



Cyngor Sgowntiaid Cymru
The Welsh Scout Council

22nd November, 2007

Ms Jane Hutt AM
Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning & Skills
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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We have received the invitation from Chris Reading to contribute to the call for evidence for the funding of voluntary sector organisations.

On behalf of the Trustees of the Welsh Scout Council I have pleasure in enclosing our views on this key and important topic and we hope that you will find our observations will contribute to the formulating of policies for the future. I am sending a copy direct to Peter Owen, Mary Nicholls and Chris Reading.

If you would like to discuss this further or require any further information please contact us. We appreciate that we have been able to contribute to the Report.

Yours sincerely

GARETH J WILLIAMS
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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c.c. Peter Owen, Mary Nicholls, Chris Reading



THE WELSH SCOUT COUNCIL RESPONSE REGARDING FUNDING IN THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

A. INTRODUCTION

The agenda for the government of Wales, "One Wales", describes much which encourages the voluntary sector e.g. "Our joint commitment to the principles of social justice, sustainability and inclusivity; we aim to foster cohesive, plural and just communities where people regardless of physical disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, creed or language, can feel valued; we will establish a new National Youth Service Fund." This and other supportive policies give rise to optimism for the voluntary sector to play an even more meaningful part in the development of Wales, where Scouting embraces 12,000 girls and boys, young men and young women from 6 to 25 years of age, led by 2000 adults of whom only 9 are employed. If converted to the minimal wage this contribution would equate to millions of pounds per annum. However, the work of Scouting in Wales relies on the dedication, energy and skills of unpaid volunteers.

B. POLICY FOR FUNDING VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

Public funding is often project specific with the focus on described ages of young people, the geography of a particular project and certain disadvantaged groups. Scouting – as with other organisations – embraces all young people and is totally inclusive and will not alter its policies simply to seek to gain funds. The goalposts are not moved because we already celebrate diversity.

Scouting - in common with many voluntary organisations - is well placed to identify local issues in its 300 communities and to provide solutions in those localities. Scouting is a community organisation, organised by adults within that community, for the children and young people of their community. Scouting, therefore, plays a key role in achieving Welsh Assembly Government policies and has engaged with the Russell Commission, Extending Entitlements and the Seven Core Aims to help provide a national framework for engaging young people in Wales.

The demands of the Charity Commission and audit all have to be met and considerable work is asked of volunteers at a local level where the volunteer's skills are in the delivery of youth work. It is timely to review the policy on providing core funding – often more measurable because of the objectives set for professional support services for those who deliver youth work at a local level. Scouting has benefited enormously from the NVYO grant without which its activities would not have been sustainable. Core funding is vital to sustain the central services that support the on-going local delivery.

C. POLICY DIRECTIVES ISSUED

Sometimes the timescales of giving notice for applications may be too short. Voluntary groups need time to consider appropriate projects and to consider sources of match funding. In this regard it would be interesting to know the policies of what the Assembly considers for funding and how schemes are considered and processed. Perhaps WCVA or CWVYS could communicate this approach but in any case you have volunteers preparing for a review by the

employed professional. It is all too easy for stretched voluntary organisations to miss a crucial opportunity for support at a national or local level.

When a charity's objectives match those of the Assembly Government the boundaries are clear. When and how is the Government willing to correctly adjust its criteria to meet a charity's needs?

D. PROCEDUES FOR MONITORING OUTCOMES

Scouting welcomes wholeheartedly the approach to reporting on the outcomes of funding and monitoring progress of an approved project. This avoids waste and ensures a strong focus is maintained on the promised work. Depending upon the size and extent of the project those reports may be annual or six monthly, supported by evidence.

Our experience is that the support and advice given has been excellent during following the submission of the monitoring reports.

E. GENDER BUDGETING

From the age of 6 years old girls and boys are welcomed to join Scouting as young people, where the programme contributes to their development as responsible citizens and members of their local, national and international communities and enables them to achieve their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potentials regardless of gender. The programme is provided to support the individual young person's needs within a co-educational setting. Similarly, Leaders are both female and male and gain a variety of skills by undertaking the Adult Training Scheme. There should be no distinction today in voluntary organisations.

F. EASE OR DIFFICULTY IN ACCESSING DETAILS

There is a recurring theme of seeking resources to access funding and not all volunteers can possibly have the time to access the details. We have experienced no difficulties accessing the details once the opportunity is known. WCVA has organised conferences to communicate such funds. But let us remember that some volunteers have a day job and, with the best will in the world, attendance at a day conference is not possible.

CONCLUSION

In funding we must be careful not to dissipate funds by creating layers of approval and involvement e.g. the Welsh Scout Council holds the certificate of professional endorsement issued by the Education and Training Standards Advisory Group (Wales) and seeks to work with Young Peoples Partnerships in the Unitary Authorities.

Criteria and monitoring should be continued for all groups, acknowledging diversity and equality in every definition.

To help meet the policies in *One Wales* consideration should now be given to provide additional core funding with strict criteria and also to provide funding from age 6 years upwards – the formative years for our young people.

The demands upon volunteers cannot be compared with those who contribute in the maintained public and private sectors – an important distinction to take us forward in delivering the objectives in *One Wales*.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees

Gareth J. Williams
20th November 2007