

Take five minutes to give government your two bits about grants!

The screenshot shows a three-step process in a consultation form. Step 1: A navigation menu for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, with options for 'HOME', 'About the sections', 'Useful terms', and sections 1 through 4. Step 2: A question asking to select a topic from a list: 'Devolution/localism', 'Public services' (which is selected with a red checkmark), 'Public service mutuals', and 'None of the above'. Step 3: A question asking to rank up to three changes needed to enable local public services to respond further to the needs of communities. The changes listed are: 'People having more opportunities to shape and/or run the public services they use', 'Service providers delivering more public services that have been designed and produced with their users', 'Drawing on wider civil society networks to support services', 'Changes to commissioning practices', and 'Greater understanding of how to demonstrate and measure social value'. There is also a text box for additional changes.

1. Go to the online consultation submission form.
https://dcms.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6WD0fhMedwfg8o5
2. Enter info about your organisation and go 'section overview'.
3. Skip to all sections 1 to 3 by selecting 'none of the above' on each introductory page.

4. In section 4 'Place' select 'Public Services' as your topic and hit 'next'.
5. Scroll down until you see the question starting "Are there any additional changes..." .

6. In the box below, copy past the text that we have prepared for you (see below).
 7. Hit 'next' and 'submit'.
- DONE – this was easy :)

Use the following text [you can tailor it as well]

Government grants for the voluntary sector- what's the problem?

Over the last decade, government grant funding as vital resource for the voluntary sector has been rapidly disappearing, replaced by more restrictive and inflexible government contracts.

From a wider perspective civil society organisations have an estimated combined annual [income](#) of £197.8bn. Out of this, voluntary organisations (or 'general charities') account for £45.5bn of [income](#). The income that the voluntary sector receives from government contracts was [worth £12.4bn](#) in 2014/15. This is only [around 6%](#) of government's overall £191.7bn spend on purchasing goods and services. The voluntary sector receives government [grants worth £2.9bn](#). This accounts only around 5% of government's £57.4bn [spend on grants and subsidies](#).

Why does it matter?

Grant funding from government is essential for communities to thrive, putting people at the heart of everything. It empowers charities and voluntary groups to identify and solve problems, and address needs in a way which is centred around people. The recent collapse of Carillion has also shown that charities which are either forced to compete in the public services and outsourcing markets (or are sitting in its wider supply chains) are [exposed to high financial risks](#). The lack of alternative and sustainable ways of funding services puts financial pressure in particular small voluntary organisations.

What benefits do government grants provide?

There is a wide range of advantages that grant funding provides as [financial source for the voluntary sector](#). The [Grants for Good campaign](#) has been highlighting the ways grants can deliver better outcomes for people and communities for years:

- **Adapting to Change:** Grants give organisations freedom to respond to changing priorities, conditions and beneficiary needs. They reduce the risk of tying organisations down into services that aren't working, and can allow organisations to redeploy resources where they are most needed.
- **Investing Locally:** Because grants can be targeted at local organisations, investment can be kept within the local economy. Grants can also help bring in other resources to support services and add value, for example volunteer time, or donations from companies or the public.
- **Supporting Community:** Grants are especially good for small organisations which succeed by drawing on resources in the community to deliver their project. By engaging the understanding and skills of the area's people, the needs and capacity of the community are more likely to be met and sustained.
- **Empowering People:** Where a contract imposes an already-made scheme on the people who need help, a grant puts trust in individuals – professionals, volunteers and service users – to respond to local realities with people-centred ideas and ways of working that fit people's lives.

- **Sustaining Services:** Rather than reinventing the wheel with disruptive tendering exercises, grant funding can sustain vital services which are known to be effective. This stability provides important continuity for service users, and enhances the capacity of voluntary and community organisations under pressure from increasing demand.
- **Saving Time, Effort and Resources:** Grants are more cost effective, less complex, and faster to implement than other forms of commissioning. They avoid the bureaucracy of EU tendering requirements, saving overhead costs. This benefits commissioners, deliverers and ultimately service users.
- **Nurturing Innovation:** Whereas contracts dictate how a service is to be delivered and are increasingly awarded on a payment by results basis, grants are flexible and give charities the space to explore new ideas to find the best solutions for their beneficiaries and, importantly, without fear of losing income.

What needs to happen?

The trend of an ever decreasing share of government grants in the voluntary sector's income mix should be reversed. Despite a tide of current austerity cuts, there are many social and economic benefits that grant-funding for the sector provides. They can deliver better outcomes for people and communities – especially when supporting smaller charities and community groups. This requires a significant change in current commissioning practices and a renewed interest in spending locally which means resources stay in communities. A renewed approach to commissioning can bolster a local economy. Government grants can play a vital role in bolstering the local voluntary sector.

END

Grants for Good Campaign

Join the campaign to promote government grants for charities and voluntary groups.

Find out more at:

<https://www.dsc.org.uk/grantsfororgood/>

