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Rt. Hon. David Cameron MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1A 2AA

13 May 2010

Dear Prime Minister,

In the run up to this election, you spoke persuasively of the need for a ‘big society’ and to give power to people, saying that a Conservative vote on 6 May would mean the people in power thereafter. Your coalition partners argued for a redistribution of power to the people, and a fairer society. Today, we 267 third sector chief executives, with many hundreds of years of experience between us working to help and give voice to millions of the most vulnerable people and communities here and around the world – often in partnership with the state, sometimes in spite of it – are writing to you to welcome you to Government and to offer you our partnership in making your vision a reality.

We believe a partnership between the third sector and your Government could be a powerful force for change, creating a big society and putting power in the hands of the people. We give people and communities a voice. We give individuals, families and communities the information, advice and advocacy to enable them to act as empowered consumers and citizens. We work to protect the environment. And we can transform public services across the board, achieving better outcomes and saving the state billions. That is the ‘big offer’ we set out to your colleagues George Osborne, Francis Maude, Nick Hurd, Oliver Letwin, Philip Hammond, Andrew Lansley, Andrew Selous, Alan Duncan, Nick Gibb and Maria Miller at the Conservative/Third Sector Summit in March 2010. As George Osborne said at that event, we know that you and your colleagues are keen to ‘take us up on that offer’. Now we need to make it happen.

If the potential of our sector is to be fully tapped, the partnership between your Government, our organisations and the people we represent and support needs to move up a gear from what it has been, and it needs to start now.

We are not writing to you with specific requests for action or funding. We are not coming to you with a ready-prepared shopping list. We are writing to ask that from the very start, even in your Government’s first formative days, you work with our sector as real partners, and spark a step-change in the way Government and civil society leaders relate. Not once the mould is set, not as an afterthought, but now.

That might mean a third sector leader on every departmental board; it might mean an Advisory Council of third sector leaders at the heart of Government; it might mean a Commission on the future of Government/third sector relationships; it might mean similar commissions for each of your departments; it might mean a taskforce with the Treasury on transforming public services. It will almost certainly mean an early,

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electrifying signal from the top that the way Whitehall deals with our sector needs to change.

We hope you might find the time to meet a delegation of us to discuss these issues in more detail. We hope that your Government and our sector can work together to the benefit of all the people of this country. We hope that in that respect, as you have suggested, your appointment will mark a step-change in the way Whitehall engages with the civil society that we lead. And we wish you well in making that happen.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Bubb	CEO	ACEVO
Abdul Khan	CEO	BECON
Adrian Bagg	CEO	Papworth Trust
Alan Lodge	CEO	Hospice of St Mary of Furness
Alan Patchett	CEO	Age Concern Sunderland
Alastair McCapra	CEO	Landscape Institute
Alex Fox	CEO	NAAPS
Alison Fisher	CEO	Bedfordshire and Luton Mind
Alison Hunter	CEO	Bromley Autistic Trust
Alison Rogers	CEO	British Liver Trust
Alison Ryan	CEO	Weldmar Hospicecare Trust
Allison Agius	CEO	Catalyst Stockton
Allison Ogden-Newton	CEO	Social Enterprise London
Alvaro Bermejo	CEO	International HIV/AIDS Alliance
Andreas Ginkell	CEO	St James' House
Andy Jong	CEO	Dentaid
Andy Stockbridge	CEO	Toybox
Andy Williamson	CEO	Warwickshire & Northamptonshire Air Ambulance
Angela Dinsdale	CEO	St Cuthbert's Hospice
Angela White	CEO	Sefton CVS
Anne Longfield	CEO	4Children
Annette Cotterill	CEO	Learning Through Action
Annie McDowall	CEO	SHARE Community
Anthony Harmer	CEO	ELATT
Belinda Phipps	CEO	NCT
Ben Crouch	CEO	The Roby
Ben Hughes	CEO	bassac
Bob Taylor	CEO	Knowsley Housing Trust Group
Brian Ham	CEO	Dolphin Square Foundation
Bryan Teixeira	CEO	Naz Project London
Carole Cochrane	CEO	The Princess Royal Trust for Carers

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Dame Clare Tickell		
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David Wolverson	CEO	Dimensions
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Derek Twine CBE	CEO	Scout Association
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Simon Feary	CEO	Chartered Quality Institute
Simon Gillespie	CEO	Multiple Sclerosis Society
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Stuart Royston	CEO	Life Academy
Sue Thorn	CEO	Society for Endocrinology
Sue Vasey	CEO	North Yorkshire Learning Consortium Limited
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Dr Theo Gavrielides	Director	Independent Academic Research Studies (IARS)
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