Evidencing the need

Evidencing the need for any funding plays an important part of your funding application. You must be able to demonstrate why your project is needed in a clear way. Many funding applications are rejected due to a lack of evidence showing that a project is needed.

The evidence

Positive feedback or speaking to clients is not enough. Funders will assess your project based on your application and will look for accurate data, literature or records to back up your statements. In particular, your evidence might include:

- **Statistics** – population data and the breakdown of your local area in terms of ethnicity, age, religion, gender, unemployment, education, etc.
- **Research** – about your particular specialism. This might include things like parish plans, waiting lists, lack of local facilities or services in the area, petitions or campaigns, newspaper articles, or local authority information.
- **Local, regional and national strategies and needs analyses** – from your local authority or other organisations in your area.

Priorities

Many funding streams, particularly those from statutory agencies (such as local government and health services) only fund projects and activities that clearly match their agreed priorities. Even when you are not seeking funds from these agencies it is useful to be able to show how your proposal fits in with the priorities of statutory organisations in your area. A couple of things you might want to explore locally are:

The Community Strategy – All local authorities have a duty to prepare a sustainable community strategy to improve quality of life for local communities through a clear set of long-term priorities for their borough. You can use these priorities to inform your work and show how your project will meet local needs. You will find the community strategy through your local council.

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) – Introduced by the Government in 2007, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is a tool for local agencies to understand the health and wellbeing needs in a local area and identify where inequalities exist. The JSNA results are used to inform local priorities and it is an important guide when planning and commissioning services.

Duplication and gaps in service provision – Make sure that your project is unique and that it identifies a gap in your area. For instance, if teenage pregnancy rates are a problem in your area and you have found a successful model that has helped address this issue in another area, you could use the

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evidence in your application.

However, **make sure that your idea isn't already being funded by other means and avoid duplicating existing projects**. You can do this by researching other local projects in your area (existing or planned) and if there is something similar, find out if you can work with them to extend their services to your area of interest. For instance, a community bus which could extend its geographical coverage.

Your beneficiaries

Funders want to see how the users of your service have been involved in project development and how their views or feedback have helped to shape the project. You could show evidence of consultation and engagement with your beneficiaries through:

- Surveys, questionnaires or interviews
- Focus groups
- Informal discussions
- Consultation events

You could use specific feedback or quotes to back up your findings, such as the following example:

'Having three children in four years and no family close by, my volunteer offered a shoulder to cry on, unbiased advice and practical help… Without her to talk to, I may easily have cracked and if I had, the family would have fallen apart.'
Family member receiving support from Home-Start Bury

Evidencing user involvement will help make your project more effective and responsive, as well as showing funders how your project will meet the particular needs of the community.

Key Words

Beneficiaries – the people that the project aims to help

Community Strategy – A set of clear, long-term priorities and how these will be addressed for your local area

Health checks – a tool to help you develop your group.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) – non-departmental public body established for the purpose of economic development in specific areas of England.

Statutory agencies (also known as public sector bodies) – local authorities, health authorities or government departments

Further links and guidance:

- **The Big Lottery Fund** – Evidencing the need for your project: **www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/pub_evidence_need.pdf**
- For more information on research and statistics, see the '**Local statistics and where to find them**' factsheet
- For any further information, guidance and support, please visit **www.gmvss.net**

For any further information, guidance and support, please contact Bolton CVS on: 01204 546010 or e-mail: admin@boltoncvs.org.uk

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