

Open letter about the closure of the National Coalition of Independent Action

Poverty, homelessness and inequality are increasing at break-neck speeds. Safety nets, rights and services are being eroded. Mean-spirited policies stalk the streets. Protest is on the increase. So we, the undersigned, are sorry to hear that the National Coalition of Independent Action (NCIA) is closing down (www.independentaction.net).

Over the last 10 years NCIA has rung an alarm bell alerting us to the progressive silencing of charities and voluntary groups as a force to resist the impoverishment of people and communities, the loss of rights and the privatisation of public services. Whilst we have not always agreed with NCIA's positions, its voice has been essential in reminding us of the duty to dissent within civil society. A duty often lost in the clamour for public service contracts and insider influence.

But, as NCIA's closing statement says, "something else is needed to occupy the space we have taken". In particular, NCIA calls for continuing the alliances built between voluntary services, activists, unions, academics and others determined to halt the erosion of social protections, the rise of gross inequality, the worship of profit and the demonisation of those damaged by such ideologies – both inside and outside the UK.

We say thank you and goodbye to NCIA, and affirm that we will continue – in our own ways – to advance NCIA perspectives for voluntary groups independent from, and unfettered by, powerful outside interests, and committed to stand visibly and practically in solidarity with those facing injustices; to speak plainly about these injustices; and campaign vigorously for their end.

November 2015

Signatories:

- **42nd Street** - Simone Spray
- **Adur Voluntary Action** - Adrian Barritt
- **Mike Aiken** - independent researcher
- **Assemblies for Democracy** - Paul Feldman
- **bOLDr** - Steve Lancashire
- **Boycott Workfare**
- **Bradford Resource Centre** – Mike Quiggin
- **BRAP** - Joy Warmington
- **Bullian Community Resource Centre** - Belinda Lewis
- **Camden Voluntary Action** – Kevin Nunan
- **Centre for Welfare Reform** - Simon Duffy
- **Children England** - Kathy Evans
- **Chilypep** - Lesley Pollard
- **CO2Connections** - James Murphy

- **Communities Inc** - Shamsheer Chohan
- **Community Action Derby** - Kim Harper
- **Community Action Milton Keynes** - Alissa Pemberton
- **Community Development Network London** - Matt Scott
- **Community Sector Coalition** - Nick Beddow
- **De Montfort University** - Jonathan Davies (personal capacity)
- **Detention Forum** - Eiri Ohtani
- **Directory of Social Change** - Jay Kennedy
- **Disabled People Against the Cuts Steering Group** - Linda Burnip
- **Disabled People Against the Cuts, NE & Cumbria** - Gail Ward
- **Dudley Council for Voluntary Services** – Lorna Prescott
- **Edge Hill University** - John Diamond
- **Equanomics** – Karen Chouhan
- **European Services Strategy Unit** – Dexter Whitfield
- **Faiths4Change** - Laird Ryan
- **Glasgow Caledonian University** – Les Huckfield
- **Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit** – Denise McDowell
- **Hackney Unites** – Jane Holgate
- **Housing Justice** - Alastair Murray
- **In Defence of Youth Work** - Tony Taylor
- **Institute of Race Relations** - Jenny Bourne
- **Keep Volunteering Voluntary** - Penny Waterhouse
- **Lincolnshire Community Foundation** - Gordon Hunter
- **Livestroughfriends** – Bob Rhodes
- **London School of Economics** – Armine Ashkanian
- **Manchester Community Central MACC** - Mike Wild
- **Manchester Metropolitan University** - Carol Packham
- **Middlesborough Voluntary Development Agency** – Dinah Lane
- **Migrants Resource Centre** – Ros Lucas
- **Muslim Community Helpline** – Sarah Sherif
- **National Community Activist Network** - Joe Taylor
- **Neighbourhood Networks** - John Dalrymple
- **North Tyneside Women’s Voices** - Penny Remfry
- **Our NHS** - Caroline Molloy
- **People’s Republic of Southwark** – Liliana Dmitrovic
- **Question the Powerful** - Henry Tam
- **Refugee Council** - Maurice Wren
- **Renters’ Rights London & Waltham Forest Renters** - Rosie Walker
- **Sue Robson** - community development practitioner
- **Salford Star** - Stephen Kingston
- **Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations** - Ruchir Shah
- **South West Foundation** - Jan Crawley
- **Sussex Defend our NHS**
- **Unite the Union** - Sally Kosky & James Lazou
- **University of Northampton** - Bob Colenutt
- **Voluntary Action Harrow Cooperative** – Alex Buckmire
- **Voluntary Action Lewisham** – Tony Nickson
- **Volunteer Centre Lewisham** - Kay Kelleher
- **Volunteer Cornwall** - Ian Jones
- **Water Adventure Centre** - Lilian Pons
- **We Own It** - Cat Hobbs
- **West Northumberland Foodbank** - Jo Walker
- **World to Win** - Corinna Lotz