

## **EVIDENCING NEED: WHAT FUNDERS ARE LOOKING FOR**

Not evidencing need sufficiently well in your organisation's bid has been cited as one of the most common reasons (the other being identifying outcomes) for rejection by the Big Lottery Fund in their general funding programmes. Many other funders, including local funders such as the Hampshire and IOW Community Foundation will expect you to address the question of why you believe or know that there is a need for your project or your services, and it should be a question that all groups ask themselves, when they are looking to set up new projects, but also if they are continuing to run existing services or projects to ensure that they are still meeting needs the project was originally set up for.

As Community Development Workers, we know that this is often the hardest question for our local groups to answer, so here are a few tips on what sort of information funders are looking for, where to find this information, or ways you can gather this information yourselves.

The Big Lottery Fund (BLF) defines need as "the term we use to describe a problem or issue, or situation where something needs to change to make things better, for a person, a group of people, an environment or an organisation." What BLF and other funders are looking for is confirmation that your organisation has thought carefully about need when designing your project, and that you are confident that that your service users want the services you are offering.

### **So how do you go about proving demand?**

- \* Asking people (eg through door-to-door surveys, postal questionnaires, informal/formal interviews or public consultations).
- \* Records of unmet demand (waiting lists, letters from agencies who want to refer people).
- \* Existing research (NB this should be recent as people needs change and new services may have been set up since the research was carried out).
- \* Evaluation of existing services, which should include recognition of whether other organisations are carrying out similar services or targeting the same service users in your local area or not.
- \* Letters of support from existing service users.
- \* Statistics showing the needs within the target community. (The web-site [www.neighbourhoodstatistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhoodstatistics.gov.uk) is a useful source, and Hampshire County Council carries information about local populations in their Facts and Figures pages in the Business and Economy section of the web-site [www.hants.gov.uk](http://www.hants.gov.uk) and a specific set of pages aimed at developing services in the areas of health and social care can be found at [ww3.hants.gov.uk/market\\_development.htm](http://ww3.hants.gov.uk/market_development.htm))
- \* Strategies which show that your project fits into wider needs for services identified for example by your local authority. (For example, The Minding the Garden and Grow with Hart projects run by Hart Voluntary Action drew on the findings of Hampshire County Council's Older People's Wellbeing Strategy 2008-11 to support the need for these services in our district).

### **How do you demonstrate that your project is the most appropriate way to respond to the problem identified?**

Again, many of the methods above can be used. If you are already running a service, then carry out an evaluation of the service to demonstrate that this is the most appropriate way to run your service. If you are proposing to introduce a new service, and can refer to models of practice being successfully run by organisations elsewhere, then do use these.

If you would still like more help, then do get in contact with Greg Alexander ([greg@rvs.org.uk](mailto:greg@rvs.org.uk)) or Sue Hathaway ([sue@rvs.org.uk](mailto:sue@rvs.org.uk)) or call 01252 540162. Good luck with your bids!