

Voluntary**Action**Islington

Policy Briefing – Best Value

April 2011

Background

Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, has stated that he wants councils to avoid passing on disproportionate cuts to voluntary and community organisations. Following on from his statement the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has released a new set of guidelines for Best Value authorities addressing this issue. However this guidance also revokes the current duty to involve stakeholders in decision making, and the duty to prepare a Sustainable Community Strategy.

Key proposals

- Revoking of the guidance around the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, “Creating strong, safe and prosperous communities”.
- New “light-touch” guidance on considering social and environmental value in commissioning and expectations on councils when cutting funding to the voluntary and community sector.

For the VCS?

Revoking the above guidance to the 2007 Act frees councils from a range of targets and duties, most importantly the Duty to Involve. This places a duty on councils to inform, consult and involve local people in decision making, and its removal would leave it to councils’ discretion in the way they consult.

This new guidance increases the emphasis on considering social and environmental value, which may be of advantage to voluntary and community organisations in the tendering process. The guidance also makes it clear that councils are required to consult community organisations around service development at all stages of the commissioning cycle, and honour local Compacts.

The proposed guidance also highlights specific responsibilities on councils undertaking cuts to the voluntary and community sector.

DCLG is undertaking a consultation on the proposed changes up to the 12th of June. To respond check the link below.

More information:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/bestvalueconsult>

For questions or comments please contact:

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