

Cruse Bereavement Care Response to Green Paper January 2011

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

- Education
- Fire Service
- Health Care (including mental health)
- Military
- Police
- Social Housing
- Social Services
- Public Information Services

2) How could Government make existing public service markets more accessible to civil society organisations? (Other than Contract Finder, the new website being launched in March to host all central government tender docs/ contracts):

- Community Forums/ discussion groups (I note your comment Debbie about it being extra commitment...but could we delegate decision making re. attending these events to a regional/ local level??)
- Promotion of Contract Finder via third sector websites
- Promotion of public service markets via Third Sector journal
- Simplification of the tendering/ monitoring process in order to offer a generic template to all civil society organisations, which can also be made available online? This will also reduce cost and resource
- Changing the culture of views about civil society organisations, to ensure that their contribution is recognised and values
- Recognising the specialist expertise within civil society organisations, rather than having tendering processes and contracts that generalise all forms of counselling, for example, bereavement is a specific application of counselling and should be recognised individually, as should the need for specific counselling methods such as person centred or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

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

- Civil society organisations can use existing relationships to gain feedback, i.e from service users, volunteers, staff, and create local forum groups to identify the needs of communities as an ongoing process
- A universal feedback form to be developed in order to record community involvement at all stages of commissioning, to ensure consistency. Feedback forms can be made available via civil society organisation's websites also. The purpose of this feedback form is to evaluate and measure community involvement, and the influence of community involvement, i.e outcomes. This feedback form would include simple questions measuring data such as 'Do you feel that your involvement in this process is benefiting/ has benefited the

community?' and 'What could be done differently to improve the process next time?' etc.

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

- Organisations such as Cruse have an extensive volunteer base (over 6,000 nationally), therefore we are in an ideal position to gain knowledge of the needs of the communities on a micro level. Cruse have a network of intelligence and information about discreet community need, and this micro knowledge is imperative in order for commissioners to understand what services are needed, where, and for whom. Economic value in its broader sense is achievable. For example, for an organisation such as Cruse providing 1-2-1 bereavement support, this free service can be measured against the average cost per counselling session, based on the average session duration of 6-8 sessions. Civil society organisations will, in the majority, have their own data assessments regarding the needs of local communities; and these should be taken into account in order for commissioners to make decisions based on 'real' need.

Additional comments regarding the implications of payment by results for civil society organisations:

Civil society organisations with a reliance on volunteer led services will face some barriers if payment by results commissioning continues to expand. Civil society organisations would require the business skills necessary to produce monitoring and evaluation of services, Cruse monitors these areas through its existing professional management structures, i.e a commissioning manager. As an organisation, we are aware that this is a competency and resource that will need to be maintained within Cruse.

There is also a cultural issue here, as the value of volunteers is often overlooked, despite the invaluable role volunteers play. With more focus on Social Return on Investment, it is clear the volunteer stigma is beginning to dissolve. However, this cultural shift has a long way to go before the true value and expertise of volunteers is fully recognised.

An answer for civil society organisations to undertake payment by results commissioning is for this to be funded as part of the project cost. This is the only way organisations such as Cruse will have the scope to deliver such targets.

Ideally there would need to be a flexible funding model/ payment model, for example some money would be paid in advance and some would be staged based on progress and later in the programme, specific outcomes as defined in SLA's. This means both the public and third sector would have to define a middle ground. For civil society organisations, payment by results in the current economic climate will be too risky. However, we do understand that payment by results will become more widespread, so a combination of upfront payment and payment by results is the most likely model moving forward? Civil society organisations can prove that improvements are as a result of the intervention only if outcome setting and evaluation processes are in place and efficiently managed. Cruse has appointed x 2 Commissioning Managers who currently support Cruse local branches to evaluate their services.