

Finding the Good

What really is the most valuable tender?



The **Welsh Small Charities Forum**, supported by Lloyds Bank Foundation, is keen to drive much-needed conversation about **commissioning of services in Wales**.

Currently, charities experience a mixture of commissioning practice, leading to uncertainty, inconsistency, reduced resilience, poorer service delivery, and harm to communities.

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Despite this uncertainty, small charities continue to do their best to meet need and adapt to evolving challenges. However, chronic issues of underfunding and an expectation that the third sector will continue to fill gaps need to change; some charities are already closing their doors. A longer-term approach is needed to ensure sustainability of valuable services.

The policy landscape is moving towards a procurement agenda in which fair work, equity, and wellbeing impacts are key. The public and third sectors will need to work together to enact this new framework and to ensure that people can access the support they need when they need it.

We invite you to think about the question above and use this resource to guide important conversations about commissioning of services in your area.

Vision

Small charities want to make sure that the valuable work they do is recognised and rewarded fairly by commissioning bodies who treat charities as equal partners, and they want commissioning processes to be equitable, proportionate, and flexible.

This ambition links with policy reform currently being undertaken by Welsh Government, with guidance to be refined with the public and third sectors. Now is an ideal time to strengthen dialogue between stakeholders interested in commissioning.

Turning policy into practice and practice into policy

Lloyds Bank Foundation is keen to support commissioning conversations across the country. If you work for a CVC, a small charity, or for a commissioning body that wants to learn from good practice, we would like to support you to host collaborative commissioning conversations in your area. We're offering financial and practical support for up to four collaborations initially.

If you'd like to take up this offer or find out more, contact khuxleyroberts@lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk

Recommendations from the Welsh Small Charities Forum

This is what charities need commissioners to do so that they can deliver the services that communities need.

Bring partners together to discuss: what would these look like in practice in your area?

Welsh Government Funding Code of Practice principle	To small charities, this means:	Good practice looks like
Early and continuous dialogue	Engaging and listening is key to delivering effective services that meet need.	<p>1. Meaningful dialogue with communities that draws on real insight and depth of knowledge within small charities.</p> <p>2. Lived experience shapes decisions – service users and frontline staff are heard and valued.</p>
Equity	<p>Proportionality is key to maximising small charities' capacity to bid, partner, and deliver.</p> <p>Collaboration and working in partnership are desirable but can be challenging.</p>	<p>3. Tendering and monitoring processes are proportionate to the amount of funding offered and are inclusive for smaller organisations.</p> <p>4. Commissioners and infrastructure organisations support partnership building e.g. where appropriate, commissioners consider alliancing or facilitate dialogue.</p>
Valuing and outcomes	Commissioners understand the added social value and wellbeing impacts small charities contribute, and how they help achieve strategic objectives and national ambitions.	<p>5. The additionality offered by small and local charities, especially those led by and for the communities they serve, is considered when agreeing the most advantageous tender.</p> <p>6. Sharing best practice to prevent duplication, minimise wasted resource, and maximise impact.</p>
Flexibility	Flexibility is key to maximising small charities' capacity to deliver and to develop innovative solutions to emerging challenges.	<p>7. Flexibility is built into processes with opportunities for adjustments.</p> <p>8. Small charities are trusted to adapt and innovate, responding to need by drawing on their lived- and learned experience.</p>
Appropriate	Funding is sustainable and contracts are fair .	<p>9. Funding reflects the full cost of services and considers inflation.</p> <p>10. Contract-length corresponds with the length of time it realistically takes to deliver the service / outcomes.</p>

