

## TSRC Advisory Board 28.09.09

### Issues raised in group discussion about **Service Delivery**

- Particular interest was shown in ways of assessing (and increasing) the contribution of the third sector to service delivery - and, particularly, the different ways in which third sector organisations are being engaged in the new models of strategic and joint commissioning which are being developed in most public services.
  - Some participants were particularly keen to see research into how these new approaches were impacting on smaller third sector organisations - and models for dealing with problems arising in this area.
  - Concern that this move to commissioning had been over-hyped, so that some research would be valuable that established what the extent (and the limitations) of this move actually were. Moreover, the growing trend for private-third sector partnerships is worth exploration.
- A plea was made for a deeper analysis of the real (as opposed to claimed) advantages of third sector organisations in relation to innovation - where and when is it likely that the third sector will outperform organisations in the other sectors in relation to innovative services or methods.
- The reverse of innovation was also suggested as an important topic - why some things DON'T happen in third sector organisations, even when they are planned and publicised (and even made mandatory in some cases!).
- And there was interest, too, in the unintended consequences of third sector policies (both at national and local level).
- Another line of research suggested was into the different approaches to capacity-building needed in different sub-sectors, to get away from the assumption that capacity building was somehow 'generic'.
- Finally, there was a strong suggestion that, given the huge uncertainties surrounding the economy, public sector budgets, future government policy, and the way in which the third sector itself is developing, research should focus especially on experimental and imaginative approaches which open up understanding of the different trajectories which might be taken by third sector service delivery.