

Angela Smith MP
Minister for the Third Sector
Office of the Third Sector
South Side
The Mall
London SW1A 2WH

13 November 2009

Dear Angela

Thank you for writing to explain why you have cancelled the Campaigning Research programme.

We were very disappointed to learn of your decision. Many local organisations had already been informed of their campaigning grants from Capacitybuilders. NAVCA had promoted the programme and helped many local charities and community groups to submit proposals. These organisations will think it is now unfair and unreasonable to take their grants away.

You are our Champion in Government at central and local levels. You do that job really well. However, this decision will be seen as bad grant making practice and sets a poor example to politicians and grant makers in local authorities and other agencies.

We know that it is the job of politicians to decide priorities. That's a tough job especially during a recession. If you had cancelled this programme before grants had been awarded we would have been less disturbed by the decision. But to cancel after grants have been awarded and without consultation will be seen in the local sector as an expression of OTS's non-compliance with the Compact. We deeply regret that.

I should say that NAVCA and our members have promoted the Hardship Fund vigorously at local level and see it as a valuable expression of Government support for local organisations as they work hard to help those worst affected by the downturn. However, the benefits gained in the short term by transferring £750k from the Campaigning Fund to the Hardship Fund will be far outweighed by the damage done to OTS's role as an exemplar of good funding practice and to the Compact.

We request that you urgently reconsider your decision in order to avoid the damage which we believe it will cause.

*Yours sincerely
Kevin Curley*

**Kevin Curley
Chief Executive**