

Consultation on proposed Prevention & Wellbeing Grant Fund 2017

Consultation report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of the consultation

Adult Social Care carried out a consultation during 2017 on setting up a proposed new Prevention & Wellbeing Grant Fund. The consultation ran from 14th June to 1st September 2017.

The consultation was carried out as part of a review of VCS prevention services. The review had 3 aims:

1. To establish the future direction for ASC's VCS prevention offer;
2. To create a grant fund, using ASC underspends, which will empower the voluntary sector to provide more flexible and tailored solutions to help manage the risks of people developing needs for social care support.

The purpose of the consultation was to gather views on the outline proposals for the grant fund.

In addition to carrying out consultation on the grant fund, the council also consulted over **proposed changes to prevention services commissioned by Adult Social Care from the voluntary and community sector**. The report on that consultation is also available.

Summary of methods used in the consultation

The consultation used two main methods:

Survey A survey to gather views on the grant fund was carried out. It was provided online and also made available in print. Printed versions were distributed to council community centres, libraries and to the Customer Services Centre on Granby Street.

Meetings Separate meetings were held with each provider scoped into the consultation on services.

A number of other meetings were also held or attended.

In addition, a poster advertising the consultation was distributed to all council buildings, GP surgeries and providers scoped into the review. Information about the consultation was also published in VAL's weekly E-Briefing.

Consultation event A consultation event was held at the Leicester Adult Education College on 18th July 2017.

Summary of findings

From the 113 responses to the proposed Prevention and Wellbeing Grant Fund consultation it is apparent that there was not overwhelming support for Leicester City Council's proposals.

The main findings from the consultation were that whilst there was some support for the grant scheme, respondents were concerned regarding the sustainability of projects funded through grants, the requirement for constant innovation and that the maximum funding amount (£10,000 per project, per year) would not be sufficient to deliver effective interventions. Several respondents also commented that the grants fund appeared to be a way of imposing cuts to the VCS by stealth.

MAIN REPORT

Introduction

Purpose of the consultation

Adult Social Care carried out a consultation during 2017 on a proposed Prevention & Wellbeing Grant Fund. The consultation ran from 14th June to 1st September 2017.

The consultation was carried out as part of a wider review of VCS prevention services. The review has 3 aims:

1. To establish the future direction for ASC's VCS prevention offer;
2. To achieve savings targets for 2018-19 of £790,000 on VCS services; and
3. To create a grant fund, using ASC underspends, which will empower the voluntary sector to provide more flexible and tailored solutions to help manage the risks of people developing needs for social care support.

In addition to carrying out consultation on the grant fund, the council also consulted over **proposed changes to prevention services commissioned by Adult Social Care from the voluntary and community sector**. The report on that consultation is also available.

Consultation methods

Survey method

The consultation was advertised using a poster distributed to all council facilities and GP surgeries in the city, and it was publicised via the weekly VAL E-Briefing

The survey was carried out using the council's Consultation Hub. The survey was also made available in printed form in libraries, community centres, at the Customer Services Centre on Granby Street and provided on request.

The survey was also made available in Easy Read and Vista provided versions accessible to people with sight loss.

A copy of the survey is at Appendix A

Meetings method

Overall, officers had 18 meetings as part of the consultation.

Meetings were held with each of the providers whose services were scoped into the review.

The slide covering the proposals on the grant fund is shown at Appendix B.

Officers attended further scheduled meetings where requested and also offered to attend other meetings, for example with service users if requested.

Consultation findings

Survey responses

Overall 113 people completed the survey either online or on paper.

The main demographic characteristics of respondents were:

Age 38% of respondents were in the 66+ age group. The next biggest age group was 56-65 (16%).

Gender 55% were female and 33% were male.

Ethnicity The largest ethnic group was 'White: British' at 52%. The next biggest group was 'Asian or Asian British: Indian' at 29%.

Religion 31% were Christian, 21% were Hindu and 12% Muslim

Disability 51% were disabled. 28% were not disabled and 20% did not answer this question.

Type of disability Of those that were disabled, the majority (40%) were those who identified as having a visual impairment. The next two biggest categories were those that had a long standing illness or health condition (20%) and those that had a hearing impairment (15%).

Sexual orientation 57% were heterosexual, 20% said they preferred not to say, and 2% said they were bisexual. 20% did not answer the question about sexual orientation.

More detailed information about the characteristics of those completing the survey is available if required.

A detailed outline of the characteristics of those completing the survey from the About You sections and the equalities questions is in Appendix C.

Survey findings

Respondents were told that the grant fund will be aimed at reducing the risk of people age 18 or over from developing needs for adult social care support.

They were then given the following list of the proposed key features of the grant fund:

1. *The overarching aim of the grant fund will be to enable Leicester's voluntary and community sector to provide activities and services for people who are at risk of developing social care needs.*

2. *Projects will be targeted at helping people who are at risk of developing social care needs to avoid or delay those needs, to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing, and to live as independently as possible.*
3. *The grant fund would be launched in June 2018, with successful projects starting delivery from April 2019.*
4. *The overall funding available will be £250,000 a year.*
5. *Organisations will be able to bid for up to £10,000 per project. Each organisation will be able to make up to three bids for up to three different projects.*
6. *Bids can be made for funding for either one or two years (2018-19 and 2019-20). If a bid is made for two years, the funding for the second year will be dependent on whether the project met its objectives in the first year.*
7. *Organisations will be asked how they can make their projects sustainable after council funding ends.*
8. *Successful organisations will be asked to submit an End of Grant report. This report can include case studies, videos, quotes etc.*
9. *The council will run an event in 2019 to showcase successful projects and share learning.*
10. *There will be further rounds of funding in 2019-20 and 2020-21.*
11. *Decisions on bids will be made by a panel of council officers, supported by people who use social care and preventative services.*

Respondents were then asked: *Overall do you agree with the key features of the proposed grant fund set out here? Please tick one box:*

The majority of people 33% said they agreed with all of the key features of the proposal, however, 40% of respondents either didn't agree with any of the key features of the proposal, didn't answer the question or preferred not to say. A total of 27% of respondents agreed with just some of the key features of the proposals:

I agree with all of the key features	37	32.74%
I agree with some of the key features of the proposal	31	27.43%
I don't agree with any of the key features of the proposal	20	17.70%
Not sure / don't know	9	7.96%

Respondents were then asked: *If you disagree, please tell us why and/or give alternative proposals:*

Overall, there were 18 respondents that provided comments to this question on why they disagreed with the proposal. 8 (44%) stated that the scheme was More about Cost Saving / Funding is too low. Furthermore, 4 (22%) stated they need more Information / Clarity in the area. A further 2 (11%) stated that they wish to Keep the Current System, and finally 4 stated (22%) that there is No Long-term Stability.

One of the respondents commented that: “I don’t agree with the principle because you are introducing a new source of funding, needing LCC staff to administer it, bids to be evaluated yet you do not say what the administration costs are for this project”

Another respondent commented that: “limited period grant is no real help, long term stability is needed.”

Respondents were then asked: *Which groups of people (adults 18 and over) should the grant fund seek to support (for example, people with hearing loss, or older people who are lonely and isolated). Please list who you think the main groups should be and why these groups should be included.*

From the consultation 99 people replied to this question and the results shown in descending order that 38 (38%) stated that the priority should be to ensure that all Groups are supported. Following this, the second highest response rate was the Need to Focus on the Elderly, with 30 respondents putting this forward. Next, 25 (25%) stated that the grant fund should target support to people with a disability, and finally 5 (5%) suggested that focussing the grant fund on young people would be positive.

Respondents were then asked: *What kinds of projects do you think the fund should seek to fund, and why? Your suggestions can include both existing projects in Leicester or elsewhere that you think work well, or new ideas that you think should be tried out.*

In relation to this question, 87 people replied and the results shown in descending order are as follows: 17(20%) stated Isolation / Communication Activities, 14 (16%) stated Lunch Clubs, 12 (14%) Carer Visits / Support, 11(13%) All Types of Support Needed, 11(13%) Other and 10 (11%) Vista Support.

The four remaining types of support people request all recorded 3 (3%), Mental Health, Physical Activity, Young Age Group and Finally Don’t Understand / More Information. The top three areas highlighted were Isolation / Communication Activates, Lunch Clubs and Carer Visit / Support.

As referenced above, Vista support scored highly in the type of projects that respondents thought should be supported. This may be due to Vista providing support to their service users to complete the consultation questionnaire.

Respondents were then asked: *Should the grant fund be aimed at funding projects in specific areas of the city as well as having some city wide projects? Please tick one box and give reasons for your choice.*

The majority of respondents said the grant fund should be aimed at funding projects in specific areas of the city as well as having city-wide projects:

Yes	42	37.17%
No	32	28.32%
Not sure / don’t know	39	34.51%

Respondents were then asked: *Please tell us if you have any other comments.*

A total of 51 respondents completed this section of the consultation survey. Whilst there were some supportive comments such as “we have to agree, the alternative is nothing” and “The grant fund will allow for innovative solutions to be developed providers who have knowledge and expertise in certain fields”, there were a substantial number of comments that expressed significant reservations regarding the grant proposal. Comments such as “No, I think current funding should be kept as it is” and “I agree with the proposal, but this should be in addition to currently funded service/projects, not as a replacement” and “The grant fund needs to be long term to ensure continuity” demonstrate that even where respondents were supportive of the proposal there were significant concerns over whether the grant fund would be sustainable or any more effective than the current position.

Finally, respondents were asked: *Overall, do you agree or disagree with the proposal to set up a grant fund for adult social care prevention and wellbeing? Please tick one box.*

The majority of respondents agreed with the proposals but a high percentage of respondents either didn't know or weren't sure whether they agreed and when these were added to those who disagreed with the proposals, 56% of respondents did not express support for the grant scheme.

I agree with the proposal	50	44.25%
I disagree with the proposal	21	18.58%
Not sure / don't know	42	37.17%

Outcomes of meetings

A series of meetings were held with providers between 22/06/17 and 13/07/17.

Provider A – 03/07/17

Provider A disagreed with the £10,000 limit per project and would prefer that organisations could bid for up to £30,000 to deliver one project. Comments were made that Leicester City Council should use the funding earmarked for the grant scheme to cover the existing services. Provider A was however, supportive of the potential for the grant fund to continue lunch club provision.

Provider B – 12/07/17

Staff commented that if the grant scheme was used to fund a one year project, this timescale is too short to successfully demonstrate outcomes.

Provider C 10/07/17

Staff suggested that the proposals around the Grant fund did not make it clear the organisations could bid for amounts less than £10,000.

Provider D – 28/06/17

No comments given regarding grant proposals

Provider E – 19/07/17

Representatives expressed reservations around the application process for the proposed grant scheme and commented that there was only one member of the organisation who had the skills and necessary IT literacy to be able to navigate the completion of grant forms. They also suggested that if they were to apply to the grant fund it would be to fund existing provision and would not satisfy the innovation requirement set out in the proposals. Representatives from the organisations also stressed that if proposals were to go ahead the application process would need to be as simple as possible to enable volunteers to apply.

Provider F – 10/07/17

Expressed concern that some organisation may use the grant fund to “prop up” other elements of their service delivery

Provider G – 5/07/17

No comments received

Provider H - 16 06 17:

No comments received regarding grant proposals

Provider I – 20/06/17

Concerns were raised whether the organisation would receive funding from a competitive grants process. They welcomed the fact that the grant may enable their organisation to provide more than just a lunch club and could provide more flexibility for the service and its users.

Provider J – 22/06/17

Were supportive of the grant proposal and the broadening of the potential target audience. Representatives from the group suggested that they were seeing younger people with low level mental health needs and they would like to be able to offer services to them.

Provider K – 27/06/17

Representatives from three organisations suggested that it would be difficult to apply for the grants at the same time as applying for other procurement opportunities being carried out by Leicester City Council. There were also numerous questions raised regarding whether groups could bid for grants to fund existing provision, whether there was a minimum number of beneficiaries that would need to be demonstrated and how organisations were supposed to sustain their provision once the grant funding had ceased. There were also concerns raised regarding the complexity of the application process.

Provider L – 13/07/17

Participants were pleased that one of the objectives of the new grant fund would be to tackle loneliness and isolation. There was concern that the amount for the grant fund wouldn't cover the needs of those who access the service but who are not eligible for adult social care packages. There was also a fear that lunch clubs might not be prioritised in the new grant fund and that the clubs might not be able to sustain their service which would increase social isolation.

Provider M – 13/07/17

Concerns were raised that the proposed maximum grant amount of £10,000 was not enough to fund any staff posts and reservations were voiced regarding the potential for an onerous application process.

Provider N – 26/06/17

No comments made regarding grant proposals

Grant Fund Consultation Event: 18th July 2017

A consultation event was held on 18th July 2017. The aim of the event was to involve people from the voluntary and community sector in the design of the proposed grant fund.

14 people attended the event.

The programme is shown at Appendix D.

At the start of the event, respondents were given a short presentation about the VCS review as a whole, the reasons for proposing to set up the grants fund and they key features proposed.

Comments from attendees expressed concern that £250,000 per year would not go far when split between VCS organisations in Leicester. Attendees recommended that some element of the £250,000 be ring fenced for smaller organisations.

Support was given by attendees for the broad target audience of the proposed grant scheme.

Concerns were raised regarding the sustainability of the projects once grant funding ceased. Questions were also raised around how outcomes would be demonstrated and monitored.

Some attendees expressed concerns that the grant fund would be swallowed up by larger organisations with experienced bid writers and smaller organisations would be at a disadvantage. Concerns were also raised regarding the requirement for applications to constantly be innovative.

List of appendices

Appendix A – Consultation Survey Document

Appendix B – Power point slide from ASC Presentation

Appendix C – Consultation report

Appendix D – 18th July Grant Fund event programme