



How to show your organisation's effectiveness and credibility

You may have a very good project and clearly identified need, but you also have to show funders that you have the ability to carry out the project. They want to be reassured that your organisation is well-run, professional, with evidence of good financial management, qualified and committed staff and volunteers, and that you have wider support in the community and a good reputation.

How can you show this in an application?

- Usually funders will ask for background information about the organisation – if you've been around a long time, this can strengthen your credibility. (Unfortunately, this may work against you if your organisation has existed for many years but has not changed or moved forward in all that time.)
- Mention previous achievements and successes – perhaps the new project has developed out of previous work?
- Mention who has funded you previously – this helps to build a new funder's trust
- Quote feedback from service users (if allowed, enclose copies of articles or letters from service users, latest annual report)
- Quote key people who have worked with you and praised your work
- Usually funders will ask about the management of the organisation and/or the project you are applying for. It is good to mention the expertise and skills of the Management Committee and staff, mention the frequency of Management Committee meetings, number and diversity of trustees. It is good to mention key policies and procedures that you have in place and show awareness of legal responsibilities. In questions about management of the organisation and/or monitoring and evaluation, it is important to explain the reporting system between staff and Management Committee (re: financial reports, staff reports etc.), and mention strategic planning sessions you've done.
- There may also be a question about your networks or partnership working – mention key organisations that you work with in the statutory sector, voluntary and community sector, local businesses, support/training agencies, forums and networks you are members of, etc.
- There will be a question about monitoring and evaluation – show that you have good systems in place; they don't have to be complex, they just need to be effective
- If requested or allowed, include copies of your annual report, annual accounts, strategic or business plan with your application.
- Keep a credibility file! This will also help you when funders come to visit. This is a file where you keep relevant research, case studies, quotes, letters of support, copies of the annual accounts, annual reports, photos, newspaper articles etc.

Ways to show 'added value'

Funders want to feel that they are getting as much as possible out of their money. So if you can demonstrate that a grant from them will result in extra benefits (or 'added value'), this improves your case. For example:

Extra benefits that may result from a grant:

- By investing in equipment or technology a funder may enable you to be more effective and/or efficient, reach more people etc.
- By investing in staff or volunteer training and skills development a funder will improve the quality and effectiveness of your work
- By investing in your sustainability a grant may enable you to generate further income through matched grants or by enabling you to negotiate a contract with a statutory agency

Extra benefits that you can offer a funder:

- Volunteer involvement – by supporting your work with volunteers, you can provide a good quality service to more people, develop skills and employability of volunteers, perhaps involve volunteers who have specific needs, benefits for community participation and cohesion
- User involvement – by involving users in the running of your organisation (something most funders like to see) you are developing their skills and confidence, empowering them, enabling them to have a voice, enhances community participation and cohesion
- Your project may have potential for being copied by others – if you are developing a new approach etc.
- You may be getting discounts or contributions in kind which make your project even more cost effective e.g. free venues, free training or health awareness presentations, etc.
- When filling in application forms, highlight how your work will contribute to saving costs elsewhere, particularly in the public sector (i.e. NHS, mental health, criminal justice system etc.)