



Cabinet Office

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Our Ref: NMP607839

25 April 2013

Dear Leader,

The Cabinet Office wants to support local leaders who can see an opportunity to develop better services at a lower cost to the taxpayer. In particular we want to encourage those looking to innovate, redesign services and consider new delivery models.

We recognise how challenging the environment is and wanted to make you aware of some new programmes that are designed to support local leadership.

The Commissioning Academy

The Commissioning Academy exists to encourage really intelligent commissioning. It is open to all public sector commissioning organisations, including central government departments, local authorities, health bodies and judicial services. The programme will help senior commissioners learn by example from the most successful and innovative commissioning groups.

So far, a total of 47 senior commissioners have participated in the two pilot programmes. The second programme is underway and will complete in April 2013. Feedback from participants has been very positive and new working arrangements are starting to emerge, for example, sharing of commissioning models, spend maps and methodologies, to enable others to build on what's already there. The Commissioning Academy is open to applications. www.gov.uk/the-commissioning-academy-information

The Centre for Social Impact Bonds and the Social Outcomes Fund

Social Impact bonds are a new tool that creates the space for local commissioners to develop new interventions. The Centre for Social Impact Bonds is a team within the Cabinet Office that aims to promote the development of Social Impact Bonds (SIBs). It offers advice to local authorities developing SIBs and is currently working on template SIB contracts and increasing data availability. The website is www.gov.uk/social-impact-bonds and the team are available at sibs@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk.

The Social Outcomes Fund is a £20m central top-up fund for SIBs. The Fund is designed to address the issue that it can be challenging for a single commissioner, such as a local authority, to implement interventions in complex areas where benefits fall across the system. The Fund will help commissioners to overcome this by providing a 'top-up' contribution to Social Impact Bonds where no single commissioner can justify making all of the outcomes payments but where the wider benefits mean that a SIB is value for money. More detail can be found at www.gov.uk/social-impact-bonds/sources-of-funding-for-sib-projects and the Social Outcomes Fund Secretariat can be contacted at sof@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk.

Mutuals Support

By freeing employees to deliver and improve services as they know best, Public Service Mutuals can drive efficiency and innovation in public service delivery. Mutuals are proving successful at generating new business and winning additional contracts, acting as engines for growth in their local communities. Innovative mutuals are being developed or have spun out of an increasingly wide range of local government services, including youth services, adult and children's social care, libraries and housing services (see <http://mutuals.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/case-studies> for case studies).

The Cabinet Office is currently tracking over 100 emerging and established Public Service Mutuals. Around 70 are already live and trading, together delivering over £1bn of public services. 20 of these have spun out of local government services with many more at early stages of development.

There is a comprehensive package of information, advice and practical support available. Information and free specialist advice is provided through the Mutual Information Service (<http://mutuals.cabinetoffice.gov.uk> or 0845 5390 543) as well as by Mutual Ambassadors (<http://mutuals.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/mutuals-ambassadors>). The hotline also provides access to the £10m Mutual Support Programme which funds professional expertise and advice for mutuals and the Mutuals Success training programme to help future leaders build commercial skills. To discuss your ideas directly with the Cabinet Office, please contact matthew.hudson@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk.

VCSE Commercial Masterclasses

Civil society has a vital role to play in helping us deliver better public services. The voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector's knowledge of those who depend on public services and their ability to inspire trust and give a voice to people who need it most, means there is much to be gained by involving them more actively. We are helping to build commercial skills in the sector by working with the private sector, VCSE organisations and commissioners to deliver a series of commercial 'masterclass' workshops. These practical classes, which began in March, are designed

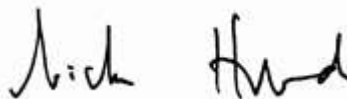
to share the skills, tools and techniques used by experts in both the private and voluntary sector to win and successfully deliver public service contracts, helping to create the next wave of contract-ready VCSE organisations to contribute to commissioning and service delivery locally. More detail on the programme is at www.knowhownonprofit.org/funding/service/commercial-masterclasses.

The Centre for Social Action

The Centre for Social Action is a new Cabinet Office initiative that will invest around £40m over two years to support programmes that get people involved in different types of social action. As part of this, Nesta is running a £14m Innovation Fund that will focus on a small number of big social challenges, like helping older people to age well or supporting young people to get into work, where there is a plausible account of how social action can make a difference and is under-exploited by the existing approach of public services.

Through the Centre for Social Action and the Innovation Fund in particular, we are looking to support programmes that have good evidence of impact to reach and benefit many more people. In many cases, that will involve working with local authorities and other local public services to implement successful programmes in your area, including through providing financial and practical support. Details of the Centre for Social Action can be found here www.gov.uk/centre-for-social-action and for the Innovation Fund go to www.nesta.org.uk/csa_innovationfund.

We would be delighted to work with your team if any of these programmes are relevant to your plans. If you would like to discuss personally, please do not hesitate to get in touch.



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