

Valuing Social Values

Project Information Sheet

Why?

Third sector organisations need to demonstrate the value of their activity to, amongst others:

- Themselves as part of understanding what they do well, and where they can improve
- Funders such as public sector commissioners, charitable trusts, donors, and investors
- Regulators such as Charity Commission, Community Interest Company regulator and Care Quality Commission.

There are a wide range of tools and techniques for addressing some of these needs and audiences. The expense in time and money needs to be balanced with the benefits; and the opportunity cost of being diverted from front-line provision. Choosing the right tool to do the job matters. For each organisation this decision will reflect their particular situation.

What?

A project to run throughout 2010 has been established by the VSV partnership to progress thinking within the North East. Specifically the project seeks to:

- raise awareness of the range of social value techniques
- develop a set of case studies through working with partners experienced in their use
- develop a 'decision support tool' to help more informed decision making.

Through this work the project will help to:

- network and share existing expertise and intelligence to generate a regional focus for addressing the challenges, tensions and opportunities of social value techniques particularly in evidencing the delivery of contracted services;
- develop Newcastle University's relationship with and offer to the third sector, as part of its mission to "play a leading role in the economic, social and cultural development of the North East of England".
- As a key part of being "regionally rooted", Newcastle University Business School seeks engagement with diverse communities to develop dialogue around values.



How?

There is considerable experience and expertise within the region. Starting from the national 'Prove and Improve' initiative (www.proveandimprove.org), initial research aims to consolidate this understanding and identify possible agencies that may be willing to be case studies.

Case studies will be produced during the spring and summer that illustrate the range of techniques and their particular purposes for the organisation. By reflecting on the experience, lessons for the organisation and broader sector can be identified.

Seminars planned for the autumn will reflect on these case studies and develop a decision-support tool. The aim of the tool is to help organisations make better informed decisions over which technique is most useful for them. Additional seminars are planned to place this work in a broader context for both the third sector and Newcastle University.

The project aims to help improve our individual and collective understanding of these challenging and important issues. Throughout the year we are keen to work with third sector organisations and funders to understand more about their needs and experiences. Working with the partner organisations there will be project presentations and seminars throughout the year.

Whether a third sector organisation or funder – public or private – we would particularly welcome contact if you:

- Have used any particular technique
- Thought about using one but didn't, for whatever reason
- View some techniques as relevant (or not) to your organisation.

Who?

Valuing Social Values Network has been established by :

- Co-ops North East - www.cooperatives-ne.coop
- Pentagon Partnership - www.pentagonpartnership.org.uk
- NESEP - www.nesep.co.uk
- VONNE –www.vonne.co.uk
- KITE, at Newcastle University Business School University Project Team:
 - Rob Wilson, KITE Co-director and Senior Lecturer
 - Jane Gibbon, Lecturer in Accounting
 - Chris Ford, Project Facilitator
- For further information please see www.ncl.ac.uk/kite/social-values/ or contact Chris Ford on 0191 243 0791 or social-values@ncl.ac.uk

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