

EVIDENCING NEED: WHAT FUNDERS ARE LOOKING FOR!

Not evidencing need sufficiently well in your organisation's bid has been cited as one of the most common reasons (the other being identifying outcomes) for rejection by the Big Lottery Fund in their general funding programmes.

Funders will expect you to address the question of why you believe or know that there is a need for your project.

They will expect you to show evidence that demonstrates

- There is a need that is not being met or not in a way that people find helpful
- That this can be proven through statistics and consultations
- That what you are planning meets the needs identified?
- That people want the solution you are offering

Here are a few tips on what sort of information funders are looking for, where to find this information, or ways you can gather this information yourselves.

The Big Lottery Fund (BLF) defines need as:

“the term we use to describe a problem or issue, or situation where something needs to change to make things better, for a person, a group of people, an environment or an organisation.”

What BLF and other funders are looking for is confirmation that your organisation has thought carefully about need when designing your project, and that you are confident that that your service users want the services you are offering.

So how do you go about proving demand?

- **Asking people** (e.g. through door-to-door surveys, postal questionnaires, informal/formal interviews or public consultations).
 - **Records of unmet demand** (waiting lists, letters from agencies who want to refer people). Existing research (NB this should be recent as people needs change and new services may have been set up since the research was carried out)
 - **Evaluation of existing services**, which should include recognition of whether other organisations are carrying out similar services or targeting the same service users in your local area or not
 - **Letters of support** from other services and partnership group
 - **Statistics** showing the needs within the target community. Can be found at:
 - <http://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/> including
 - Annual public health report 2017
<http://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/health/aphr>
 - Indices of multiple deprivation 2015
<http://opendata.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/dataset/indices-deprivation>
 - Labour Market statistics
<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>
 - Office for National statistics
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/>
- Cambridge Atlas is run by Cambridgeshire County Council
<http://atlas.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/Profiles/WardProfiles/atlas.html>
- **Strategies** which show that your project fits into wider needs for services identified for example by your local authority Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
<http://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/jsna>

How do you demonstrate that your project is the most appropriate way to respond to the problem identified?

If you are already running a service, then carry out an evaluation, to demonstrate its effectiveness, good practice and innovation.

If you are proposing to introduce a new service you can refer to models of practice that have been successfully run by organisations elsewhere.

Other Resources

Big Lottery Fund Fact Sheet - Evidencing the need for your project.

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding/funding-guidance/applying-for-funding/identifying-need/evidencing-need