

JOINT GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING FRAMEWORK

A CALL FOR CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE

This statement arises from the '*Shadow Employer*' Initiative undertaken by the Community Sector Employers Forum (CSEF). Arising from consultation with Community and Voluntary Organisations' (CVO) and government officials and research on policy and practice in other jurisdictions, we propose that a new Funding Framework be developed in Ireland.

THE PROBLEM

CVO have a unique role to play in helping tackle social exclusion and inequality in Ireland and this role is well recognised in government policies. Problems, however, are arising in the relationship between CVO and the state as it pertains to funding and employment practice. These are becoming more acute in the context of the current severe crisis.

Problems occur when funders impose conditions that interfere with CVO Management Committees' capacity to manage their services and projects in accordance with their legislative, regulatory and governance commitments. Examples of interference include dictating terms of employment, including pay rates and directing how cut backs in funding should be implemented. Such direction removes the discretion and autonomy of CVO to manage their affairs in the best interest of the communities and groups they work with and may expose statutory funders to legal liability in some instances.

These problems stem at least in part from the absence of a clear and coherent framework within which relationships can be negotiated, reviewed and developed. Drawing on the experience of other countries where such frameworks exist it is proposed that a similar framework be developed in Ireland.

TOWARDS A SOLUTION

The signatories to this statement believe that addressing current problems requires clarity about the relationship between the Community and Voluntary sector and government and particularly about how statutory funding bodies engage with CVO. This is vital in order to ensure that the particular role of CVO in the delivery of services and other activities, as distinct from that of the private and public sectors is clarified, acknowledged, supported and is seen to be accountable. To achieve this we believe that an agreed funding framework should be developed that would contain the following general provisions:

- 1.1. Recognition of the role and value of CVO and CVO/statutory partnership working and acknowledgement of the opportunities, challenges and limitations to this relationship

- 1.2. Recognition of the legal rights and obligations of CVO as employers and Company Directors to enable them to meet those obligations
- 1.3. Clarity about the respective roles, boundaries and requirements of CVO and statutory bodies in relation to funding and service delivery
- 1.4. Arrangements for ensuring the accountability of CVO through standardised and streamlined reporting procedures
- 1.5. Provision for reporting arrangements to focus on outcomes for individuals and groups rather than just inputs and activities
- 1.6. A mechanism to resolve disputes between funders and CVO if such should arise
- 1.7. Provision for adequate support and advice for CVO Boards on human resource management, fiduciary and funding related issues
- 1.8. Arrangements for planned periodic review and revision.

We the undersigned call on the government to engage in constructive dialogue with the Community and Voluntary sector in order to develop a new framework based on the principles outlined above.

Organisation

Representative

Address

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