

Modernising Commissioning

23rd December 2010

Executive Summary

This consultation response contains views sought from VCA Wirral Senior Management Team regarding the Modernising Commissioning Green Paper: Increasing the role of charities, social enterprises, mutuals and cooperatives in public service delivery

VCA Wirral Response

1) In which public sector areas could Government create new opportunities for civil society organisations to deliver?

- Payment by results would be beneficial for larger CSOs but this may cause a problem for smaller groups.
- Accept bids from smaller organisations and make the tendering process simple for the smaller amounts of funding
- There must be a way of gathering consultation data via web or internet without constant gathering of groups who are not housebound
- Support the hard worked for pathways already established in some areas
- Pass the monitoring and evaluation over to an impartial infrastructure organisation
- Don't rule anything out! We need to think of new innovative ways of delivering all types of services so don't be restrictive
- Community engagement to be as effective as possible should be handled by an external organisation possibly an infrastructure organisation to ensure its non-political and truly reflects what communities need
- Work experience for young people needs to be co-ordinated better – this could be something Volunteer Centres could offer as it links nicely with volunteering and creates relationships between CSO's and the private sector
- Future needs planning strategy, due consideration for the smaller groups when planning submission deadlines, need to be realistic.
- Transfer some of the commissioning processes to infrastructure organisations for smaller amounts of funding, who will then commission services on behalf of the public sector, using their expertise of the local Civil Society organisations.

2) How could Government make existing public service markets more accessible to civil society organisations.

- Less bureaucracy and a single approach
- Develop a calendar of funding opportunities
- Information in simple language
- Go where the people are, don't expect them always to come to meetings
- Involve more groups in an open way and avoid the usual suspects.
- Learn in detail what the diverse groups can do, large and small
- Use the Compact! Ensure that there are resources to monitor this at a local level and scrutiny at a national level
- Good marketing and publicity, to break down barriers for civil society organisations.

3) How could commissioners use assessments of full social, environmental and economic value to inform their commissioning decisions?

- Utilise the JSNA
- Support the 'Social enterprise and Social Value' Bill which would require the recognition of 'full value' as part of mainstream commissioning practice
- Pay special attention to groups who can show social value and who use their monitoring to plan, and not just say they do!
- Streamline processes to take into consideration extra value, continually ask what are we getting over and above what we are commissioning which Government should be asking of public bodies. These outcomes should also be shared using forum similar to LSP's but maybe with an outcomes focus/specific monitoring role.
- Write this into the commissioning process e.g. in bids etc..

4) How could civil society organisations support greater citizen and community involvement in all stages of commissioning?

- Develop the support to enable local civil society organisations and state partners strengthen working relationships;
- Inform the CSO of JSNA and assist them to contribute
- The JSNA needs revisiting to keep it updated and fresh
- Invest in VCAW to help both sides build strong relationships
- By ensuring that what is provided is what is needed, as evidenced by those who need it, not those who want to deliver a service
- Scrutinise decisions; how has the commissioned activity's need been identified and this needs to be varied using both qualitative and quantitative data and involving

people. CSO's are best placed to do this but this would need to be handled appropriately to avoid any conflict

- Help people understand how services are identified and bought; lose the jargon and give people more control
- By active encouragement of local community to participate in a meaningful way in the commissioning process, through consultations, service planning discussions at an early stage and funding panels.
- By being pro-active in working to ensure that the community play an active part in the commissioning of local services, and providing appropriate and timely training, to help break down the barriers of the process.