

Introduction

This series of Top Tip Guides has been produced to support Third Sector learning providers so that they will be better informed on key issues and the use of effective standard practices.

Identifying and evidencing need - Top Tips

1. Define the need that you are trying to meet
2. Engage your staff and volunteers to assist you with your needs analysis
3. Keep your information continually reviewed and up to date
4. Assume that no one knows about your proposal or about your organisation
5. Ask the people who will benefit from your project what they think their needs are and how they should be addressed

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Sources of evidence

Funders are interested to know what evidence you have that the project is an important one to fund. This evidence may be already available, or alternately you may have to undertake consultations or some research of your own.

- Statistics based on monitoring and evaluation of your existing services
- Feedback from consultation events and community involvement (using surveys / questionnaires, focus groups/meetings, interviews)
- Local government statistics and local area or community profile
- Academic, government or other specialist research (reports, surveys)
- Government or third sector strategies and policies (general and specialist)
- Information about other existing services or lack of services



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- Letters of support from service users, professionals working with your organisations, MPs, local councillors, other important decision-makers, or other organisations that make referrals to your organisation.
- Newspaper articles about your work or providing information which supports the level of need for your work
- Photos of your work
- Case studies
- Anecdotal evidence.

The importance of providing evidence of need

A strong explanation of the need you want to address must be reinforced by strong evidence because of competition for funding, to show that you understand community needs, that your work will make a difference, that you are not duplicating activity and that your organisation is worthwhile and a safe investment.

Resources

- Big Lottery Fund Fact Sheet - Evidencing the need for your project.
http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/pub_evidence_need.pdf
- Women's Resource Centre - Defining and providing good evidence of need.
http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2010/d/defining_and_providing_good_evidence_of_need.pdf
- **Social Enterprise UK Knowledge Card - Impact Assessment**
http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/uploads/files/2011/12/knowledge_card_impact_assessment.pdf
- Reports and evidence related to rural needs and issues are available at <http://www.acre.org.uk/about-rcan>. RCAN is the Rural Community Action Network is the collective name for 38 county based organisations and their national umbrella body, ACRE. Rural Community Action Network members are charitable local development agencies, generally based at county level, which support and enable initiatives in rural communities.
- Social Enterprise UK – Guide to working with the Public Sector, Busting the Myths.
http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/uploads/files/2011/11/guide_working_with_the_public_sector_busting_the_myths.pdf