

Research reveals Midlands support to be overstretched

RESEARCH IN BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL has revealed that development support for the social enterprise sector has become 'increasingly fragmented, incoherent and patchy'.

The research – funded by ChangeUP, a Home Office investment programme designed to strengthen the voluntary sector – was commissioned earlier this year by Birmingham and Solihull Social Economy Consortium (BSSEC). It concludes that although there are many agencies working in the sector, in reality this is a deceptive indicator of their actual capacity and resources to provide the kind of support the sector needs.

The research surveyed 25 support organisations in Birmingham and Solihull.

It revealed that two agencies alone provided the bulk of support in Birmingham – with one of these already suffering huge reductions in the public funding it has available to pay for its free services – while in Solihull extremely limited support was available from only one agency.

'Our findings illustrate beyond doubt that business support for social enterprise in the sub-region is now significantly under-resourced compared to even just two or three years ago,' said Ranjit Bansal, who led one of the research teams. 'There are a number of reasons for this, but declining public sector funding of support provision emerges as top of the list.'

Further information

The research reports can be downloaded at: www.bssec.org.uk