

## Consultation Process

1. The Department is keen to secure your views on the proposed new approach to commissioning, awarding and disbursing funding to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector. The consultation period will run for a 12 week period closing on 23 September 2016. Throughout the summer period the Department will engage with the sector to provide information on the proposals and encourage the sector and those with an interest to submit your views early.
2. The consultation document and supporting information will be provided via the Department's website and can also be found on NICVA and CO3's websites. The consultation document sets out a number of questions, and a proforma (Annex A) has been provided to aid the structure of responses. The Department would encourage you to submit your views in electronic format, but is content to receive views in a format that is preferred by you.
3. Should you require the consultation document in a different format, please contact the Department to organise this.
4. Contact Information:

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## Consultation Response to Department of Justice: VCSE Funding Model

### Name of Organisation:

Consultation Question	Response
<p>Do the policy aims behind the proposed funding system provide a robust approach to enabling the VCSE to deliver services which support and achieve key departmental objective?</p>	<p>There is no specific mention of domestic violence, sexual violence or any other form of gender-based violence in the Programme for Government, despite these being major issues for the Department of Justice and other government departments. However they do fall under many of the objectives, including achieving a more equal society; to ensuring people enjoy long, active healthy lives; to ensuring that people are able to fulfil their potential and are able to be employed in better jobs; to having a community which respects the law and each other; to having a society that cares for each other and helps those in need; to give children and young people the best start in life. We urge that domestic and sexual violence remain key priority issues for the DOJ in terms of work and funding.</p> <p>Domestic violence is a cross-cutting issue, involving other government departments such as Health, Education, and Communities. We note that the policy alludes to potential cross-departmental funding opportunities at paragraph 12. However it would be useful for the policy to include more concrete information on how a broad, cross-departmental approach can be taken when considering priorities and funding, and how any new system of commissioning by the DOJ will be able to facilitate this.</p> <p>We would also urge that the priorities identified by the Department and the measures used to benchmark progress</p>

	<p>reflect the complex reality of many of the problems faced by our society. Often issues that government and the VCSE works to resolve, including domestic and sexual violence, are not simple problems with simple solutions. Meaningful improvement to the lives of those affected cannot be accurately measured by a simple quantitative statistic such as those used in the draft PfG. They require more nuanced, qualitative monitoring.</p>
<p>Will the new funding system better enable the Department to prioritise and direct available funding to key areas to be delivered by the VCSE?</p>	<p>We welcome the recognition that delivering on outcomes can take time, and that sufficient time will be given for long-term projects to deliver meaningful change. We are also supportive of a partnership approach. We appreciate that the Department will be expected to make further cuts in funding during this mandate. However there is no evidence presented in this document to show that this new approach would necessarily have the desired outcomes of saving money while better delivering on outcomes.</p> <p>We would question the rationale for tendering all services. In other regions where there has been a move to tendering and procurement for services which require specialism and particular expertise, difficulties have arisen regarding the quality of service and meeting needs of service users. Commissioning models, if simply derived from private sector procurement models, often do not place sufficient weight on the need for expertise and specialism over low cost. Meeting the complex needs of vulnerable people often costs money, as specialist services and support are required to properly meet those complex needs. If a commissioning system does not reflect this, and places disproportionate emphasis on cost, the result is services which are cheaper to run but do not deliver on the specialist</p>

	<p>requirements to meet the needs of service users. Ultimately this results in the needs of service users and government objectives not being met. We would seek reassurance from the Department that any commissioning model guarantees that specialist services for those with specialist needs will still be funded, and that fully meeting the needs of service users will take priority.</p> <p>More detailed information as to how this commissioning process will work is required. We urge that the co-design process includes discussion on how procurement processes themselves are developed.</p>
<p>Will the new funding system provide greater opportunity for wider participation from the VCSE in the commissioning of services?</p>	<p>Probably yes.</p>
<p>Will the new system improve confidence in the consistency and transparency of how funding is awarded?</p>	
<p>Do you consider that embedding a culture of co-design in the new funding system will better harness the knowledge and skills of the VCSE and lead to the design and delivery of more effective services being delivered for the public?</p>	<p>Possibly, though the system should be based on the principles of evidence based best practice primarily, and a recognition that organisations with certain expertise may have more to contribute on their expert issue than others.</p> <p>Writing the brief for commissioning services also requires expertise in the subject matter on the part of the commissioners themselves.</p>
<p>Do you consider that the use of Full Cost Recovery costing will provide greater opportunity for more VCSE organisations to compete for funding?</p>	<p>In theory full cost recovery is a good idea.</p>
<p>Do you agree that the use of a Full Cost Recovery approach will promote</p>	<p>It is important that VCSE organisations are able to be sustainable and not have</p>

<p>greater understanding within VCSE of the costs involved with delivering specific projects, and therefore ensure VCSE organisations do not deliver services at a loss?</p>	<p>to deliver services at a loss.</p>
<p>Will the incremental approach to implementation provide sufficient safeguards against negative impacts on VCSE organisations during the three year transitional period?</p>	<p>Factoring this time in to allow for transition to any new system is essential.</p>
<p>Will the funding model provide equality of opportunity to all VCS bodies seeking to bid for funding?</p>	
<p>Do you envisage the implementation of a new funding model will negatively impact on any particular groups?</p>	
<p>Please provide other comments and views on the proposed new VCSE Funding System:</p>	<p>The use of private sector principles and language in this document to construct a public and VCSE funding system is concerning. Experience in England and Wales has highlighted issues with using a business sector model of tendering and commissioning for public services to people in need. For example there have been concerns over such a system resulting in poorer quality services, delivered by organisations without the requisite understanding or expertise of the complex needs of their service users, which ultimately negatively impacts on those using the services and the delivery of positive outcomes. This has been coupled with the loss of many specialist services and the decades of expertise that goes with it.</p> <p>This is especially the case when commissioning specialist services like domestic violence services. In Scotland, local government has recognised the limitations of the standard commissioning model, and has worked alongside specialist support providers like Women’s Aid to devise specific commissioning guidance for specialist services, with</p>

	<p>the aim of delivering better outcomes for victims and their children. We recommend that the Department looks to other regions where the limitations of tendering and procurement have been identified and assessed in greater detail, and take on board examples of problem solving and specialist commissioning that have been developed to redress these limitations.</p>
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