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Welsh Government

## Consultation Document

# Continuity and Change - Refreshing the Relationship between Welsh Government and the Third Sector in Wales

## Executive Summary

Date of issue: **16 May 2013**

Action required: Responses by **8 August 2013**

## Overview

This consultation focuses on refreshing the Welsh Government's relationship with the Third Sector in Wales, and in particular considers:

1. Affirming and renewing the relationship;
2. Supporting Third Sector Infrastructure;
3. Engagement with the sector;
4. Working together nationally, regionally and locally;
5. Local Compacts; and
6. Framework documents.

## How to respond

You can respond to this consultation either by using the questionnaire at the back of the document or completing the online form which is available on our website at: <http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/housingcommunity/welsh-government-third-sector-relationships/>

In addition, three Consultation events will be held across Wales which will provide a further opportunity to respond.

29 May, Welsh Government office, Penllergaer

6 June, Welsh Government office, Llandudno

25 June, Welsh Government office,  
Merthyr Tydfil

Full event details available on our website.

## Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternate language versions of this document are available on request.

Further information which you may find useful can be found on the Third Sector pages of the Welsh Government website using the following link: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/voluntarysector/?lang=en>

## Contact details

For further information:

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## Data protection

### How the views and information you give us will be used

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Welsh Government staff to help them plan future consultations.

The Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full.

Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government.

This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.

## **Change and Continuity; Refreshing the Relationship between Welsh Government and the Third Sector**

In January 2013, the Welsh Government announced a process to refresh its relationship with the Third Sector in Wales in order to *'make this crucial relationship as strong and effective as possible'*.

As part of this process key policy documents that underpin the relationship will be reviewed and revised to bring them up to date including:

- The Voluntary Sector Scheme (last revised 2004)
- The Code of Practice for Funding the Third Sector in Wales (last revised 2009)
- The Third Sector Partnership Agreement

This formal consultation will be used to inform Welsh Government thinking on a range of related issues, including:

- Our future support for the Third Sector in Wales, particularly the work of Third Sector "Infrastructure" organisations including the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA), County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) and Volunteer Centres (VCs).
- The main means of engagement between Welsh Government and the Third Sector including the Third Sector Partnership Council (TSPC) and meetings with Welsh Ministers.
- The Third Sector's contribution to Public Service Delivery and the Programme for Government at the national, regional and local levels.
- The future development of local Third Sector Compacts (local agreements which govern the relationship between Public Sector organisations within local authority boundary areas and Third Sector organisations)

Our intention is to strengthen and renew the relationship between Welsh Government and the Third Sector in Wales in an open and collaborative way.

### **Outline of Consultation Document**

Preface by Huw Lewis AM, Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

### **Chapter 1 – Outline of the current basis of the relationship between the Welsh Government and the Third Sector**

This includes our primary documents (Voluntary Sector Scheme; its Strategic Action Plan, *The Third Dimension*; The Code of Practice for Funding the Third Sector; and the Partnership Agreement between the Infrastructure organisations as outlined above). We have also provided a summary of the key changes over time which make it necessary to bring these documents up to date. This includes the development of the Welsh Government's Programme for Government; the current economic climate; and the need for greater regional working.

## **Chapter 2 – Affirming and renewing the relationship.**

We are looking to reaffirm the core principles that were set out in *The Third Dimension* in 2008. We are not seeking a fundamental change to our understanding of the sector or our relationship with it, but we do need to ensure that we are able to continue to work together effectively.

## **Chapter 3 – Supporting the Infrastructure.**

We outline our understanding of the existing Third Sector infrastructure in Wales (principally WCVA, CVCs and VCs) and propose some changes to the way funding might be allocated in future, including making provision for innovative work particularly at the regional level.

## **Chapter 4 - Engagement.**

The Welsh Government engages with the Third Sector in many ways, principally the Third Sector Partnership Council and meetings with Welsh Ministers. We suggest in this chapter some ways of enhancing the former and changes to the latter with more emphasis on the wider range of ways that Ministers and officials engage with the sector.

## **Chapter 5 - Working Together Nationally, Regionally and Locally.**

Working collaboratively is essential to deliver for the people of Wales. This chapter highlights a range of issues that impact on our relationship with the Third Sector and considers how we might develop more robust ways of working across Wales at the national, regional and local levels.

## **Chapter 6 - Compacts.**

We recently commissioned research to advise on the option to legislate to enforce local compact agreements between local public sector bodies. The findings of this research propose the strengthening of existing frameworks rather than seeking new legislation in this area. We are opening a discussion to assess the wider view of this approach.

## **Chapter 7 - Framework Documents.**

We have stated that some of our primary documentation needs to be brought up to date to take account of the current climate and the Welsh Government's own policy agenda as set forward in the Programme for Government. It is our intention to revise the Voluntary Sector Scheme and Code of Practice for Funding the Third Sector, but not to develop a new detailed action plan. We believe that it is better to use a range of other tools to monitor the relationship on an ongoing basis.