

## **Please find below responses to the Modernising Commissioning Green Paper Consultation from Disability LIB.**

Initially Disability LIB started as an alliance of 7 organisations offering capacity building support and advice to Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) in England using rights based principles and business skills, at a time of financial crisis and political opportunity. Now Disability LIB grew into an informal network of Disabled Peoples Organisations who challenge disablism, promote inclusion and embrace diversity.

A disabled people's organisation (DPO) is an organisation that has a membership and managing board with a majority of disabled people, and whose objectives are the rights and equality of disabled people. Disabled People's Organisation (DPO) are different from disability charities, as DPOs are run and controlled by disabled people and focus on peer support, empowerment and equality, when Disability charities are controlled by non-disabled people and speak on behalf of disability community. Our work is focused to support and facilitate this emerging subsector within UK Civil Society. We offer a wide range of capacity building assistance and support to DPOs to help them improve their effectiveness and boost performance. This assistance usually focuses on management, leadership and governance, research, information and policy analysis and the development organisational systems. See also <http://www.disabilitylib.org.uk/> for further details of our activities.

We have also produced two documents relevant to this consultation. Our report '[Thriving or Surviving](#)' shows how DPO's are disadvantaged and restricted in their development in a range of areas. These include securing and sustaining funding, the additional costs of access, commissioning & competitive tendering processes, skills retention and shortages, governance & leadership, capacity building support as well as the exclusion of DPOs from mainstream capacity-building activities. Also, in November 2010 we produced a position paper looking at challenges and opportunities for DPOs and mainstream capacity building organisations alike when working together, and the benefits for them to do so. The report titled '[less courses more conversations](#)' outlines the purpose of capacity building and characteristics of Disabled Peoples Organisations, including activities, added value and position within the Disability sector in terms of income.

Our responses are focused on Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs), also known as User Led Organisations of Disabled People. The

information given here recognises DPOs as a small and emerging subsector within UK Civil Society Organisations who are different to larger Disability Charities. This is because DPOs are a vital source of empowerment, employment and leadership for disabled people through the way they have disabled people themselves running their organisations. We believe DPOs need to have specific development of their infrastructure in order to increase and improve the huge impact they can have on disabled peoples achievements and inclusion. In this way we feel DPOs require specific initiatives to support there involvement in taking on commissioning opportunities.

## Consultation Questions

### **In which public service areas could Government create new opportunities for civil society organisations to deliver? -**

Commisioning is highly relevant to Disabled People being able to achieve equality in their everyday lives through the way they access support resources. This relates to both individuals and organisations. As the provision of individual budgets and right to control increases individual disabled people are going to enjoy far greater control and choice than ever before. This offers the opportunity for the number of disabled people to increase rapidly as individual employers of support staff. This will require infrastructure support and could see the development of Employee Led Mutuals of Disabled People buying services from Employee Led Mutuals of Support Workers which could increase efficiency. This will need specific promotion and initiative to develop this.

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

By reducing organisational complexity and inaccessibility, cutting red tape and making sure disabled peoples access needs are met and accommodated for as a default option. Also, by opening up nano commissioning opportunities, so that for example a group can bid for bits of work that amount to small contracts, like £5k a year to host a cultural event. Encourage consortium bidding to ensure that smaller regional and local groups could participate.

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

The unique and specific value of DPOs comes from the leadership, pride and learning disabled people demonstrate to others by showing how equality and inclusion can be done. DPOs demonstrate that disabled people are a 'normal' part of everyday life. However, this added value is not easily measured or indeed understood. While some established DPOs have used specific examples of their work and successes to secure income, future capacity building work is needed to develop this. This work could be part of a much wider cross social issue network. Methods such as SORI are very complicated and time consuming. There needs to be something much easier to use, that demonstrated the added value of DPOs. A partnership between, major DPO infrastructure groups and the SORI network and others would be a useful way of developing this.

**How could civil society organisations support greater citizen and community involvement in all stages of commissioning?** - Ensure there are community positions for all stages of commissioning work. Create opportunities where the community group is to be involved in the commissioning evaluation and scrutiny, quality checking of social services for example.

For more information please contact:.

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