

# Review of Unified Voluntary Sector Fund and CLD HQ Funds



## RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

### 1. Name/Organisation

Organisation Name

Action for Sick Children (Scotland)

Title Mr  Ms  Mrs  Miss  Dr  Please tick as appropriate

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May

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### 3. Permissions - I am responding as...

Individual  / Group/Organisation   
Please tick as appropriate

(a) Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site)?

Please tick as appropriate  Yes  No

(b) Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your responses available to the public on the following basis

Please tick ONE of the following boxes

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

or

Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address

or

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

(c) The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site).

Are you content for your **response** to be made available?

Please tick as appropriate  Yes  No

(d) We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Please tick as appropriate  Yes  No

## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Q1. The Scottish Government values the key role played by the third sector in providing support and services that improve outcomes for children, young people, their families and communities. Ministers wish to ensure a strategic and coherent approach to supporting the third sector.

We are aware that the funds currently under discussion and the activities they support can have a significant impact on the lives of children, young people, their families and communities.

- **In your view, how can any available funding be put to best use to improve outcomes for children, young people, their families and communities?**

Action for Sick Children (Scotland) ((ASC(S)) believes that Scottish Government funding to improve outcomes for children, young people, families and communities must link into the Scottish Government's National Outcomes. Organisations seeking funding should then show how their work, within the parameters of their charitable objects, assists the Government to meet these National Outcomes. While strongly supporting the need for evidence based outcomes, ASC(S) would also make the point that it is easier for organisations which are direct service providers or which have direct service projects to reflect links to National Outcomes and evidence impact. The Scottish Government must recognise however that many organisations also contribute very significantly to National Outcomes through eg working with Scottish Government and other statutory and voluntary partners to influence service planning and provision and to contribute to policy and practice development on a national and regional level. This work is however not as easily reflected in evidence based outcomes.

- **What are the challenges faced in implementing this?**

In the current climate third sector organisations are trying to secure funding from a diminishing pool of resources while the need to assist children, young people and families increases. The need to secure funding to sustain our work becomes more pressing and more onerous especially for small organisations with no dedicated fundraising staff.

The Scottish Government could consider offering support to its beneficiary organisations to assist them to further develop evidence based outcomes.

- **How could any new fund assist the third sector to meet these challenges and improve outcomes for children, young people, their families and communities?**

ASC(S) is one of the 90 the UVSF beneficiaries. We are aware that other organisations who may fit the Fund criteria have been unable to submit applications in recent years pending this Review. We believe it is only fair

that any new Fund is open to all organisations who meet the criteria and that all have an opportunity to make their case. We recognise that funding is extremely tight but hope that the Scottish Government will seriously consider increasing the funding available to the Fund from its current level of £7 million. It would be a pity if a consequence of opening out the funding opportunity is that organisations who have delivered and who continue to deliver improved outcomes for children, young people and families sustain cuts in funding for no other reason than that the funding available has had to be spread more thinly. Given that the health and well being of Scotland's children and young people is critical to their and our futures and this is reflected in the National Outcomes, the Scottish Government should endeavour to make sufficient funding available to support the UVSF organisations working on their behalf.

Q2. As part of this review, we want to see the third sector having an even greater impact:

- **We would value your views on how the third sector could have an even greater impact.**

One of ASC(S) projects is funded through Inspiring Scotland's Early Years Early Action Fund. We have benefited greatly from IS's hands-on approach eg through capacity building and evaluation support provided by Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS). The Scottish Government may wish to consider whether it could provide its funded organisations with such capacity building support which many organisations would not be able to self finance.

- **How could any future fund better support more developed partnership working and coproduction in improving outcomes for children, young people, their families and communities?**

ASC(S) believes that partnership working between voluntary organisations and between the voluntary and statutory sector can deliver improved outcomes, provided that the impetus to work in partnership is not led primarily by a desire/need to cut costs eg to staff posts, resources, services. Such instances may well result in a diminution of service. We would expect synergies through partnership working resulting in improved outcomes for children, young people, families and communities and not cost savings to be the principle motivator.

We feel that it is harder for smaller third sector organisations with limited resources to develop partnerships to the level of jointly funded project working as this requires significant time and resources, firstly to identify potential partnerships and then to take these forward. Some funders eg Inspiring Scotland, The Self Management Fund for Scotland (via LTCAS) encourage networking between funded organisations, sharing learning and good practice and the Scottish Government might consider holding similar events which could also focus on how to develop joint projects and learning from successful case studies.

The Scottish Government should also recognise that many organisations regularly work in partnership although not in a joint funding relationship. ASC(S) works in close collaboration with NHS Boards to deliver ASC(S) projects as well as to bring the views of sick children, young people and their families to the attention of key decision makers. Currently we work with Education Authorities to deliver our Special Smiles Dental Project, with Care Agencies to deliver our Children and Young People in and Leaving Care Project and with organisations working with young parents to deliver our Child Health Tayside project.

Q3. Ministers are of the view that any new fund should focus on preventative spend, particularly, but not exclusively, in the early years as part of their overall commitment to prevention and early intervention, as well as the other four themes set out in paragraph 6 above (parenting, communities, integrated services and workforce)

- **What are the key outcomes and activities that the fund should aim to support?**

ASC(S) supports the Scottish Government's focus on early years and early intervention. We also welcome the Scottish Government's acknowledgement that while any new Fund should have a focus on preventative spend that this need not be exclusively focused on the early years, since problems which make children vulnerable may arise at any time in their lives. The Scottish Government's 'Early Years Framework' 2008 notes that there is life beyond early years and some children and families will require long term support throughout childhood and beyond. For example LAC children and young people may be in care because they have not had the best start in life and they and their carers need to be supported to redress the disadvantages they have experienced. The new Fund should not exclude children and young people who have fallen through the net in their early years but who still are in desperate need of help.

Q4. **Based on the outcomes you have set out, what would you set as the criteria for any awards to be made?**

Funded organisations must show how they assist the Scottish Government to meet its National Outcomes and how they are making an impact. It should be recognised that organisations can make an impact in a variety of ways for example through:

- a) direct service delivery
- b) supporting other parts of their organisation (not directly funded through this fund) to deliver a service/make a difference to children, young people and families
- c) enabling other organisations – voluntary or statutory – to improve their outcomes for children, young people and families.

**Q5. If the funds continue, how should they be administered in future to ensure transparency, best value and sustainability?**

ASC(S) feels that funding awards should be made for a three year period to enable forward planning and to deliver a period of stability. This will also help to attract funding from other funders. We would welcome the opportunity to meet on a regular basis to discuss our progress with the Scottish Government and to have a named person with whom to raise issues in relation to our work as the need arises.

Clearer guidance would be welcome on what is expected of applicants and grant recipients in relation to reporting requirements; outputs etc. It would be helpful if this could be devised in consultation with the Funders Forum to ensure a consistency of approach amongst major Funders eg in relation to providing evidence, reporting on outcomes etc.

We also hope the Scottish Government will take account of the fact that monitoring and reporting must not become too burdensome and draw too heavily and disproportionately on the organisation's resources. This could become very challenging especially for organisations with a small staff team and impact on their ability to 'get on with the job'.

- **What support, if any, should be available to ensure recipients get the most from the funding they receive?**

As mentioned elsewhere in this response, we would highlight the value of opportunities afforded to us as one of Inspiring Scotland's Early Years Early Action ventures in relation to organisational capacity building and evaluation support. We have also appreciated, as a grant recipient of The Self management Fund for Scotland, the support available through sharing of best practice and learning encouraged by The Long Term Conditions Alliance Scotland (LTCAS).

**Q6. If your organisation is currently in receipt of funding from the funds in question, how do you assess your impact and whether you have improved the outcomes for the children, young people, families and communities with whom you work?**

As noted earlier it is harder to evidence impact of certain key areas of work such as eg influencing and contributing to child health policy, child health planning and provision and indeed of working with other organisations. Organisations therefore have to show how core funding will benefit the work of the whole organisation – including those parts not directly funded by UVSF. The Scottish Government should therefore look at the work of the organisation as a whole.

It is easier to assess impact when it is relating to eg projects working directly with or children, young people and families. For these activities/projects ASC(S) develops a range of indicators by which to

measure whether a particular outcome has been achieved. Quantitative and qualitative information is gathered via a variety of methods including questionnaires; evaluation forms; observation; case studies etc. We totally support the need to evidence impact through ongoing monitoring and evaluation but also know from experience that developing a robust evaluation framework is a time intensive process. Some organisations may need support to develop this further. We would also note that methods and measures need to be proportionate and not too burdensome for the organisation.

**Q7. What do you think are the successful and less successful aspects of the funds currently?**

The fact that core funding has been the focus of the Fund is the most successful aspect, given that core funding supports the organisational infrastructure and is crucial to the continuation of our work and given the difficulty in securing core funding from other avenues.

More opportunity to meet with the Scottish Government to discuss progress and get feedback would be helpful.

**Q8. The UVSF and CLD HQ funds fulfil the role of core funding for many of the current recipient organisations.**

- **What do you see as the role and value of core funding in contributing to improving outcomes for children, young people, families and communities?**

Core funding facilitates stability, growth, innovation, input to policy development and change. It attracts funds from other sources and Scottish Government funding in particular signals stability and credibility to other potential funders.

We view the role and value of core funding in contributing to improving outcomes for children, young people, families and communities as critical.

ASC(S) receives a contribution from the UVSF fund towards its core costs and this contributes to staffing costs for the National Co-ordinator and the Development Officer - both national posts. It also contributes towards national office costs such as rental, utilities, cleaning, postage/phone, and core activities such as book-keeping etc. The National Co-ordinator post has delegated responsibility from the ASC(S) Board for the day to day running of the organisation; ensuring adherence to its legislative duties as a charitable company and employer. ASC(S)'s Projects, not directly funded by the UVSF, are co-ordinated and planning, financial management and evaluation support provided. Project staff are line managed, supported and supervised. HR matters, policy development and crucially raising funds to enable the continued existence and development of ASC(S) are part of this

remit. The Development Worker post raises awareness of our work within the statutory and voluntary sectors throughout Scotland. It enables good working relationships and collaboration with other health sector organisations and facilitates access of health professionals and their clients to our services. In the past year this post has worked with the National Managed Clinical Network for Children with Exceptional Healthcare Needs; RCPCH; the Royal Hospital for Sick Children (Edinburgh) and The National Delivery Plan for Specialist Children's Services Implementation Group, representing the needs of sick children and their families, bringing their voices to the table so as to influence child healthcare service planning, policy and delivery.

Without the UVSF contribution towards this it is difficult to see how the work of ASC(S) to improve outcomes for children and young people at times of illness could continue.

- **In your view, what types of funding should any future fund provide? E.g. core funding, supporting innovation, project funding with a view to mainstreaming learning and outcomes? Why?**

We would repeat our view that core funding is essential to the continued existence of our organisation and to the delivery of our work to support the needs of children, young people (and their families) at time of illness. The UVSF has been of immense benefit to us in that it has provided a contribution to core funding, whereas most other Funders have preferred to fund projects. In our experience it is much harder to secure core funding and yet without this we would be unable to secure funding or support our projects. For this reason we believe any future Fund, given that it will not be a limitless pot, should focus primarily on core funding. We recognise however the need to support innovation and pilots which have the potential to become mainstream and it would be good if the Scottish Government could allocate a smaller funding stream which could be made available to the voluntary sector for such purposes.

Q9. Any review of funding implies change. This may mean in future that some organisations will no longer be recipients of the fund, some will see their funding reduced and some will receive increased support.

- **What in your view would be the best way to provide transitional support for moving from the current system to any new system?**

We urge the Scottish Government to convey the outcome of the Review as soon as possible to enable organisations to plan ahead.

We believe that current beneficiaries should not have their funding withdrawn immediately. We believe that a period of tapered funding over (ideally) a three year period should be provided to allow time to put in place alternative funding arrangements. Immediate withdrawal of funding would

mean many organisations will be unable to continue. ASC(S) cannot overstate how serious the impact would be on us if UVSF funding were lost and we were unable to replace this funding from another source. Based on our current financial position, we would have to issue redundancy notices to all staff and take steps to end all projects and settle all liabilities within a further 15 months period.

It would be helpful if the Scottish Government could provide assistance as early as practicable to identify new sources of funding, including philanthropic or commercial, perhaps through consultancy or similar support, to organisations whose funding is to be withdrawn.

It would also be helpful if information about the various Scottish Government funding streams for voluntary sector organisations were made more accessible. Our experience is that it has not been at all easy to find out about the funding streams available.

**Q10. Do you have any other comments you would wish to make?**

As noted in Q9 above, ASC(S) hopes that decisions arising from the Funding Review will be conveyed as soon as is practicable.

We hope that organisations will be given a reasonable amount of time between notification of any new funding arrangements and deadlines for receipt of applications. It is much more difficult for those organisations with limited staff resources and no dedicated funding staff to turn round applications and supporting information within a few weeks.

ASC(S) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the consultation process and the future shape of this funding stream and we thank the Scottish Government for involving the voluntary sector in this process. The UVSF fund has been invaluable in enabling us to continue our work on behalf of children, young people and their families and we hope that the Review finding will recognise this and will continue the good work of this Fund.