

Modernising Commissioning Response by Volunteer Cornwall

The Green Paper seeks views on four key questions and outlines the Government's current plans for discussion:

1. In which public service areas could government create new opportunities for civil society organisations to deliver?

- Introducing payment by results – so payment is linked to outcomes not inputs;
- Setting proportions of specific services that should be delivered by independent organisations; and
- Introducing new rights for communities to run services.

Civil society could get involved in almost all public service areas. Local people should be involved in most public facing services, we have to coproduce them and get professionals to work in a more engaging way with volunteers from the communities.

Sub- Question: What are the implications of payment by results for civil society organisations?

There are capital and revenue implications as many civil society organisations would not have the ability to back roll initiatives.

How would this impact on the Ccompact and payment in advance?

How are preventative outcomes measured as successes?

How are multiple outcomes for individual and communities measured if funding remains in silos?

How can long term outcomes to addresses?

Sub- Question: Which public services areas could be opened up to more civil society providers? What are the barriers to more civil society organisations being involved?

All of the preventative services for health, social care, children's services and community safety can be delivered by civil society. There should be greater civil involvement in delivering environmental goods and services.

Civil society should be able to train public sector staff and local elected members.

Barriers include silo mentality of public sector funding and providers, professional boundaries and hubris, set up costs, cash flow issues, training of staff.

Sub- Questions: Should Government explore extending the right to challenge to other local state-run services?

If so, which areas and what benefits could civil society organisations bring to these public service areas?

All services should be challengeable at a local level. Civil society should also be able to challenge the monoliths of DWP, Health and Education. All activity has to be from the perspective of the overlapping needs and aspirations of the whole person in the context of their community.

Sub-Questions: Are there types of assets whose viability, when transferred to civil society management or ownership, would be particularly dependent on a continuing income stream from service contracts or public sector tenancies?

What are the main barriers that prevent civil society organisations taking over asset-based services?

Children's Centres, Day Care Centres, libraries and leisure centres.

Barriers would include lack of trust by professionals and elected members, procurement practices. Also possible single outcome focused transfers instead of looking at multiple outcomes.

Sub- Question: How can we encourage more existing civil society organisations to team up with new employee-led mutuals?

More flexible operational models need developing with the focus on people and place and not on narrow services.

Need collaborative training to understand 'fuzzy' boundaries and complex systems and emergence.

Need incentives to develop opportunities and not blocking by those in control.

Ensure duplication does not happen, with scarce resources trust and collaboration is more important than competition. Think about resilience as well as efficiencies.

Lending rules of Big Society bank need to be carefully considered to allow for flexibility and innovation, do not stifle risk.

Sub-Question: What other methods could the Government consider in order to create more opportunities for civil society organisations to deliver public services?

Number of local volunteers engaged should be a measure of success. These local people will be involved in the design, development and delivery of services (coproduction).

2. How could government make existing public service markets more accessible to civil society organisations?

- Cut away unnecessary red tape by streamlining procurement processes;
- Improve transparency of public procurement opportunities;
- Address ways to manage the short term movement towards large centralised contracts and move to a decentralised approach in the longer term;
- Launch a contract finder service, a free facility for small organisations to find procurement and sub-contracting opportunities all in one place.

The Full range of public services has to be considered not just single functions. Need to focus on what links people and communities not how Whitehall can control expenditure.

Building the capacity in the sector must be as equal and trusted partners not as incidental and peripheral.

Again focus on multiple outcomes and not narrow inputs through silos, understand complexity of people and places and emergence.

Sub-Question: What issues should commissioners take into account in order to increase civil society organisations' involvement in existing public service markets?

Commissioners are needed who understand how to commission not just procure. A bit of humility by professionals, respect for civil society, organisations and volunteers an increase in trust.

Sub- Question: In the implementation of the abovementioned measures, what issues should the Government consider in order to ensure that they are fully inclusive of civil society organisations?

Need to focus on small scale local delivery to increase ownership not big national frameworks that make it easy for government. Support in developing capacity at grass roots not multinationals.

Sub-Question: What issues should the Civil Society Red Tape Taskforce consider in order to reduce the bureaucratic burden of commissioning?

DWP new framework contracts are hugely increasing civil society organisations workloads as they have to produce difference information and evidence for big organisations that are tendering.

Emphasis has to be on local when looking at commissioning keep grass root ownership and wealth circulating within communities.

Sub-Question: How can commissioners achieve a fair balance of risk which would enable civil society organisations to compete for opportunities?

Understand better what the risks are for smaller civil society organisations, financial, safety, quality etc. need improved collaboration to share risks.

Procurement system needs to change from narrow value for money issues to broader multiple outcomes, social, environmental and economic.

Sub- Question: What are the key issues civil society organisations face when dealing with TUPE regulations and what could government do, within existing legislation, to resolve these problems?

Costs can be excessive if TUPE costs not covered by the public sector institution. The transferred staff from public sector organisations tend to be paid more than current employees working in civil society.

Improved job evaluation and salary levels adjusted.

Sub-Questions: What issues should Government consider in order to ensure that civil society organisations are assessed on their ability to achieve the 16 best outcomes for the most competitive price?

Focus a gain on multiple outcomes for individuals and communities not for silo funders.

Sub-Question: What issues should Government consider in the development of the Big Society Bank, in order to enable civil society organisations to take advantage of public service market opportunities?

Lending criteria has to be flexible and allow for different models of delivery and structure. Consortia opportunities have to be supported across sector. Understand management attitudes to financial risk. Understand emergence from interacting agents within civil society.

Sub- Questions: What issues affecting civil society organisations should be considered in relation to the extension of the Merlin Standard across central government?

Major contracts should build in a proportionate surplus for local civil society organisations and not cream off the profit.

Sub- Question: What barriers prevent civil society organisations from forming and operating in consortia? How could they be removed?

Procurement and commissioning rules

Local interactions and damaging competition with the focus on organisational existence and not individual and community needs.

Institutional behaviours and models of doing business which are 300 years old and out of date when dealing with scarce resources and multiple outcomes.

Need incentives to collaboration to maximise outcomes.

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

- Encourage understanding of social and environmental priorities of local people to be considered in the commissioning process; and
- Support the 'Social enterprise and Social Value' Bill which would require the recognition of 'full value' as part of mainstream commissioning practice.

Understand complex systems approaches and emergence, understand fuzzy boundaries and collaborative models of engagement.

Sub-Question: What approaches would best support commissioning decisions that consider full social, environmental and economic value?

Need a whole person approach in the context of their community.

Commissioners should think about wider impacts of investments. How things fit together from individual and communities not for funding body. Need to ensure wealth is retained and circulated locally.

Sub- Question: What issues should Government consider in taking forward the Public Services (Social Enterprise and Social Value) Bill?

It is vital that we involve local volunteer in all public service, design, development and delivery.

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

- Develop a new package of support to enable local civil society organisations and state partners strengthen working relationships;
- Extend the planned 'right to challenge' to public services; and
- Roll out 'Community Budgets' which pool funding for local services giving more flexibility to meet local priorities and a joined up approach across the board.

Again as already mentioned all public services should involve local volunteers in coproducing them. This should be assessed as part of the procurement process.

Sub-question: What role and contributions could civil society organisations place, through Local HealthWatch, in informing the local consumer voice about commissioning?

People are not just passive consumers but a key part of the solution.

Make sure it is not the usual suspects which has tended to happen with Link.

We need to expand the HealthWatch concept into all service provision.

Use the wide range of civil society organisations to gauge feedback on public services beyond health.

Sub-question: What issues relating to civil society organisations should the Government consider when refreshing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Guidance?

Engage grass roots groups and use local volunteer in process of gathering evidence etc.

Sub-Question: How could civil society organisations facilitate, encourage and support community and citizen involvement in decision making about local priorities and services commissioned?

This is what voluntary and community sector is all about and has been trying to do this for years without any real support from the public sector.

Sub-Question: What forms of support will best enable statutory partners and civil society organisations to improve their working relationships?

Joint training would be good, proper joint commissioning and not narrow procurement. Also business planning, financial security and multiple outcome focused collaboration.

Sub-Question: What issues should the government consider in the development of the future programme of training public service commissioners?

Perhaps shadowing, secondments and staff rotations, joint training, development of understanding of complex systems an emergence, fuzzy boundaries and multiple outcomes.

Sub- Questions: What can civil society organisations contribute to the roll out of community budgets? What barriers exist to realising this contribution? How can these barriers be removed?

Civil society organisations are generally set up and run by local people, they are on the ground and linked directly into people's lives and addressing community issues from their perspective not service providers.

They are flexible, generally dynamic and respond to need and support aspiration.

Barrier include procurement process, lack of respect and trust by public sector and financial vulnerability.

Sub- Questions: What can civil society organisations contribute to the roll out of Local Integrated Services?

What barriers exist to realising this contribution? How can these barriers be removed?

Civil society organisations have strong local links that cut across silos of public sector delivery, have a future focus and engage people from their own lives not political agendas.

Barriers as above including respect trust and being treated as an equal partner. Could be overcome as in Cornwall through contributing to a Joint Commissioning Board.

Sub- Questions: What can civil society organisations contribute to the development of Free Schools?

What should Government consider in order to realise this contribution?

Civil society link schools into their community, considerable evidence that situated learning has a huge benefit.

Sub- Questions: What contributions could civil society organisations make to the extension of personal budgets across a range of service areas?

What changes do both commissioners and civil society organisations need to make to adapt to an environment where citizens are commissioning their own services?

Provider side engagement and coordination, supporting choice, training people to volunteer then become Personal Assistants, quality assurance. Assists people to support and plan their care and build social capital in their community to support them when needed. Expert volunteers with grass root support.

