



About TimeBank

TimeBank is a national volunteering charity. Our vision is to make volunteering part of the fabric of everyday life and a rewarding experience for everyone involved, enabling outstanding volunteering opportunities to happen for more people, more of the time. We do this by utilising the skills and experience of volunteers to deliver social impact projects that directly address the needs of disadvantaged and socially excluded groups across the UK. From social exclusion to digital inclusion, we show the difference volunteers can make and use this to influence others – policy makers, charities and businesses.

TimeBank has 14 years' experience and a strong track record in delivering a variety of successful mentoring programmes (including in Scotland) and we have matched over 6,000 individuals in mentoring relationships. Our refugee mentoring scheme, Time Together, was the first national mentoring programme to successfully achieve the Approved Provider Standard from the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation and led to the mainstreaming of mentoring provision for refugees in the UK.

TimeBank currently provides volunteer mentoring support to: small charities and social enterprises: ex-service personnel and family members; UK residents with little or no English language; young people leaving care and young people with mental health problems.

1.1

Reflecting on the journey to sustainability, what types of support will have the greatest impact and why?

There are two types of support that we believe will deliver the greatest impact:

- Freeing up the capacity and time for organisations to innovate, and
- Ensuring charities are “market ready” – so that they can either provide or partner to deliver services.

Most small to medium voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations do not have enough core or unrestricted income to have the capacity to free up time to plan, research and innovate. By making a small grants fund available to cover the core costs of organisations, senior staff could invest time in development work. Funding could be in the range of £15,000 - £30,000. It would be worth considering the approach adopted by the Department of Health's Voluntary Sector Investment Programme's Sustainability Fund 2012/13. This was available for one year only, and was to develop the long term sustainability of successful projects in their final year of grant funding from the Innovation, Excellence and Strategic Development Fund.



Also worth considering is the Department for Communities and Local Government 2013 open competition for community based English language learning. This two-stage competition made funds available to work up a bid from stage one to stage two: this £6,000 enabled TimeBank to bid for and win a contract for over £1 million.

The other support need for VCSE organisations is in adapting and evolving as the funding environment changes from grant funding to commissioning of services.

Despite significant investment by national and local government, many VCSE organisations do not understand the language, processes, or have the capacity/expertise to respond to the commissioning cycle. They are not in a position to be competitive in the market. For some, this down to a failure to measure or understand what value their goods and services have in the market place. It is equally true that many in the private and statutory sector fail to understand the role the not-for-profit sector can play in delivering services.

The most effective support would be for VCSE organisations to have a better understanding of the commissioning cycle and build their capacity to contract to deliver services. The key areas where the sector needs more support are:

- Support and training to build the knowledge and capacity for business development in organisations – helping VCSE organisations recognise the importance of business and entrepreneurial skills alongside the more general service delivery skills as a core component of running a modern charity.
- How to engage directly with service commissioners in local authorities, public bodies, central government department or local NHS bodies (and vice-versa).
- The specialist skills to help VCSE organisations identify and monetarise the value of the services they deliver.

1.2

How can we best encourage pro-bono support alongside paid-for support?

Mentoring, pro-bono support and secondments. For example, by investing in projects like TimeBank's mentoring project Leaders Together. Leaders Together matches leaders from small charities, social enterprises and community groups with senior professionals from the private and statutory sectors in London. TimeBank is well placed to upscale this project to meet need nationally.

According to the Charity Commission, 88% of 152,502 registered charities in 2012 had an income under £500,000 and 43% had an annual income under £10,000. The majority of charitable organisations operate on minute budgets. While small charities and community groups are typically passionate about their purpose, because of limited resources like time and money, they are not always in the best position to deliver it as well as they would like.



TimeBank assesses the needs of VCSE organisations and matches them with a mentor who has expertise in that area. By matching them with senior managers from the public, private and voluntary sector they benefit from extra support with things like writing business plans and developing strategy, as well as the opportunity to discuss leadership, fundraising, strategic and business planning. Once matched, the pairs will meet for 24 hours over six months, in addition many communicate by email and text in between meetings for advice on funding bids or situations that arise unexpectedly.

Through greater support for organisations like Pro-Bono Economics, who match volunteer economists with charities wishing to address questions around measurement, results, impact and value. The volunteer economists work with charities to measure the impact of an intervention or service.

By supporting a more consistent approach to employer supported volunteering within organisations in the private sector, local authorities and government departments. While the Civil Service encourages employee volunteering, the approach is not consistent across all departments. It is often not skills based nor is there often an adequate budget or acknowledgement that sourcing volunteering opportunities, managing the day, undertaking health and safety and risk assessments and preparing briefing documents costs money. We believe that this could be changed so that all Government employees are supported to undertake five days paid volunteering leave, and by adopting a skills-based model – utilising employees' existing professional skill set in their volunteering. This could be made more meaningful if linked to the annual performance and appraisal cycle.

1.3

Are these the right factors for identifying those in-need?

Yes, but this is not an exhaustive list. Consideration should also be given to:

- The level of unrestricted income/core costs available for running VCSE organisations
- The number of short, fixed-term contracts for projects
- Inadequate IT infrastructure and expertise to support delivery
- The number of zero hours contracts (for many charities this is an unpalatable necessity)
- Given the perception that many VCSE organisation's Chief Executives are overpaid, should some consideration be given to the ratio between the highest paid member of staff and the lowest paid member of staff?



1.4

What might be an effective approach to identifying those ‘in-need’, particularly given that these factors could be seen as negative and organisations might be unwilling to admit to them?

We believe that organisations identifying as “in-need” and subsequently seeking support should be invited to complete a confidential (on-line) self-assessment questionnaire and, if eligible, an application process. One possible model for providing evidence would be to use the Charity Commission’s guidance “The hallmarks of an effective charity”.

1.5

We intend to use the DWP definition of ‘vulnerable and disadvantaged’. Should we also include any additional groups?

Yes. Those in transition between child and adult mental health services, and young carers.

1.6

How should we ensure that support available is appropriate to local need?

There should not be a one-size fits all approach, and any investment should be made as close as possible to the point of service delivery/need. Caution should be exercised if the funding is to be directed through second-tier infrastructure organisations (umbrella bodies). There will be a significant cost in time, bureaucracy and available funds for this type of intermediary. While, for example, some Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) are very effective at building the capacity of front line delivery organisations they may have a limited understanding of the requirements of a particular voluntary and community sector organisation’s service delivery or beneficiaries.

1.7

What evidence is there of local need in particular locations?

It is not clear what is meant by need in this context – the needs of VCSE organisations or that the needs of local people are being unmet. In the latter case there are a number of sources of information – the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and the work of Local Enterprise Partnerships. This information, coupled with the information available from local infrastructure organisations about the size, capacity and effectiveness of the local voluntary sector infrastructure would form a reasonable basis for evidence of need. There are also a number of well-established user-forums which could supply local intelligence at a regional and sub-regional level.



2.1.

Could we use a light touch self-assessment tool that would identify the likelihood that an organisation is appropriate from simple evidence and data?

Yes, see 1.4. The self-assessment tool could draw on the Charity Commission's guidance "The hallmarks of an effective charity" and be supported by financial evidence and data. Also, in the last year of Capacity Builders (the non-departmental Government body established in 2006 to run the Government's ChangeUp programme) it experimented with an on-line grants eligibility and application process. A historical record of this should be available in the Cabinet Office.

2.2.

Are there existing tools that would enable us to do this?

Not that we are aware of.

2.3.

Could we use existing local knowledge to identify appropriate organisations, for example by utilising a nomination approach?

Not without a template for consistency that ensured parity locally, regionally and nationally. There are too many vested interests.

2.4.

Which local bodies or partnerships could best provide local knowledge? E.g. local infrastructure such as Councils for Voluntary Service, Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Authorities?

All of the above might be helpful, but they do not all engage directly with front-line organisations or beneficiaries. It is also important to recognise that smaller community based organisations, BME, faith and rural organisations are less visible than the organisations listed. Previous Government programmes that worked through the local infrastructure, in particular ChangeUp and Futurebuilders should be used as a starting point for what did and what did not work. Again, there should be a historical record of this within the Cabinet Office.



2.5.

How could a model like this be made to work effectively?

It is not clear how this model might work effectively because:

- It is not expressed who the intermediaries are (individuals, organisations, partnerships)
- It is not clear what the process or standard required for “pre-approval” of intermediaries might be
- How coverage would be ensured for communities of place, faith and interest (for example it would be reasonable to assume that London might be well served by intermediaries – could the same be said of the South West?)
- How they would be held to account for spending public funds
- Front-line-organisations might not want to be required to work through an intermediary, but have it available as an option.

In addition to the above points, there is a risk that a further layer of bureaucracy, for example local infrastructure organisations acting as intermediaries, would divert funding from front-line organisations.

2.6.

Is there an appropriately sized and experienced body of potential intermediaries available to fulfil this role?

Given the answer in 2.5, not that we are aware of.

2.7.

How would we ensure that intermediaries are appropriately held to account and challenged to deliver effectively?

At the local level, there is accountability through the governance structures of the front-line-organisations. If the Cabinet Office is accountable for the funding stream, then ultimately through a contractual relationship with the Cabinet Office.

2.8.

Should we apply upper and lower turnover limits to focus efforts on those organisations in need and which are achieving impact?

Yes.



2.9.

If so:

- **What lower limit would be appropriate for identifying organisations having the desired impact in communities?**

£50,000.

- **What upper limit would ensure that organisations that shouldn't need support are excluded?**

£2 million.

- **Should we have a phased upper limit with higher turn-over organisations considered in exceptional circumstances?**

Yes, but there needs to be a consistent application of the term "exceptional circumstances".

2.10.

What average level of funding would enable appropriate depth of activity for individual projects, whilst ensuring a broad reach for the fund across the sector?

£20,000 - £30,000

2.11.

Are these the right ways to incentivise effective engagement?

In part, but more independent external expert scrutiny is required.

2.12.

Which of these are likely to be most effective?

- Clear accountability from named individuals in frontline organisations, both from senior executive leadership and the board of trustees.



2.13.

What other ways could ensure effective engagement from all parties?

A public facing website that listed all funding sought; the supplier of that support and both the costs and details of the plan of support provided.

3.1.

Which of the proposals for achieving sustainability do you think are likely to be most effective? How else can we ensure lasting impact?

Open up a future income stream for an organisation from public service delivery or trading.

We could also ensure lasting impact by making it a condition of funding that 20% above the value of the grant is generated in the 12 months after the funding is awarded.

3.2.

What other ways could individual projects maintain their activity after 2015/16?

Not answered.

3.3.

What other ways could we sustainably grow the market of support for frontline voluntary organisations?

Not answered.

4.1.

In addition to the types of support described in this consultation document, what ideas do you have that could help organisations build their sustainability?

There are a significant number of grant making trusts and foundations in operation in England. Their funding was recently estimated to be three billion pounds (DSC The Directory of Grant Making Trusts 2014/15). To date there has been no attempt to co-ordinate this funding in a strategic way, either thematically or geographically.



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Better and more effective mergers supported by the Government. A model built on facilitated dating agency nights or another form of brokerage. This would be an environment where organisations could talk to one another without being tarnished with the 'we are about to fail and therefore need to merge' brush – but instead talk to open-minded like for like organisations about long term collaboration

4.2.

What other mechanisms of delivery could the fund explore in order to better reach beneficiaries?

Not answered.

Contact details.

TimeBank would welcome the opportunity to discuss with the Office for Civil Society how supporting volunteers and volunteering could contribute to supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged groups to plan for the future, and maintain their services in challenging times.

If you have any questions about this response or would like further information about TimeBank please contact Helen Walker, Chief Executive at TimeBank.