



Trustees: Facing the Challenge

Wednesday 26th January 2011, Green Fish Resource Centre

Event Context

With a funding crisis looming for the voluntary sector in Manchester, there will be some major decisions to be taken over the coming weeks. Although voluntary organisations are used to delegating much organisational business to their professional managers, responsibility for the major decisions remains with the trustees, both legally and to avoid practical conflicts of interest.

Manchester Community Central hosted this event specifically aimed at Trustees as a follow on from the Thinking the Unthinkable series.

Presentations

1. It's becoming to come into focus

Mike Blaney, Business Improvement Co-ordinator, Manchester Community Central.

Exploring what we already know about the cuts affecting the sector, identifying further areas of how cuts will affect services, overview of public sector reform and a look at the current funding environment.

2. Collaboration, Merger, Closure

Rick Gwilt, Business Improvement Co-ordinator, Manchester Community Central.

Outlining options for consideration around collaboration, merger and closure along with identifying the benefits and risks associated to each option.

After a short break participants were encouraged to identify key challenges, issues and priorities which covered:

No Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

- what are EIA requirements?

Cuts are 'frontloaded'

- what is the criteria for the funding cuts?
- the sector should have a say to where the cuts are being made

Onset of panic within the sector

- organisations within the sector are inevitably going to fight one another for limited funding
- is there an opportunity to challenge decisions?

Local Authority statutory duty – laws / boundaries

- what are the boundaries between mandatory and discretionary services directed by central government for local authorities to deliver?



Further discussion points identified throughout the session:

- Examples of incentives and disincentives to collaboration
- Would DTI fund redundancy costs in an insolvent charity?
- Roles and responsibilities of trustees
- Recruitment of trustees
- Developing a pool of expertise to call upon when required
- Establishing a communication hub specifically for trustees to offer support and share ideas with one another
- New funding opportunities that may have arisen
- Generating your own income (possible presentation from Wesley Community Furniture Project)
- Challenging funding decisions in public law
- New approaches to income generation and volunteering as contained in the Giving green paper
- Personalised budgets within the social care setting and the personalisation agenda

Next steps

A show of hands confirmed that most attendees would welcome a further session focusing on the identified key challenges, issues and priorities to be arranged in 4 weeks time.

In addition to a further session, attendees are encouraged to contact Manchester Community Central with specific organisational support requests on **0333 321 3021** or email info@manchestercommunitycentral.org.

Summary of event comments made by attendees

- The session offered the opportunity to network and engage with other trustees which many found invaluable
- The session acted as a confidence boost that many trustees were on the right track within their organisations
- Allowed the opportunity to 'face facts' in a clear and concise manner
- Would welcome an additional session