

# Consultation on the rationalisation of grant funding from the Children, Young People and Families Directorate to voluntary organisations

## Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 2 September  
2005

Your comments must reach us by that date.

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The information you send to us may need to be passed to colleagues within the Department for Education and Skills and/or published in a summary of responses received in response to this consultation. We will assume that you are content for us to do this, and that if you are replying by e-mail, your consent overrides any confidentiality disclaimer that is generated by your organisation's IT system, unless you specifically include a request to the contrary in the main text of your submission to us.

The information you provide in your response will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations, which allow public access to information held by the Department. This does not necessarily mean that your response can be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies. You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided, but you should note that neither this, nor an automatically-generated e-mail confidentiality statement, will necessarily exclude the public right of access.

**Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.**

Name Felicity Collier

Organisation (if applicable) British Association for Adoption & Fostering

Address: Skyline House, 200 Union Street, London SE1 0LX

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can e-mail: [CYPFDgrants.CONULTATION@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:CYPFDgrants.CONULTATION@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:

Telephone: 01928 794888

Fax: 01928 794 311

e-mail: [consultation.unit@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.unit@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)

Please put an X in one of the boxes below that best describes you as a respondent

Voluntary Organisation	Community Organisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Voluntary Sector Umbrella Organisation
Other		

Please Specify:

The British Association for Adoption & Fostering (BAAF) is the leading UK charity working for children separated from their birth families. BAAF is a membership organisation and all registered voluntary adoption agencies and most voluntary independent fostering agencies are members.

1 Do you agree with our proposal to integrate, from April 2006, the existing Children, Young People and Families Directorate grant programmes into a single programme to support the work of voluntary and community sector organisations with children, young people and families?

Yes

No

Don't know

Comments:

We would support the stated aim of "reducing any unnecessary bureaucracy associated with the current programmes" and broadly agree with the general proposal.

However we would welcome greater clarity about how decisions about allocations will be made. As a former Section 64 grant holder, we are aware there was also an allocation between different policy areas in children's social care (such as adoption) which allowed the voluntary adoption sector to be confident funds would be available for this work, even though it is relatively specialist. Relatively small areas might not achieve support over time in allocation if the "panel" involved in the selection process was weighted towards larger and more significant DfES departments. We would therefore want to recommend comparative monitoring/analysis being published annually for several years so that subtle shifts in emphasis could be noted and also would like to see a commitment to equitable access in different policy areas during the transition period.

2 Do you have any comments on the outcomes for voluntary and community sectors that we are proposing would be delivered through the single grant programme?

Comments:

We support the overall coherence offered by linking outcomes to "Every Child Matters".

How will outputs and outcomes be differentiated? Outcomes can take much longer to achieve so monitoring would need to take place over a longer time frame than perhaps even the direct funded activity.

Our specific comments refer only to the outcomes/aims for voluntary and community organisations.

- ❖ We would welcome details about with whom organisations are expected to share learning and with whom they should work in partnership (eg with other organisations, governments, users of services?).
- ❖ Does having an awareness of public policy developments mean that voluntary organisations have to follow them? Will this impact negatively on

their independence?

- ❖ Will developing greater capacity to engage with the strategic planning of public services mean more actual delivery of public services by the voluntary sector? This could impact negatively on their ability to maintain independence from government and also provide effective challenge which stimulates policy changes.

3 Do you have any comments on the activities we propose to fund through the single grant programme?

Comments:

We support the funding of national infrastructure provision and particularly welcome the emphasis on capacity building with the example of training. It is often difficult for small voluntary organisations to fund staff development and training. While accepting the case for enabling children's trusts to respond to local need, there will need to be robust inspection/monitoring arrangements in place to ensure appropriate priority is given to engaging with the voluntary sector and sustaining funding against agreed outcomes over time.

By their very nature, innovative work or pilot programmes have a high risk of failure associated with them. Will funding still be available to work that may fail? If it is not, then only relatively low risk activity may be funded. That would mean missing some opportunities.

4 Do you have any comments on our proposals for strategic funding arrangements?

Comments:

We would support a greater emphasis on strategic funding. The current requirement for new applications to be submitted every three years for "core funded" organisations creates uncertainty about viability, particularly given the very late notification of decisions which occurs currently. A "rolling" three year grant, subject to review is much more sensible. We would be keen to see assimilation onto the rolling programme for organisations in the middle of a three year grant when the new funding arrangements are introduced. It is vitally important, however, to retain the three year forward provision to reduce uncertainty and facilitate good planning.

We agree with what appears to be a reference to "full" project costing at the end of paragraph 4.6. Without this, additional funding has to be sought to make organisations stable and provide the organisational infrastructure required to deliver activity.

5 Do you think that our proposal to award most of the single grant programme as strategic funding is appropriate to ensure effective delivery of the outcomes we have proposed?

Comments:

It is unclear what the link is between “strategic funding” and “effective delivery”. Nor is it clear why one would automatically follow the other. Capacity and ability to deliver are equally important. It would be helpful to know what the current proportion of "project" funding is and what proportion it might be in future, i.e. how much of a shift is envisaged.

Project funding has provided an important opportunity for small adoption and fostering charities to develop models of good practice (eg concurrent planning) which are of strategic significance. Project funding also enabled stakeholder organisations (such as NORCAP and Adoption UK) to develop their capacity to apply in the future for strategic funding. It is possible that a move away from project funding would disproportionately impact on smaller black and minority ethnic organisations.

6 Do you think that these proposals strike an appropriate balance between enabling stability in the voluntary and community sectors and allowing sufficient flexibility to meet emerging priorities?

Yes

No

Don't know

Comments:

We recognise this is a difficult balance to achieve and we are pleased that there is a commitment to improving stability. However we have some concerns about the emphasis on supporting government policy, where priorities emerge relatively slowly and believe it may limit the opportunities which the voluntary sector presents for being more responsive to need and to innovation.

7 Do you have any comments on our proposals for application and monitoring processes?

Comments:

We agree with an emphasis on simplicity and transparency. The administrative process to date has seemed disproportionate and resource intensive. It is important for the DfES to give a clear commitment to early notification of decisions within a set time scale which takes account of voluntary organisational planning and budgetary cycles.

8 Do you have any recommendations for particular approaches to application and monitoring processes which we should explore to deliver an effective single grant programme?

Comments:

We would be keen to see an honest and intelligent approach to the use of outcomes, i.e. recognising their value at the planning and design stage while noting in many cases the considerable difficulty in demonstrating any clear or convincing relationship (particularly any causal relationship) between actions taken and eventual outcomes. Costs for evaluation must also be recognised as a legitimate part of any funding bid.

9 What issues do you think will need to be taken into account in further developing arrangements for the transition to a single grant programme?

Comments:

We do not believe it is realistic to start with a blank sheet when many national voluntary organisations depend heavily on strategic core funding now, and it would certainly be burdensome for officials and create sector uncertainty. We recommend transitional assimilation for those organisations whose current review process demonstrates the effective contribution they make to children's outcomes.

Attention needs to be given to the way in which activity moves from this form of funding to another if it becomes established as necessary. Where this funding is difficult to achieve, activity may be presented as being 'new' in order to gain funds. There is a balance to be struck between dependency and funding activity that has genuinely shown its value. We would be in favour of some high-level tracking (during the early stages of the new regime) to get a sense of where the money might have come from under the old grant programmes, so as to avoid extreme [short-term] change/fluctuation in moving from the old to the new.

10 What additional issues not covered in this consultation document do you think will need to be taken into account?

Comments:

The impact on organisations of delay in taking a decision in relation to 2006/2007 funding would be most unhelpful. We recommend that there is an interim year.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

**Please acknowledge this reply X**

Here at the Department for Education and Skills we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

X Yes

No

**Code of Practice on Consultation**

All UK national public consultations are required to conform to the following standards:

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

Further information on the Code of Practice can be accessed through the Cabinet Office Website: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/consultation-guidance/content/introduction/index.asp>

**Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.**

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 2 September 2005

Send by e-mail to: [CYPFDgrants.CONULTATION@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:CYPFDgrants.CONULTATION@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)