



Building Change Trust

Delivering Change in a Shifting Landscape

The future of the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector in Northern Ireland

Commissioned Opinion Pieces

As we progress towards closure in December 2018, Building Change Trust has developed and will implement a programme to engage with the VCSE sector, its funders and policy makers to identify both the issues facing the sector now and in the future and also the action all key stakeholders need to take to ensure Northern Ireland continues to benefit from a sector that can identify and meet the needs of people and place.

This legacy programme will run from January 2017 until mid-2018 and will comprise a number of strands as follows

1. Engagement with sector organisations and their member organisations through a series of events. These are currently being arranged on a regional and thematic basis.
2. Engagement with funders through the NI Trusts Group and the Association for Charitable Foundations NI special interest group. This is currently being arranged.
3. Engagement with policy makers through relevant government departments and elected representatives where appropriate and possible.
4. Small scale project work by each of the 5 Trust founding partners – Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, Community Evaluation NI, Rural Community Network, Volunteer Now, Business in the Community – each of whom will look at a future issue facing the sector in the context of their own area of specialism.
5. Commissioning of opinion pieces on relevant and topical issues and publishing and dissemination of same.

Through the programme of work we intend to develop a series of specific proposals and recommendations which will be shared at a final event attended by sector organisations, policy makers and funders in mid-2018.

We are now inviting proposals from individuals and/or organisations for the production of opinion pieces based on the criteria set out below.

Where we agree to commission based on a proposal, a fee will be paid to the individual /organisation concerned. This will be a maximum of £3,500 inclusive of VAT and all expenses where applicable. Payment will be made upon completion and submission of an agreed final product.

1. Our objectives:

Our objectives in respect of commissioning opinion pieces are to:

- Attend to context or some aspect of context in which the sector operates and its future development be that through looking at the sector itself, and/or funders and policy makers;
- Point to problems / challenges / issues and - where possible - suggest solutions or different ways of approaching “delivering social change”;
- Provide a view that may not always be heard or considered;
- Provoke and stimulate new thinking through looking at issues in a different or new way.

2. Our requirements:

We are seeking proposals from individuals/organisations that will:

- Be based on a credible level of experience and expertise;
- Draw on existing data/information/evidence to inform opinion. Evidence does not have to be academic research. Case studies may be appropriate in some instances;
- In addition to articulating problems/challenges and their implications for the future but also suggest/identify opportunities and or actions needed by relevant stakeholders to overcome challenges.

3. What do we expect of the final product?

Each completed opinion piece will be:

- Between 2000 and 3000 words;
- Readable and accessible;
- Not be defamatory, libelous or offensive;
- Published online through the Trust website and other formats as appropriate.

4. The commissioning process:

At this stage we are interested in hearing from individuals/organisations with ideas that either meet or could meet the criteria set out above.

- We are accepting ideas on a rolling basis for the next 6 months or until our budget is used up, whichever is sooner.
- Those proposing to produce pieces should note that after agreement our expectation is that a draft will be provided within 6 weeks of the date of commission and the final product agreed and published within 8 weeks of the date of commission.
- Where appropriate and necessary we will be happy to have ongoing engagement with authors to provide advice and support.
- Proposals will be considered by Trust support staff, external consultancy team and Board members and should it be judged that a proposal has merit, the Trust may either commission the work or engage further to seek refine and agree a proposal.
- Pieces will be published in the author's/organisation's name and it will be acknowledged that the content will not necessarily represent the view or position of the Building Change Trust.
- The decision to publish or otherwise will rest with the Trust whose decision will be final.
- Neither the Trust nor the author will be restricted in use/publication of the product as long as the role of both the Trust as commissioner and of the author are credited.
- The Trust reserves the right to edit pieces in agreement with the author prior to publication.

5. Next steps

If you and/or your organisation feel you have something to say and contribute to thought, debate and discussion on the future of the VCSE sector in Northern Ireland, submit a maximum 1 page proposal both setting out your idea and why you/your organisation are well placed to do the work. At this stage we expect that some ideas may not be fully developed and where appropriate we may engage with you to further shape/develop a proposal.

For an initial conversation please contact the Trust Director of Operations, Nigel McKinney on 028 90245927 or alternatively please send your proposal to nmckinney@communityfoundationni.org

Further information on the Trust and our legacy programme is available on our website www.buildingchangetrust.org/VCSE-Futures

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