

Social investment and the youth sector: Call for information summary

On 12th December, we launched a call for information about any organisation exploring how the conditions of social investment might be applied to youth work. We wanted to understand who was operating in this area, to inform any future work. This note provides a summary of the information we received, and next steps.

Summary of responses:

- We received 18 responses, from a range of organisations
- Eight organisations directly delivering a range of services and programmes for young people
- Six network organisations
- Two organisations dedicated to supporting the sector with social investment and in related work
- One funder
- One Local Authority

Points emerging from responses:

- Delivery organisations are prioritising the diversification of income streams, often in response to reduced funding for youth services at a local level
- Many are at early stages in defining the fundable outcomes of their work – particularly those offering universal provision. One mentioned a need to move beyond being paid for different outcomes by individual grant/contract and to develop a more coherent cross-organisation (or cross sector) framework of fundable outcomes
- A range of organisations working with young people are developing Social Impact Bond (SIB) models to fund their programmes in the future. It was clear from references in responses that similar work was being done across the sector and beyond the organisations who responded to the call, including numerous local authorities considering how their services can be redesigned and potentially move to outcomes-based commissioning approach
- Sector organisations remain varied in the extent to which they embrace the conditions and principles of social investment – from those maintaining that it is, at the moment, inappropriate for youth work, to those developing proposals for SIBs and focusing on increasing capacity to secure and manage Payment by Results contracts

Lessons learnt

- This exercise has provided an initial and useful indication of the work in this space, but should be extended to develop a more comprehensive picture
- A range of organisations working with and for young people are – with caveats – enthusiastic about the potential for social investment to be applied to youth work, so there is merit in government supporting the further development of business models, building on work already carried out through the [Catalyst Consortium](#)

- Any future work should be led by the sector (providers, networks, social investors and funders) to ensure relevance, and increase the likelihood of widespread buy-in
- Future work should address analytical thinking behind appropriate models and outcomes, while ensuring that organisations doing good work 'on the ground' are supported in practical ways to become more sustainable in difficult times

Next steps

- We will continue to work with the [Centre for Youth Impact](#) to build impact measurement capability; and
- We will explore the opportunity for a longer term project, in collaboration with the sector, building on the exploratory work completed under the [Catalyst Consortium](#), and youth sector SIBs applicable to the youth sector that are already in development.