

Public-Social Partnership

A Guide for Public Sector Procurement Agencies

Public-Social Partnerships (PSPs)

The Scottish Government's Guide to Forming and Operating Public-Social Partnerships (PSPs), published in July 2011, defines PSPs as:

'A strategic partnering arrangement which involves the third sector earlier and more deeply in the design and commissioning of public services'.

PSPs are based on a co-planning approach, through which the public sector can connect with third sector organisations (voluntary, charity and social enterprise organisations) to share responsibility for designing services based around service user needs rather than the current suite of standard services which users can access.

Public Social Partnerships recognise and value the contribution that third sector organisations can make to the service planning process through their close relationships with service users. By giving the third sector an equivalent role in service design, alongside the public sector commissioner; services can be designed with the needs of service users at the forefront of the process. Services can then be trialled by third sector providers, with a view to identifying how the service works in practice, outcomes achieved and how much it costs. The service that emerges from this process is then commissioned for the longer term using a competitive tendering process.

Why are PSPs Important?

Successful adoption of the Public-Social Partnership approach to the design and delivery of services can engender significant benefits:

- Services are not designed in isolation – the third sector's ability to innovate and its experience in working on a day-to-day basis with particular client groups can help to deliver better, more efficient services which achieve key outcomes for service users
- Allowing greater agility to find creative solutions to service user requirements, while increasing focus on taking preventative action to keep users out of traditional service provision.
- Helping to break down intra-organisational bureaucratic barriers and risk averse cultures
- Supporting the delivery of wider social and economic benefits focused upon communities
- Promoting the sharing and transfer of skills and knowledge between partners

How can Ready for Business help?

Ready for Business is managing and leading the Scottish Government's *Developing Third Sector Markets* programme. It has a broad range of experience in developing partnerships and is therefore able to provide support that is flexible, responsive, accessible and challenging to organisations currently involved in, or considering, Public Social Partnerships. We have committed to providing support for a number of PSPs within the programme in the following ways, so that the potential benefits associated with PSPs can be realised:

- Review of the current position so that a defined and structured programme of support specific to the needs of each PSP can be created
- On-site support for each PSP including user and/or stakeholder engagement and assistance in the resolution of complex programme issues
- Access to targeted support through a dedicated mentor from the Ready for Business core programme team and access to Subject Matter Experts who will be able to support, for example: service design (including all PSP partners and service users); project planning ; financial planning; and tender processes
- Group events scheduled every month to share experiences and common issues
- Advice and guidance on social impact will be provided to each PSP to ensure social impact is embedded into the design, commissioning and procurement within each PSP
- Development of case studies which will be shared through relevant networks and knowledge sharing infrastructure

For stakeholders within the procurement-commissioning and third sector communities, Ready for Business will:

- Introduce a Partners for Change Programme which will accelerate relationship building, form a shared agenda, support forward-thinking commissioning head on, and create a solid platform for the roll-out of PSPs
- Conduct Champions Forums through which key public sector champions will be engaged with a consistent message around PSPs
- Hold locally focused engagement events around Scotland to enable public sector representatives, the procurement-commissioning community and third sector community to engage and gain a better understanding of the opportunities which exist and how to access them
- Hold themed service design workshops focused upon joint commissioning and the PSP approach including models, techniques and case studies
- Work with the Scottish Government to follow-up all enquiries for support and with all those expressing an interest in forming PSPs

Working together we can improve commissioning and effectiveness in service delivery.

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