

May 2012

Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012

The Public Services (Social Value) Act complements the legislation already in place which sets out what needs to be considered by those who have responsibility for commissioning and procuring (or buying) contracts for public services. This policy briefing aims to summarise the new legislation and set out what it means for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGB&T) voluntary and community sector.

What does “social value” mean?

Social value involves looking beyond the price of a contract for a particular service to consider what the collective benefit to the local community might be. For example, an organisation which provides services for LGB people might recruit volunteers from those communities to run some of these services. The social value aspect would be in providing LGB people with volunteering opportunities in an environment where they feel safe and supported, allowing them to develop skills, gain work experience, and feel socially included. This would be in addition to the organisation being able to provide its services to the community.

What will public bodies have to do?

All public bodies (e.g. local authorities, NHS Trusts and PCTs, government departments, fire and rescue services, and housing associations) already consider value for money and the impact on the environment of the services they commission. Now they are required to consider the potential benefit to a community when they award contracts for services. It applies to all public service contracts, but does not apply to public work or public supply contracts. The new legislation is effective throughout England and much of Wales; please see the bill's pages on www.legislation.gov.uk for Welsh exceptions.

What can I do?

LGB&T voluntary and community groups that are commissioned to provide services may well already be providing social value as part of this. If you don't already, consider how you can measure the social value your group creates – Social Enterprise UK has resources which can help you do this. Get in contact with public bodies you would like to work with and tell them about the social value you provide in your community; find out what their needs and priorities are, and how you can work around these. Plan how you will include evidence of your social value in future applications to tender – but don't forget about the other aspects of the application, such as strategy, financial management, cost, quality, risk management



POLICY BRIEFING



Resources

Social Enterprise UK:

http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/uploads/files/2012/03/public_services_act_2012_a_brief_guide_web_version_final.pdf

Legislation.gov.uk:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/3/enacted?view=interweave>

A. Westall: Value and the Third Sector. TSRC Paper 25. University of Birmingham. 2009

J.Eliot & R.Piper: True Value- Uncovering the Full Value of your organisation. NCVO. 2008

If you would like to contact The Lesbian & Gay Foundation you can email adam.winter@lgf.org.uk