

## **How could government make existing public service markets more accessible to civil society organisations?**

- offer training to commissioners to develop their understanding of the voluntary sector.
- tendering can be a barrier and is often used even when contracts are below the European threshold. Tendering is often very long and it is not always clear how decisions are made. It would also help if PQQs were standardised and if there was less emphasis on ISO standards which many organisations have little knowledge of because they do not apply as directly to the areas covered by civil society organisations.
- ensuring monitoring is commensurate with the size of the contract and not unduly onerous. Timing of monitoring is synchronized to help organisations delivering on more than one contract.
- It was good to see the acknowledgement in the green paper that the government is committed to considering how to reform commissioning to enable proportionate levels of risk allocation across all public service providers. However, it then goes on to talk about payment by results which will be of serious concern to civil society organisations, particularly small and medium sized ones as the risk will be greater for them. However if this is to come about then we feel there must be a transition period from one payment model to the other so that organisations have a period of time in which to make the change.
- It would also be useful to carry out an impact assessment so that we have some understanding of how this would affect civil society organisations in comparison to other providers and whether or not it would be a barrier to them bidding for public service contracts.
- The government is stressing localism and its importance but it is difficult to understand from this paper how this will be encouraged and how local organisations will be able to compete against larger, national organisations that may also be bidding.
- We want to emphasise the role that local infrastructure organisations could play in helping to develop CSOs to enable them to bid for public service contracts if that is what they want to do, particularly for small and medium sized organisations that can't afford to buy in consultancy. The private sector is not always best placed to deliver this kind of support to CSOs because they have a limited understanding of the sector.
- It must be remembered that CSOs are not merely public service deliverers and want to continue to pursue their charitable objectives which are not necessarily tied in with delivering public services.