**Cabinet Office advice review fund/Advice Services Transition Fund briefing October 2012**

*The shared ambition of both the Government and the advice sector is to ensure that particularly the most vulnerable clients continue receiving relevant, free advice and effective support. As a result of the review, the Government has announced an additional £33.6m funding for not-for-profit advice providers in England over the next two years, 2013/14 and 2014/15.*

As a result of [the Cabinet Office advice review](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/65-million-free-advice-services-help-vulnerable), the Government has announced an additional £33.6m funding for not-for-profit advice providers in England over the next two years, 2013/14 and 2014/15. The Big Lottery Fund (BIG) has set up [the Advice Services Transition Fund](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/england/advice-services-transition-fund)  to administer the funding. Bids **must** be between £50,000 and £350,000.

Application form and any supporting documentation must be returned by no later than 12 noon on 28 January 2013

All projects must meet both of the following two outcomes:

1. Advice organisations collaborate effectively with each other, and other agencies, to improve service outcomes for customers, and
2. Local advice services are resilient and well-equipped to meet future needs, with more modern and enterprising business models and more diverse sources of funding.

Key themes for services wishing to access the fund –

* Collaboration:
* Early intervention, prevention and education:
* Resilience and innovation:
* Focusing on outcomes and impact:
* Exploiting remote channels:

To be eligible for funding, not-for-profit advice providers will need to come together as partnerships with plans for collaborative ways of working to address local needs. Grants will provide support for frontline service delivery but this must be set within the context of a broader plan for adaptation and sustainability. **Individual organisations cannot be part of more than one proposal.**

The range of advice providers within a partnership should reflect the full needs of the people and communities in their geographical area. Expect each successful partnership should provide at least welfare benefits, debt, housing and employment advice. Particularly interested in supporting partnerships that will work across second tier local authority areas and will consider local partnerships that work in a different way, perhaps across local authority boundaries, or in smaller areas within a single area where there is a clear benefit from that approach.

**New (8/11/12) - My organisation works across more than one second tier area. Can we be included in more than one partnership?**

They say that organisations cannot be part of more than one proposal. They made this a requirement because the aim of the funding is for local not-for-profit providers to come together across a second tier local authority area and develop a proposal to improve local services. That aim cannot be achieved with a larger number of rival bids or complex multi-partnership arrangements.

However, some organisations located in one second tier area may also provide services in neighbouring areas. This could apply to some support providers, providers of specialist advice or frontline advice providers. These organisations could make a valuable contribution to bids in different areas. Where it can be shown in the application that including these types of partner will strengthen a proposal, then they can be included in more than one bid. Each bid that includes these types of partner will need to demonstrate that each grant request does not include duplicate funding. **No organisation can lead more than one bid.**

**New (8/11/12) - Can voluntary sector organisations that support frontline advice providers join partnerships?**

They say partnerships can include other not-for-profit civil society organisations (i.e not advice providers) where it can be shown that it will strengthen a proposal. This includes organisations that provide support and developmental services to front line advice providers.

You can apply for some, or all, of your project costs for up to two years, including:

* contribution towards partnership organisational overheads.
* contribution to costs of delivering services to people in need of help and advice, where these are not already funded from elsewhere (no more than 25% of project’s total costs)
* cost of building partnership’s skills and capabilities to deliver the project effectively. The partnership is best placed to choose where to get the help - this may be the voluntary sector, the private sector or both. For example, you might identify help with:
  + diagnosis costs to help develop partnership’s plans for change, and understand current strengths or weaknesses
  + training to transform services to new ways of working, or adapting to new ICT systems
  + developing partnership’s skills in adopting new business models
* Capital expenditure up to £20,000 in respect of items needed to deliver project, such as office, IT equipment or refurbishment.

**New (8/11/12) - How is ‘direct delivery of advice services’ defined, which may form no more than 25% of the bid?**

They have said that up to 25% of a grant can be used for direct service delivery. By this they mean funds for the continuation of frontline advice services run by partners in a bid. The development of new ‘direct delivery’ channels that will help the advice sector work together to improve services and become more enterprising and resilient should form part of the main bid.

**Timescale**

**26 October 2012** – Programme launch and application materials available

**November 2012 to end of January 2013** –identify and engage with partners and agree project

**12 noon on 28 January 2013** – Deadline for submitting applications

**February and March 2013** –assess applications and discuss any queries

**April 2013** –decisions notified. If successful, you will draft a partnership agreement and send it for approval. This will be reviewed and may contact you with questions.

**June 2013** – Deadline for submission of partnership agreements – this will be a maximum of two months after you receive offer of funding. The sooner you send your partnership agreement, the sooner you can start your project. If partnership agreement approved, you must start project within three months. If not approved, you have up to a month to make some changes but if it still does not meet requirements, any grant offer may be withdrawn.

To find out more about the programme, including further guidance on completing your application form, see website at <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/england/advice-services-transition-fund>

If you have any questions, you can email [Advice.Transition@biglotteryfund.org.uk](mailto:Advice.Transition@biglotteryfund.org.uk) or Phone 0845 4 10 20 30 between 8am and 7pm weekdays. If you have a hearing impairment you can contact using a text phone on 0845 6 02 16 59. A Live Chat facility is also available on the Big Lottery Fund website [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk)

**Other identified potential statutory sources of collaboration and funding**

**The Department for Work and Pensions** (DWP) will collect information relating to the type of advice required to **help people to manage their personal finances**, and the best means of delivering that advice, as part of the Universal Credit Direct Payment Demonstration Projects (DPDP). This will help to inform DWP’s budgeting and financial support strategy for Universal Credit.

**DWP recognises that the Welfare Reform programme may place additional challenges on the sector** during the transitional period, as the changes bed in. DWP will work with sector representative bodies to identify opportunities to reduce demands placed on the advice sector and to examine the options for meeting that demand using a mixture of nationally and locally available resources, alongside the advice sector’s own work to improve efficiency and collaborative working.

The **Department of Health** published its information strategy, *The power of information: Putting all of us in control of the health and care information we need* in May 2012. This states that the NHS and local government will do more to offer support for those who need it to access, understand and use information.

From April 2013, it will be for the new clinical commissioning groups, working jointly with local authorities, to **identify through Joint Strategic Needs Assessments the advice services they require in their local areas**, and to include this in their Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The **care and support White Paper** sets out how the **care and support system will work together to improve access to information and advice to citizens and the additional funding** available to local authorities to do this.

**Government is also exploring alternative models to deliver advice** currently provided directly by public bodies, in order to put funding on a more sustainable footing. For example, in April 2012 responsibility for providing consumer advice was transferred from the Office of Fair Trading to Citizens Advice, and the Money Advice Service assumed the responsibility for coordinating the provision of debt advice (previously part of the remit of BIS).

**In the future, it will be more important for not-for-profit advice providers, individually and collectively, to be able to demonstrate how their services contribute to local and national public policy objectives.**

**Good practice examples**

**Collaboratio**n: The Avon Advice Network to improve access to advice and legal services by working collaboratively together and with funders to develop sustainable services to meet the needs of vulnerable communities, increase early access to advice and provide a seamless quality service. There is effective information sharing including a shared website and monitoring systems and a common referral system amongst some of the larger providers.

**Focusing on early intervention, prevention and education**: Coventry Law Centre, in partnership with Coventry and Warwickshire Council of Disabled People, delivering a programme of activity to make disabled people aware of changes to the benefits system and to offer support through a variety of activities over the next year

**Outcomes Based Delivery**: Portsmouth City Council commissioning an advice service which is designed to deliver what matters to customers and to understand the levels and causes of failure in the wider system of services with which advice engages, such as benefits administration

**Exploiting remote channels**: In Manchester the One Stop Advice project provides the growing number of smartphone users with access to advice information, a nearest provider search, email an adviser function, and telephone advice ([www.onestopadvice.org.uk](http://www.onestopadvice.org.uk) ) The Manchester One Stop Advice website provides residents with access to free information and fact sheets from trusted independent sources such as national advice charities like Citizens Advice

**Resilience and innovation**: Calderdale CAB which has developed a trading arm providing advice to businesses, and Islington Law Centre, which is working on a model which would allow free legal advice to be subsidised by fee-paying clients

**Efficienc**y: Community Money Advice (CMA) helps community groups, churches, Housing Associations and county councils set up face to face money advice centres in their neighbourhood. It currently has 107 centres with over 700 fully trained volunteers based in areas often overlooked or where the demand is too great for other service providers. The majority of these centres are staffed and run by properly trained volunteers.

**More information**

Cabinet Office advice review press release- <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/65-million-free-advice-services-help-vulnerable>

Full report - <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/not-for-profit-advice-services-england.pdf>

Big Lottery Fund Advice Services Transition Fund - <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/england/advice-services-transition-fund>

Updated – 6 December 2012