

ON A MISSION

BRIEFING OF THE COMMISSIONING POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT STEERING GROUP

CODE OF PRACTICE UPDATE

The results of the consultation on the Public Sector Code of Practice for Commissioning Third Sector Services were presented at the Steering Group meeting on 8th September.

Attendance at the Cracking the Code consultation event in June was good, attracting 75 participants from third and public sector organisations. The involvement of the Chief Executives from both Rhonda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils and presentations from Steve Vaughan, Head of Partnerships in the Office of the Directorate of Social Services Wales and Sue Lloyd Selby of Value Wales highlighted the extent of the support for and interest in the Commissioning Project.

All the responses to the consultation have been compiled and analysed and are now available in a Consultation Responses Analysis document. On the basis of the consultation, the Code of Practice will be rewritten and issued as soon as possible to key partners for final comment.

The Code of Practice will then be presented to the joint meeting of the Local Service Boards in November to seek endorsement for its adoption and implementation by individual partner organisations.

The **Cracking the Code Report** and **Consultation Results Analysis** can be found on VAMT and Interlink websites.

TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS

The results of the completed Training Needs Analyses (30 in total) were also discussed. Key points to emerge were:

- Whereas most public sector respondents had received commissioning training from the Institute for Public Care (IPC), third sector respondents cited the County Voluntary Councils and WCVA as the source of their commissioning training
- The priority topics identified by both sectors for future training included citizen and stakeholder involvement in service planning; collaborative approaches to commissioning and procurement; and measuring and evidencing value.

There will be further discussion at future Steering Group meetings on precisely what training to offer under the Project and a draft programme presented in the near future.

The results of the **Commissioning Project Training Needs Analysis** can be found on the VAMT and Interlink websites.

WEBSITE

The first few pages of the new website were presented to the Steering Group. It was explained that numerous ideas had been provided by participants at **Cracking the Code** on the kind of information they would like to see included in the website and that many of them were being adopted. Steering Group members and partners will have the opportunity to comment on the website content as it is developed.

STEERING GROUP MEMBERS

Ian Benbow	Merthyr Tydfil
Carwyn Jones	Merthyr Tydfil CBC
Jenny Ludlow	Cwm Taf LHB
Samia Saeed	Cwm Taf LHB
Neil Elliott	RCT CBC
Vince Hanley	RCT CBC
Vince Price.....	Third Sector
.....	Procurement
.....	Champion RCT
Ann Philpott	Interlink
Margaret McLaughlin .	VAMT/Interlink
Ian Davy	VAMT

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Read about the project on VAMT and Interlink's websites including:

- **On a Mission Briefings** - which summarise decisions from Steering Group meetings
- **Cracking the Code** consultation event report
- **Training Needs Analysis** report

Complete the Value Added Facts Questionnaire, available on the CVC websites, which allows third sector organisations to describe and quantify the added value that they bring to service delivery. Then return the completed questionnaire to Margaret McLaughlin at VAMT.

Look out for **training** from the Commissioning Project in the near future.

Contribute local case studies and resources to the website as it develops.

FIND OUT MORE - SOCIAL CLAUSES

An aspect of commissioning that is of particular interest to third sector organisations is the use of social clauses in service specifications.

Social clauses can relate to economic, social or environmental benefits but should be of relevance to the service that is being considered. They relate to commissioners thinking about the entire benefits of a service and not simply the most immediate and obvious benefits. This way of viewing service specifications is very much in keeping with an outcomes based approach to commissioning. It also connects to the concept of the added value that third sector organisations can bring to service delivery.

Examples of social clauses from **Procurement and the Third Sector: guidance for the Public Sector in Wales** (2008):

- Synergy with other services
- Engagement and empowerment of service users
- The provision of information and advice needs not directly covered by the contract

Ian Benbow of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and member of the Project Steering Group is currently exploring the range of social clauses that might be of relevance to health and social care service development.

Have you come across any social clauses that you think he should consider? If so, let me know and I will pass them onto him.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Specification Writing for community benefits Northamptonshire County Council - free online learning course on producing service specifications www.specification-writing.info

To find out more about the Commissioning Policy Development Project, contact: Margaret McLaughlin, Project Officer on 01685 353920 - margaret.mclaughlin@vamt.net - To access further information about the project, see www.vamt.net and www.interlinkrct.org.uk