online resources and training materials.
- Like Joomla supports all media type (text, images, sound, video).
- Comprehensive access control levels.
- Conforms to W3C standards.
- Unlimited records.
- Content management by date (as Joomla)

### Disadvantages:

- Added functionality of the tool will result in an higher learning curve for directory administrators and content editors, if the LIO wants total ownership without developers support.
- Require high level skills to customise 'out of box' installation.
- Less 'off the shelf' templates available and many look less appealing.
- Some people find the graphical user interface not as 'friendly' / intuitive as other potential tools.
- Development will cost money, (however, many developers who work with Drupal also work with Joomla).
- Potentially more developer's time required to achieve the desired functionality.
- Also requires maintaining and upgrading to ensure security.

## 3) WordPress (version3)

At first glance WordPress looks like a content management system but is actually classified as a blogging tool (*A blog - a contraction of the term "web log" is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video*). This tool however has been used successfully to create a directory application <http://www.ictchampions.org.uk>, a directory of resources so it can also be used for health directories.

### Advantages:

- Free Open Source Software.
- Will build web site gateway and directory application using a blog layout.
- Very easy to setup and use, less technical skills required than other solutions).
- Completely customisable templates.

- Complies to W3C standards.
- Unlimited records (blogs)
- Easy to host with low hosting resources.

**Disadvantages:**

- Not as much functionality or scalable as a full blown CMS tool.
- Limited search facilities.
- Not easy to create multiple views for say commissioners data and service users.
- Performance can be an issue if trying to make a comprehensive directory but may be ok for simple information.

**4) CiviCRM (version 3.X)**

This tool is a free open source customer relationship management solution (online database) that can be stand alone or integrated into Joomla and or Drupal for added complex data processing. This tool could be considered if you already have (or planning to have) membership information in an internal electronic database that may track interactions with members and want to share some information online with commissioners.

This tool is currently being used as a performance monitoring database by Change-Up Manchester and Merseyside teams.

If considering this application careful planning and consultation with a professional developer consultant would be highly recommended. This is a highly complex tool that will require significant development (and cost) but could produce a centralised information system for both internal and external stakeholders.

**Advantages:**

- Free opens source software.
- Highly customisable.
- Can be used to include interactions / interventions with member organisation in addition to contact information and organisation details.
- Designed for non-profit organisations, (used by Amnesty International and Greenpeace for example as a Customer Relationship Management tool).
- Incorporates membership, events, grant management, donations, mass mailings, reporting modules
- Single and multi-site access with single central database (good for multi site organisations).
- Can integrate into CMS systems or be stand alone.

**Disadvantages:**

- A complex tool that will require significant development to look at making selected restricted membership data publically accessible for commissioners and potential service users.
- Limited developers in UK compared with CMS systems.
- It will require annual maintenance / support contracts.
- Mass mailing feature does not integrate with desktop email client (i.e. Microsoft Outlook)
- Hosting server needs higher than normal resources to run the database.
- Not designed for community editing; integrity (ensuring data entered is accurate and valid) will lend itself to central data inputting / editing by the LIO taking ownership.

## Potential project cost

The cost can and will vary greatly depending upon many factors:-

**Design** – free templates – custom template (non exclusive \$50 / exclusive \$2000), custom built template £2000+)

**Complexity of directory** – customised field, custom views, custom forms (i.e. specific feedback form), multi language, accessibility tools, directions / maps, export facilities, reports, help features etc...in addition to the purchase of each plug-in c\$20 (additional modules and plug-ins can be in £, \$ or € as these tools are developed globally) there is the time required to customise the features. There are free plug-ins available but sometime paying a little to support the development of the database tool does provide greater features and also provide support if needed.

**Directory development** – the organisation you use to contract the technical work to. This can be seen as an area to save money, it can also be an area to cost you dearly. Open source tools have seen a rise in third sector (social enterprise) developers that are more competitive than proprietary / commercial developers. Cost can vary from £1000 to >£10,000.

**Content** – who is going to add the text, images hyperlinks for all the organisations in the directory? If it's the developer then time is money and at £300 per day having developers add content can mount up.

**Project planning meetings** – Appendix 3 has a simple yet effective staged process to help you consider a directory project. A clear vision will help project manage the directory and require less developers time. Planning will also reduce going back to developers / consultants for specification changes. Its normal to have the initial scoping meeting, followed by first draft followed by final draft and go live with a follow-up meeting to evaluate site feedback.

**Hosting** – This can be seen as an area to save money, from experience it is an potential area to cause greatest problems. Hosting can be from <£75 per year to around £400 per year. This will depend on the tool selected and the resources it needs and the services the hosting organisation provides (i.e. static IP addresses, bandwidth, disk space, email / mailboxes, control panel functionality, secure PHP etc...). Most hosting packages use a shared server, don't rule out a dedicated server at £120 per month its the securest option and you can income generate by selling some web space to your member for their web site.

**Maintenance / support** – this involves updating the software tool used, backups, adding users / changing user passwords, telephone help when having a problem adding content etc... Depends on how much administration the LIO wants to do. Typical cost between £175 - £1000 per year.

**Training** – after the site has been developed staff will need training. This could be a half day in content editing or more complex administration. ! You tube has some great tutorial videos on all the open source tools evaluated in this report and by using open source tools there are many online tutorial documents and forum to help.

## Tool section

The LIO has staff with good basic ICT skills, who do not want to spend too much time and money on learning a complex database tool, want to commission a contractor / developer to do the

structure but want to do minor changes, add content and do the administration themselves = Joomla or WordPress.

The LIO has internal technical staff who want to take a lead in development, maintenance but also want to work with a contractor on changing code = Drupal and Joomla.

The LIO has highly technical staff who have developed database solutions and competent with Internet technologies = CiviCRM

### ***Project cost***

Based on use of Open Source CMS / CRM database tool employing a consultant / developer with:-

- Project management
- c.100 directory entries
- Design / modification of a non exclusive template (including logo images)
- Design data views (multi target audience – commissioners / service users)
- Accessible elements (font adjust, multi language, screen reader accessible etc..)
- Graphical map location
- CAPTCHA on all web forms
- Feedback form
- Login form
- Navigation
- Directory structure (categories / thematic / geographical area)
- Custom data fields
- Key word search
- Advanced search using specific fields
- Help features
- Reports
- Export utility
- Adding content (including image optimisation – image fit for web sites)
- Directory testing to W3C standards
- Training for administrators and content editors
- Training for web site control panel
- System security
- Site engine optimisation (if required due to localised influence)
- Annual hosting and support (including core software updates, backup and disaster recovery is needed)

### ***Budget***

*Between £6000 and £10000*

## Conclusion

In principle any current database / web site can incorporate a directory element. The cost of such an integration maybe considerable depending upon the database tool used to develop existing systems and willingness of the vendor to make such modifications. Another method is to create an independent directory solution and use a link from existing web sites to the directory.

There are numerous online database tools on the market that can be developed as an online directory. There are free open source tools that can (at a cost) be develop and do not incur annual licence fees. Open source content management systems like Drupal and Joomla have been used successfully to develop online health and wellbeing directories, (GMCVO & St Helens / Halton VA).

If possible a preferred solution would be an open source solution that will give the owners / funders total transportability of both the directory structure and content. The added value for open source is the ethical non-profit and community nature of software development.

Using standard web based database technologies can provide a common platform for integrating localised directories into a larger geographical / thematic directory. This would require some level of common data collection.

It may be difficult to have cross thematic directories by geographical area due to the specific language, categorisation used by potential funders. It may be possible to use a 'gateway' approach using an introduction page and the same web based technologies to produce multiple thematic directories.

Having clear aims and objects and formal planning are the key elements to developing an effective online directory (see appendix 3 for a stage planning strategy).

## Appendix 1 - Potential Directory Tools

This list has recently been compiled and is not an exhaustive list

✓ = yes      ✗ = no      blank = unknown

Database	Voluntary sector	Web based	Open Source	Costs	Web site	Notes
<b>ACT!</b>	✗		✗		<a href="http://www.act.com">www.act.com</a>	Owned by Sage so integrates into sage accounts if necessary.
<b>AIMS</b>	✓	✓		From £290 (+£90 annual support)	<a href="http://www.lasa.org.uk/aims/index.shtml">www.lasa.org.uk/aims/index.shtml</a>	LASA Suppliers directory
<b>Care CRM</b>	✓				<a href="http://www.computersoftware.com">www.computersoftware.com</a>	Membership Management Software, Charity Management and Fundraising Solutions for the Not-for-Profit sector
<b>CiviCRM</b>	✓	✓	✓		<a href="http://civicrm.org">http://civicrm.org</a>	you'll need a skilled technology professional to get you up and running
<b>contactLINK</b>	✓	✗	✗	From £400 (+£75 annual support)	<a href="http://www.ITsorted.org.uk">www.ITsorted.org.uk</a>	CRM system
<b>Drupal</b>	✓	✓	✓		<a href="http://drupal.org/">http://drupal.org/</a>	Drupal is a free software package that allows an individual, a community of users, or an enterprise to easily publish, manage and organize a wide variety of content on a website. Used in conjunction with CiviCRM to produce
<b>Ebase</b>		✓	✓		<a href="http://www.ebase.org">www.ebase.org</a>	Can work on Macs

Database	Voluntary sector	Web based	Open Source	Costs	Web site	Notes
<b>ETapestry</b>		✓	×	Free for up to 500 constituents and \$35/month for up to 1000 (up rapidly after that)	<a href="http://www.etapestry.com">www.etapestry.com</a>	Fundraising database solution
<b>eTarget</b>				Free trial version	<a href="http://www.centrepont.uk.com">www.centrepont.uk.com</a>	provides complete CRM functionality together with full Membership administration. Simple to use and designed to meet the needs of most small and medium NFP organisations
<b>evol</b>	✓				<a href="http://www.senior.co.uk">www.senior.co.uk</a>	Selected by Wales CVA River CMS & MemberBase product
<b>FirstPoint</b>	✓	×	×		<a href="http://www.computercraft.co.uk">www.computercraft.co.uk</a>	
<b>HTML, SQL &amp; PHP</b>	×	✓	✓	Free open source	<a href="http://www.mysql.com/">http://www.mysql.com/</a> <a href="http://php.net/index.php">http://php.net/index.php</a>	And coded solution, technical used by Cumbria CVS for their directory and web site.
<b>illuminate</b>	✓	✓	×	No set costs. Price on quotation	<a href="http://www.illuminateict.org.uk/content/databases-illuminate">http://www.illuminateict.org.uk/content/databases-illuminate</a>	Used to create Voluntary Action Coventry - Adult Care Services Directory
<b>iMIS</b>					<a href="http://www.advsol.com">www.advsol.com</a>	
<b>IMPak</b>			×		<a href="http://www.issimpak.com">www.issimpak.com</a>	
<b>Joomla</b>	✓	✓	✓		<a href="http://www.joomla.org">www.joomla.org</a>	Largest CMS tool. Used to create <a href="http://www.here-help.info">www.here-help.info</a> commissioners directory
<b>KISS</b>	✓		×	£120 for 1 £60 for extra PCs	<a href="http://www.kissoftwaresolutions.com">www.kissoftwaresolutions.com</a>	

Database	Voluntary sector	Web based	Open Source	Costs	Web site	Notes
Lamplight	✓	✓	✗	£10/month £120/year	<a href="http://www.lamplightdb.co.uk">www.lamplightdb.co.uk</a>	
Metrix		✓	✓		<a href="http://metrix.fcny.org">metrix.fcny.org</a>	
Osprey			✗		<a href="http://www.activecomputer.com">www.activecomputer.com</a>	
Outlook	✗		✗	Comes with Microsoft Office.	<a href="http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/outlook/">http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/outlook/</a>	Business Contact Manager which is an add-on to Outlook
Plone	✓	✓	✓	Free open source	<a href="http://plone.org/">http://plone.org/</a>	A powerful, flexible Content Management solution that is easy to install, use and extend
Progress				£15K or more + £130 per month support	<a href="http://www.fiskbrett.co.uk">www.fiskbrett.co.uk</a>	
Raiser's Edge	✓		✗	Plan on at least \$10K to start and thousands per year in support.	<a href="http://www.blackbaud.com">www.blackbaud.com</a>	Widely used and can integrate with a good financial module.
REDABOUT	✓	✓	✗	£50/month or £550 year	<a href="http://redabout.com/">http://redabout.com/</a>	
Salesforce	✗	✓	✗	Free for up to 10 users for non profits	<a href="http://www.salesforce.com">www.salesforce.com</a>	Needs configuring for vol sector
SugarCRM		✓	✓			Aimed more at sales
thankQ	✓	✗	✗		<a href="http://www.esit-admit.co.uk">www.esit-admit.co.uk</a>	Selected by NACVS and Cumbria and others
VC Connect	✓	✓	✗	Up to 10 users initial licence £4000. Annual fee £1800	<a href="http://www.vconnect.org.uk">www.vconnect.org.uk</a>	Developed by Voluntary Action Sheffield.
V-Base	✓		✗		<a href="http://www.do-it.org.uk/needvolunteers/vbase/introduction">www.do-it.org.uk/needvolunteers/vbase/introduction</a>	Volunteering management
Volbase	✓	See notes	✗		<a href="http://www.volbase.co.uk">www.volbase.co.uk</a>	Web-enabled with remote capabilities,

Database	Voluntary sector	Web based	Open Source	Costs	Web site	Notes
						configurable without programming, contact management, membership management, casework with output and outcome monitoring and sophisticated record categorising using self-customised profile questionnaires. In use in many CVSs
<b>Wild Apricot</b>			✗	Prices start at just \$25 per month, and include: 30 day free trial	<a href="http://www.wildapricot.com/">http://www.wildapricot.com/</a>	Wild Apricot membership management software for small associations, non-profits, clubs and subscription websites.
<b>WinShark</b>	✗	✓	✗	£100 + VAT per user	<a href="http://www.winshark.com">www.winshark.com</a>	
<b>WordPress</b>	✓	✓	✓	FOSS	<a href="http://wordpress.org/">http://wordpress.org/</a>	Mainly a blogging tool but the main principles can be used to create a simple directory.

Other useful links to database systems:-

Charities evaluation Services - <http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/index.cfm?pg=505>

IT for Charities - <http://www.itforcharities.co.uk/dbsoft.htm>

## Appendix 2 – Resources

	Description	Resource location
<b>General</b>		
	Lots of articles – particularly planning	<a href="http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/databases/index.cfm">http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/databases/index.cfm</a>
	Refers to articles broken down by the different stages of deciding on a database solution	<a href="http://metrix.fcny.org/wiki/display/docs/Introduction+to+Databases">http://metrix.fcny.org/wiki/display/docs/Introduction+to+Databases</a>
<b>General issues to consider</b>		
	Reporting data, data sharing, ownership and security, data categorising, the 'real' issue,	<a href="http://www.ichub.org.uk/articles/Databases.html">http://www.ichub.org.uk/articles/Databases.html</a>
	Original version of the above article	<a href="http://www.preponderate.co.uk/databasedilemmas.htm">http://www.preponderate.co.uk/databasedilemmas.htm</a>
<b>Planning a database</b>		
	Excellent and comprehensive document on planning for a database	<a href="http://www.techsoup.org/binaries/Files/DatabasePlanningWorkbook.pdf">http://www.techsoup.org/binaries/Files/DatabasePlanningWorkbook.pdf</a>
<b>Choosing and introducing a database</b>		
	Excellent article about managing change in the context of projects with relevance to databases	<a href="http://www.ichub.org.uk/articles/Making_Change_Happen.html">http://www.ichub.org.uk/articles/Making_Change_Happen.html</a>
	The planning process – an overview of what you need to consider, costs etc	<a href="http://www.ichubknowledgebase.org.uk/planningyourdatabase">http://www.ichubknowledgebase.org.uk/planningyourdatabase</a>
	An overview of the three main types of database used within the voluntary sector: Contact, Membership and Fundraising	<a href="http://www.ichubknowledgebase.org.uk/buyingadatabase">http://www.ichubknowledgebase.org.uk/buyingadatabase</a>
	Particularly good section about identifying your needs	<a href="http://foundation.verizon.com/resourcecenter/tsoup_11.shtml">http://foundation.verizon.com/resourcecenter/tsoup_11.shtml</a>
	Set of articles: intro to databases; info management; should non-profits buy or build a database; planning	<a href="http://foundation.verizon.com/resourcecenter/tech_database.shtml">http://foundation.verizon.com/resourcecenter/tech_database.shtml</a>
	Comparing solutions	<a href="http://www.ephilanthropy.org/site/News2?news_iv_ctrl=-">http://www.ephilanthropy.org/site/News2?news_iv_ctrl=-</a>

	Description	Resource location
		<a href="#">1&amp;page=NewsArticle&amp;id=5479</a>
	Fundraising databases fact sheet	<a href="http://www.charitytimes.com/pages/ct_factsheets/Fundraising%20Databases%20Factsheet.pdf">http://www.charitytimes.com/pages/ct_factsheets/Fundraising%20Databases%20Factsheet.pdf</a>
<b>Comparing relational databases (more technical)</b>		
	More technical. Choosing the Right Database (Relational) Microsoft Access, SQL Server, MySQL, PostgreSQL	<a href="http://www.paragoncorporation.com/ITConsumerGuide.aspx?ArticleID=1">http://www.paragoncorporation.com/ITConsumerGuide.aspx?ArticleID=1</a>
<b>Tailor made or off-the-shelf?</b>		
	Lasa's Information Systems Team and database developer Margot Lunnon look at the options	<a href="http://www.ictubknowledgebase.org.uk/setupadatabase">http://www.ictubknowledgebase.org.uk/setupadatabase</a>
	Should Non-profit Agencies Build or Buy a Database?	<a href="http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/databases/page5028.cfm">http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/databases/page5028.cfm</a>
<b>Public access to database</b>		
	Looking at benefits of having a publicly accessible online community database (i.e. available to public as well as your staff)	<a href="http://www.ictubknowledgebase.org.uk/communitiesfromdatabases">http://www.ictubknowledgebase.org.uk/communitiesfromdatabases</a>
<b>Database Reviews</b>		
	Databases for Membership Organizations. Eight non profit technology professionals recommend membership databases	<a href="http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/databases/page4795.cfm">http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/databases/page4795.cfm</a>
	Low Cost Constituent Databases	<a href="http://www.idealware.org/articles/fgt_low_cost_dbs.php">http://www.idealware.org/articles/fgt_low_cost_dbs.php</a>
<b>Donor Databases</b>		
	Comparison of selected Fundraising databases by a fundraising database	<a href="http://www.ebase.org/about/featurecomp.lasso">http://www.ebase.org/about/featurecomp.lasso</a>
	Lists Inexpensive Donor Databases – US based but not exclusively	<a href="http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/databases/page4798.cfm">http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/databases/page4798.cfm</a>
<b>Working with and choosing database consultants</b>		
	This provides some general guidance on key issues to consider when choosing a developer.	<a href="http://www.ictubknowledgebase.org.uk/choosingdatabasedeveloper">http://www.ictubknowledgebase.org.uk/choosingdatabasedeveloper</a>

	<b>Description</b>	<b>Resource location</b>
	What a Database Consultant needs from their client	<a href="http://www.lasa.org.uk/cgi-bin/publisher/display.cgi?1438-8102-51359+computanews">http://www.lasa.org.uk/cgi-bin/publisher/display.cgi?1438-8102-51359+computanews</a>
	Buying and Commissioning ICT	<a href="http://www.ictclub.org.uk/articles/Buying_and_Commissioning_ICT.html">http://www.ictclub.org.uk/articles/Buying_and_Commissioning_ICT.html</a>
	Selecting a Database Consultant Some specific questions to ask the consultant when interviewing them about building a database from scratch, buying an "off-the-shelf" program or setting up your database through an ASP.	<a href="http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/databases/page5126.cfm">http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/databases/page5126.cfm</a> -
	Choosing the Right Consultant	<a href="http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/consultants/page5159.cfm">http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/consultants/page5159.cfm</a>
	Writing a Contract	<a href="http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/consultants/page4802.cfm">http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/consultants/page4802.cfm</a>
	Independent UK software developers (individuals and small companies) who specialise in, and/or have wide experience of working with the non-profit sector.	<a href="http://www.itforcharities.co.uk/inddev.htm">http://www.itforcharities.co.uk/inddev.htm</a>
	Introducing Volunteer IT Professionals to Charities Needing IT Help	<a href="http://www.it4communities.org.uk/it4c/index.jsp">http://www.it4communities.org.uk/it4c/index.jsp</a>
	TechFinder is an online directory of suppliers of ICT goods and services to the non-profit, voluntary and community sectors. The directory lists suppliers and where they are located. Make sure you select UK	<a href="http://www.techsoup.org/techfinder/index.cfm?p=browse">http://www.techsoup.org/techfinder/index.cfm?p=browse</a>

## **Appendix 3 - The Directory Project Process**

Implementing an online directory solution is a significant process that many organisations have found difficult and costly. A directory application is a significant asset but will require significant resources in both time and money.

The stages below give some overview of a typical database / directory process. This process starts at a point where an organisation has identified the benefits of a directory, secured funding and are starting the project management.

*“something funny happens once a non-profit organisation needs a database...all of a sudden they can't live another day without it”*

*Barbara Change NPower New York*

### **Stage 1 – The team**

The first stage is to define the project team. Involving staff from the start will help with the directory ownership. During this phase you should identify staff, stakeholders and if you do not have staff internally who can develop a directory then start to consider appointing an external developer, (the resource guide in appendix 2 give some more information on appointing a consultant). This team will timescale the project, appoint consultants, review developments with stakeholders and ensure the project is on track.

Within the team there should be an appointed champion / manager who will be accountable and a decision maker. This person should be the point of contact for the external developer / consultant and involves the funder as the directory progresses.

Define roles, responsibilities and communication methods from the start. Senior management should be visible and actively support the project.

The assignment of staff to this project is a significant allocation of resources in both time and money and will impact on day to day operations. This hidden cost is often overlooked when planning a directory / database.

### **Stage 2 – Current data collection system**

It is vital that before you develop a directory / database you evaluate what data your currently collect and how your process it. This may be a new project with no current systems in place.

This is a critical process. Be clear about your aims and objectives and what you / the funders really want the directory to do. Forget the technology and concentrate on what you are trying to achieve, what difference it will make, who will benefit and who will access this information.

### **Stage 3 - Planning**

With clear aims and objects the team can start to plan the project. It should focus on potential risks and liabilities, sustainability, the budget, external consultants / developers and plan accordingly.

During the planning you can start looking at which data collection method will be used to provide the source information and the information do you want to collect. When considering what you want the database tool to do always consider the reports you will ultimately want from the directory, which will aid planning your data collection.

Commissioners' overwhelmingly stated that they required an online system, so review your web site look at your hosting company and investigate the package you have and any limitations before considering a database tool. Consider / take advice on, should the directory be integrated into your existing web site or be separate online tool? There are many factors that may influence integration into an existing web site maybe the design requirements of building an electronic directory from an existing paper version, the development costs, and the functionality of your existing web site or the confidential nature of information for the directory.

Produce a formal plan, review frequently and modify as required. You can use many online collaborative tools such as Google docs to share and aid communication.

While planning the directory it is important to look at the expertise needed for the project and start looking internally and / or externally for consultants / developers. A database consultant will help the team with functionality requirements and database tool identification.

Consider sustainability, with annual hosting charges for your directory you may look at a membership fee for a directory entry to ensure continuity of the service post funding.

## **Stage 4 – Functionality**

While keeping clear objectives in mind the team now need to look at what features the directory will have. It is not important for the project team to have technical knowledge during this process but that they have a clear vision of what they want from the directory.

An important aspect in any application is the user interface. In addition to the design requirements the directory should be clear and easy to navigate / user. Colour and design and the ability for screen readers to work on the directory may be a consideration for accessibility issues. Does the directory need to have different views for different target audiences (i.e. service users / commissioners). Initial contact with a disability organisation and or Ability Net (<http://www.abilitynet.org.uk/>) will help identify potential problems / accessibility requirements.

Identify the field that will hold data, the type of field (drop-down box, radio button, check box etc...) and identify the field labels. Define any mandatory fields, consider the user interface bearing in mind the target audience. As the directory develops additional custom fields may need to be added, this is the scalability of the tool (application).

Consider if any information will be categorised into thematic topics, geographical delivery / locations etc. Will you list deliver organisation alphabetically, newest organisation to the directory first or by some other criteria?

Will the site need more accessibility options than is supplied via the computer's operating system? Will it need multi-language support? Do you want links to a Google map? Will you have a help feature enabled? Do you want images, video, sound on the directory? Will the directory need to export information to another software application like Excel? Do you want a feedback form or poll for user interaction? Do you want / need to rate delivery organisation by quality or times visited? Will there be web links to other organisations? Do you want RSS links to both pull dynamic information into your site and automatically push out information to other web sites? These are some of the functionality identified from the ACEVO's report. The UCLAN event with commissioners discussed the PQQ process and not duplicating information gathering so some in-depth discussion is needed to identify data collection.

A directory could have different levels of access. There could be public information, restricted information and an area for the site administrator to maintain the directory. So some form of login facility may be required.

The directory should have a comprehensive searching facility. This could be an A-Z index, keyword search, selection by categories and / or a visual tree directory index as in windows file manager. The search feature should be fully customisable. If the directory is to export any reports it will be necessary for the reporting part of the database tool to be fully customisable.

At the commissioner event held by UCLAN there was discussion about sharing data from localised directory into more sub-regional / regional directories. This could be achieved by exporting reports / producing an interface that links several directories together. This could only be achieved if some commonality of data existed between all directories, an agreed core standard.

## **Stage 5 – Database solutions**

Having created a list of key functionality requirements we can now start looking at a database tool that has the functionality you require. There are many tool on the market that can be used to produce an online directory, appendix 1 has a list of some of the more common solutions although the extent of customisation of some listed would require significant investigation. There are 'open source' solution (free software) and commercial solutions (which may have charity discounts through Charity Technology Exchange – <http://www.ctxchange.org/> ). Some consultants look at tailor made solutions or off the shelf solution either way there will be a significant amount of customisation (and maybe some limitations) required so that it meets your requirement.

An online directory solution will be required to be hosted on a web server. During your planning phase you should have established any current resources available and this may be a factor when selecting a database, additional expenditure maybe required to upgrade your hosting solution to cope with a directory database. Most online solutions will use an SQL database flavour together with PHP, Java, HTML / XHTML used in conjunction with CSS to control the graphical appearance of the directory. Other proprietary systems may use Microsoft's .net, ASP, Python technologies together with some of the above mentioned technologies.

Investigate the hosting organisation control panel and look at backup facilities. Also depending upon the tool selected the database program itself may need upgrading from time to time to fix any security bugs in the software.

When selecting a solution investigate the ownership / licensing of the tool you are thinking of using. Some bespoke solution on the market will make it impossible to move your directory to another developer / hosting company, the data may be yours but the tool may not!

Another important consideration when selecting a database tool for your directory is the availability of developers to configure the tool and the associated costs.

## **Stage 6 – Configuration**

This is where a developer will need to modify the database tool to your / the funders specific requirements and why it is so important to have a clear vision / planning before the development part of the project begins.

Once configuration is complete a draft directory should be presented to the project team for functionality, design, navigation and data collection evaluation. Developers will modify the draft in line with initial specification. Please note additional functionality at this stage in development may incur additional costs!

During the development and configuration process the developers should be producing a comprehensive documentation of the directory.

Once the initial configuration is agreed it is ready for data testing.

## **Stage 7 – Testing**

Have a test site where stakeholders can access and test the usability and functionality of the database / directory. A test environment will encourage end users to have ownership and remove barriers / fear of breaking a new tool. Create an 'issues' log and define a mechanism to report anomalies to the developer and have the developer sign off reported issues.

When testing the directory add unexpected information to test the database validation process, (i.e. add a date of birth in the future, add text where numbers are expected, leave mandatory fields empty etc...) this is what some developers call 'breaking it' during this process the robustness of the system is identified.

You can run the site through W3C validator (<http://validator.w3.org/>) to test the quality of the coding of the directory to a global quality standard.

When reporting issues / errors to the developer you could adopt a traffic light system to prioritise fixes; red - urgent, amber – required, green – desirable.

You can contact disability organisation to have their membership test the accessibility elements of the directory and offer feedback.

### ***Stage 8 – Data Transfer (if applicable)***

If your organisation already has data applicable for the directory it may be possible to import that information into the SQL database that holds the content for the directory. This may also be an opportunity to ‘cleanse’ existing data before taking into the directory, removing any duplications and correcting / updating existing data. Depending on the type of data and quality of data this process can be expensive and the amount of data being transferred may be limited.

If data is transferred into the new directory undertake another testing exercise to ensure the data handles correctly (i.e. the data type has not been corrupted in transfer – a number looks like a number but is actually being handled as text).

### ***Stage 9 – Training***

The report by both ACEVO and UCLAN look at the ownership of the directory in terms of maintenance and updates. Training will be a critical factor in the success of the directory. Training will be required for content editors and administrators. Additional training maybe necessary for the hosting organisations control panel / backup procedure. If commissioners / deliver organisations are going to add content then they will require training.

It would be good practice to have some training notes / documentation for ongoing reference. Depending on the degree of functionality training may need to be phased to ensure staff are not over-burdened with a new application.

The training phase of a directory development is also provides a good testing and evaluation process that forms part of the formal testing / developer feedback process.

### ***Stage 10 – Implementation / go live***

When the directory is full tested, functional and robust it can be implemented / rolled out, with an online directory this is usually the ‘go live’ process. Review your initial plan; look at retaining some of your budget for minor developments resulting from the online feedback system.

It will be important to keep the directory accurate and up to date. Content Management System tools can help manage this process much easier than some hand coded solutions.

### ***Stage 11 - Review***

Have a formal review process for the directory periodically looking at any additional requirements from commissioners, delivery organisation, service users and the steering group. From the administration facilities look at number of visits, if this is a public tool look at site engine submission and optimisation to have a greater web presence. As the UCLAN event mentioned running an online directory in parallel with an annual paper version there could be an annual process / survey to ensure online version is accurate. So database tools could automatically un-publish directory entries until some online process of validation is completed. These tools can significantly reduce the ongoing costs of directory maintenance.