



SOS: Saving our Sector

Introduction

Here at WRC we are aware that many of our members are facing – or may already be experiencing – cuts to budgets, funding and staff. In some cases the very existence of your organisation may be at risk.

In order to provide our members with some of the tools to mitigate such threats, we have compiled this list of steps you can take.

It includes how to lobby your local authorities, possible alternative sources of funding and other hints and tips. We hope this information will enable you to feel more equipped to take on any possible challenges to your organisation.

We will be updating this list on a regular basis, as and when more resources and tools become available.

Contact the government

On 20th of October the UK government will publish its Comprehensive Spending Review, which will set out spending plans for the years 2011-12 to 2014-15. The government has launched a 'Spending Challenge' which asks people to suggest ideas for cutting public spending in a way that is 'fair and responsible'.

You can submit your own ideas here:

<http://spendingchallenge.hm-treasury.gov.uk/>

As for local authorities, some as we know are already cutting budgets and most will begin by the end of the year. You can read our statement on the situation with London Councils here:

http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2010/l/lc_grants_scheme_2.pdf

General local authorities:

This site enables you to find who your local councillors and MPs are and provides a basic email letter template to send: <http://www.writetothem.com/> Your local council website should also have a list of who is councillor in your local ward.

Your MP: <http://findyourmp.parliament.uk/>

Full cabinet and departmental ministers list:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/prod_dg/groups/dg_digitalassets/@dg/documents/digitalasset/dg_187701.htm

London Councils-specific:

See WRC's [statement](#) on the future of London Councils funding

Contact Grants and Leaders' committee with your concerns ([lists on the VSF website](#))

Respond to WRC's survey (if you are currently funded by London Councils) - <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8NNWLRP>

Respond to VSF's survey (if you are not currently funded by London Councils) - http://www.smart-survey.co.uk/v.asp?i=22193fdiog&dm_i=6I7,4X4T,O94A8,FAKO,1

Know your rights

There are many legal tools that, if used correctly, can bolster your case as an organisation. For information on using public law and equality duties with regard to your organisation - such as the Gender Equality Duty (GED) - read 'Keeping it Legal', the National Equality Partnership's (NEP) guide for third sector organisations on public law and equality rights :

http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2009/k/keeping_it_legal.pdf

You can also read WRC's factsheet on the Gender Equality Duty here:

http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2010/g/gender_equality_duty.pdf

Respond to consultations

If you are given an opportunity to respond to a consultation on the future of your funding, **make sure you respond and get your voice heard. If you would like advice about how best to respond to consultations, please get in touch with WRC (contact details below).**

WRC will be providing template responses for some consultations and these will be available through enews and our [website](#).

London Councils Consultation

The consultation on the future of the London Boroughs Grants Scheme will open in August and is likely to finish at the end of October. There will be opportunities to respond online and at a number of events in September and it is essential that we respond with a united voice. See our [statement](#) for more information.

Write a letter

Should you need to write to your local councillor/MP/funder about the future of your funding, remember these key points:

- Ideally, your letter should be personalised to the recipient, short and succinct
- It should be constructive, saying what the money would do and why you are the best placed organisation to receive it rather than a list of complaints.
- You need to show you are pro-active and focused organisation.

An example of template letter to send to a council which intends to end funding to a specialist service (including a request to conduct an equality impact assessment) is available on pages 16-17 of NEP's '[Keeping it Legal](#)' publication.

Get the message out

1. **Use your social media!** Are you on Facebook/Twitter/other? Get the message out to your supporters and galvanise them to take action. Start a Facebook campaign and send out to your network, Tweet about your problem and encourage others to do the same.

If you send out a regular email newsletter, use it to spread the word and get in touch with other organisations/newsletters to maximise the spread your news gets.

2. **Contact your local media** – local media are always looking for stories so your area's newspapers, radio stations and websites are excellent ways to get your message out there.
3. **Use your supporters** – they can press the case for you.

Support websites

These websites offer good support and advice in dealing with the budget cuts:

<http://www.copingwiththecuts.org.uk/> from Directory of Social Change, who are also running a course on the issue Tuesday 30 September, details [here](#).

<http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/advice-support/coping-with-cuts#advice>

And on our website is a comprehensive list of resources/advice and more:

<http://www.wrc.org.uk/resources/default.aspx>

Alternative funding sources

Our website contains a [list](#) of funding resources, but there are others here:

Sources of government funding

<http://www.governmentfunding.org.uk/Default.aspx>

Voluntary and community sector grant information

<http://www.j4b.co.uk/>

Funding central

<http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/Default.aspx>

In addition, look to holding emergency fundraising events or awareness events.

Get in touch

If you are concerned about your organisation and the future it faces, get in touch with WRC and we will endeavour to give you the best advice and support available. Please email info@wrc.org.uk and put 'SOS' in the subject line or call our office on 0207 324 3030.