

Gloucestershire Association for Voluntary and Community Action (GAVCA) response to survey results – January 2016

Introduction

Cheltenham Borough Council conducted a survey to review the service provided by GAVCA in late 2015.

GAVCA was first established in 1996 and supports the local voluntary and community sector across Gloucestershire. GAVCA is a registered charity and receives funding from Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucester City Council and from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office. When available, GAVCA receives funds from Charitable Trusts; we also raise funds from membership and our training and development programme.

GAVCA's services

GAVCA provides all aspects of organisational development support to help community groups, charities and social enterprises - from the initial advice to set up and establish a governing structure, to support to develop policies, find funding and recruit and manage volunteers. GAVCA facilitates networking opportunities to share good practice and to develop collaborative working relationships. GAVCA is known for its expertise in providing training for the voluntary sector and also offers an accreditation hub service which enables organisations to accredit their own training courses. GAVCA holds a county-wide database of over 2500 voluntary and community organisations which it uses to share information relevant to the sector and the communities they serve. GAVCA has recently developed 'Our Community is your Business' – a project to connect and develop the relationship between local business and charitable and community organisations.

Surveys

We conduct our own satisfaction surveys which complement those done by our funding partners. During 2015, we undertook 2 major surveys:

- During June the survey concerned the voluntary and community sector forums, meetings and networks and had 49 respondents.
- Between 7th January and 12th February the GAVCA Annual Needs and Satisfaction Survey had 107 respondents, the majority (28) operated in Cheltenham.

Surveys are one of the tools GAVCA use to inform future strategy and plans.

The recent Cheltenham survey carried out by CBC corroborates with most of the findings from our earlier surveys:

- Satisfaction rates were consistently high across all surveys with scores of 75% and more
- The top 3 priorities for support are fundraising, collaborative working and marketing in the Cheltenham CBC survey
- The top area of support in GAVCA's February survey is funding information and advice

- GAVCA's June survey showed the benefit to groups of opportunities to learn from peers, share good practice, work collaboratively through networks and forums

The key challenges and needs identified by respondents are listed below along with our response:

Sector Challenge	GAVCA response
Funding Support <i>"Bring more funding into local charities"</i> <i>"funding from external bodies to cover core costs"</i> <i>"Identifying suitable funds to apply to"</i> <i>"advice on potential bidding opportunities and new ways of seeking funding"</i> <i>"lack of guaranteed income"</i> <i>"generating revenue"</i>	Improve the quality of applications Opportunities to meet funders e.g Funding Fair Inform the sector about new forms of social investment Build up relationships with private businesses Ensuring that organisations are "funding ready" Help to develop marketing and communications skills
Volunteer recruitment <i>'...volunteering expertise'</i> <i>'more responsive support finding volunteers'</i> <i>'replacing volunteers that decide to stand down'</i> <i>'recruitment of volunteers'</i>	Volunteer managers' networks Volunteer training Policies and Procedures development Advertise vacancies and work collaboratively with Volunteering Gloucestershire
Impact of external environment <i>"Doing more with less"</i> <i>"Adapting to whatever new challenges arise"</i> <i>'ensuring that small, local voluntary sectors has a vital role to play in the provision of services in Cheltenham'</i> <i>'promotion and support for partnerships, knowledge of development opportunities, good governance'</i>	Pro-actively facilitate collaborative arrangements Offer models for joint working and shared resources Brief the sector on possible impacts of changes e.g. Devolution, Charity Commission charges Keep the sector up to date on current good practice and new initiatives Playing the role of facilitator to enable discussion of new and emerging trends and responses for the benefit of the wider community

GAVCA also receives:

£15,000 funding from Gloucester City Council

£63,000 funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner's office

£22,500 income from other charitable activities (training, consultancy and memberships)

Although we have not yet received confirmation of the 2016-2017 budgets, we are confident that we will retain the same funding levels for next year. To mitigate against any potential shortfall in funding we are reviewing our costs base and have several funding applications to Trusts in the pipeline.

Catherine Kevis (CEO) and Angela Gilbert (Support Services Manager)

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Encl: GAVCA Annual review 2014-15