

Third Sector Finance Planning Group meetnig

6 July 2020 10am-11am

Microsoft Teams

Attendees

- Ben Lloyd, WCVA
- Ruth Marks, WCVA
- David Cook, WCVA
- John Gallanders, AVOW
- Chris Johnes, Building Communities Trust
- Alison Pritchard, WCVA
- Victoria Lloyd, WSA
- Helene Hayes, Citizens Advice Cymru
- Andrea Cleaver, Welsh Refugee Council
- Sandra Stephenson, Welsh Government
- Sheila Hendrickson Brown, C3SC
- Paul McDonagh, Welsh Government
- Chris Buchan, Welsh Government
- Gethin Rhys, Cytun
- Jess McQuade, WWF Cymru

Apologies

- Paul Glaze, CWVYS
- Jackie Jones, Wales Assembly for Women
- Victoria Ward, WSA

Ruth introduced the meeting.

Anna commented that organisations are worried about short and long-term funding. There is a need for long-term funding amid uncertainty. She commented on the green and just recovery, financial resilience and Covid's impact on charity funding.

Ruth asked colleagues to think about observations for the October Ministerial Meeting – what would we like to ask about, what do we want to offer?

Gethin noted issues around Covid funding eligibility that ruled out non-incorporated bodies, and issues around business rates that caused the same issue – although some Local Authorities overrode that.

Jess requested more information on the link between the Finance Minister's budgeting process and the Counsel General's Covid emergency response and fiscal stimulus package.

John commented that where a fund is developed by Welsh Government and then devolved to Local Authorities for administration, there has been inconsistency in how criteria applied.

Sheila said there has been a lack of join-up between community action. There is no visibility on what next phases should look like. There is a need for indicative funding to allow the sector to plan.

Helene commented on the need to embed participatory working, strategic planning and co-production of services. She is seeing an increase in debt problems and fuel poverty as we move towards autumn, when mortgage holidays and furlough will end. This is most likely to affect those with protected characteristics and those from BAME communities. There needs to be joined-up working between Welsh Government departments before we hit a crisis.

Andrea asked how we can help Welsh Government change the fact that they only receive a one-year spending round from UK Government. Welsh Government often do not meet the Code of Conduct for Funding the Third Sector

Chis commented on if there is a mechanism for joined-up working at Welsh Government and how do we feed into Welsh Government's working groups.

Ben commented on needing to know at what point in planning processes for funding recovery we are likely to be able to help the sector plan services for delivery.

Anna said we need a picture of which parts of the sector are fine and which will struggle to get an idea of the diversity of the sector and feed into Welsh Government planning.

Paul said Welsh Government understand the issues the sector is facing. It is overwhelmed by different demands to keep the economy going. UK Government have not engaged well with them. There are fears of a spike of virus cases in winter.

Chris said the virus has presented opportunities to work across departments and have greater engagement with the sector. The Finance and Compliance Sub-Committee has an important role to play, but hasn't met since the crisis.

Jess said that requests for evidence with no end date have limitations. How can the sector best engage with civil servants. Chris said he will ask Local Authorities what communications they have had with the sector and prompt them to engage.

Anna said we need to do something participatory across the sector on budgeting issues.

Sheila said we need to ensure we don't miss the curve on Welsh Government priority setting. Paul said there isn't a clear roadmap right now, but one is developing. Chris said engagement with policy officials is vital.

John said that the increase in unemployment has already begun. We need to ensure dialogue is in place when looking at schemes to support the unemployed.

Paul said that for the Ministerial Meeting, common themes across all sector organisations need to be brought together into a strategic package. In October, we may be in a different position re Covid, Brexit and medium-long term issues.

Action:

Alison and Cat Miller to look at the grants that have been made available and what the learning points are, for WCVA to feed into the budget development process at Welsh Government.

Ruth to communicate with the Counsel General on the sector's desire to engage with him.

WCVA to reflect on meeting, link with officials, then come back to group on most effective way to conduct October Ministerial Meeting.