Nick Starkey, Deputy Director, Office for Civil Society

- The Office for Civil Society works to support civil society in three ways:
  1. Making it easier to set up and run a charity or voluntary organisation
  2. Getting more resources into the charitable or voluntary sector
  3. Making it easier for the sector to work with the state.
- Local infrastructure helps organisations to improve the efficiency of how they work.
- A social sector skills and leadership review was carried out by Dame Mary Marsh, the review examined the sector’s most vital needs around attracting and developing a skilled workforce and leadership. Skills gaps were identified and grouped into eight themed areas.
- OCS has made it easier to access resources – we are in difficult times but there are new streams of capital and finance. These include Big Society Capital, Social Impact Bonds and the Advice Services Transition Fund.
- Following the G8 announcement the Social Incubators Fund will also be available. This £10m fund will specifically target social incubators and will help them provide investment and support to early stage social ventures. Grants should be awarded from January 2013.
- The Cabinet Office and Nesta have formed a partnership to address problems in specific areas. The Centre for Social Innovation launched in April 2013 and it will accelerate the pace and scale of public service innovations that harness the capabilities, expertise and resourcefulness of citizens and civil society.
- It is not only about making money available – we need to help organisations know how to spend it and we need to help develop capacity to take up social investment.
- The National Citizen Service is sowing the seeds for future social action. The aim is to support 16 and 17 year olds from all backgrounds to work together and to take on new challenges and make a difference in their communities.
- Masterclass workshops were launched in December 2012, they will use case studies, practical tools and the direct experience of experts to guide organisations through what is required to win and develop public services. Organisations will share their knowledge on how to work better with government.
- OCS has supported the Social Value Act which came into force on 31 January 2013. The act requires local authorities to consider how to improve the social, environmental and economic impact of public service contracts at the pre-procurement stage.

About the APPG on Civil Society

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Civil Society and Volunteering exists to provide a forum for discussing issues affecting the voluntary and community sector with Parliamentarians from across the political spectrum.

How to get involved?

- **Come to a meeting** (details below)
- **Join the group** - APPG members get advance notice of all of our sessions as well as an invitation to our Christmas Parliamentary Reception. E mail for details
- **Give us a call, visit our website or follow us on twitter**
Future Meetings

- The autumn schedule will be announced shortly

Please RSVP to Alison Evans on civilsocietyappg@ncvo-vol.org.uk or telephone 020 7520 2473.