

EVALUATION
TRUST



Review of Information and Advice Service

for

Bournemouth Council for Voluntary Service

Toto Gronlund

May 2008

Many thanks are due to the support of the Evaluation Trust staff, in particular Sarah del Tufo, who has provided materials and guidance. Thanks are also due to all the Third Sector organisations who participated so willingly in this review, and to David Leighton, the Bournemouth CVS Advisor, who provided data and facilitated all the access to information and to the Third Sector organisations.

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Executive Summary

1. Introduction

The Third Sector is a vital part of the local society in creating active and enterprising communities. The Third Sector provides a voice for marginalised people, campaigns for change, meets social needs, delivers services and influences local decisions and planning. The 'Future Role of the Third Sector in social and economic regeneration.' (July 2007) consultation reportⁱ estimates the contribution of volunteering to be equivalent to a million fulltime workers.

A study by the Young Foundationⁱⁱ highlights the importance of small grass roots Third Sector organisations. These are crucial through their direct connection to the local area and priorities, and provide the opportunity for people to become involved in the design and delivery of projects tackling local issues and aspirations, and providing services to meet needs not directly addressed by mainstream organisations. They are well placed to facilitate social inclusion and positive community development, as well as economic benefits. They have a high volunteer-to-staff ratio and represent good value for money. Some are also the larger groups of the future. But they generally find it difficult to develop to a level of sustainability, facing initially a lack of skills, knowledge and funding.ⁱⁱⁱ These smaller groups do not have the infrastructure and support to which many larger Third Sector organisations have access, often at national level, nor the funding to pay for technical or legal support.

Two important components of the strategy in 'Future Role of the Third Sector' are the continuation of the 'CapacityBuilders Programme' and the provision of the 'Small Grants Programme' for small grassroots Third sector organisations. While there are a number of sources for grants to Third sector organisations there is evidence that many organisations lack the capacity to seek funding^{iv}, or to remain sustainable after any initial funding. CapacityBuilders has the objective of building this necessary capacity by encouraging and providing practical support. Such support includes responding to the needs of the local community, for example by helping groups become established; providing information and advice; training, advocacy and community representation; and in particular to reach the smallest and most marginalised communities.^v This is the context for the provision of the Information and Advice service at Bournemouth Council for Voluntary Service (BCVS).

Amongst the smaller and emerging groups, B&ME groups are a focus for these services. People from B&ME groups have particular difficulty in accessing specialist services partly because of language or culture barriers, but also through not knowing what is available. Thus these have been an important focus for BCVS, typically requiring a higher level of interaction and one-to-one support.

2. Background

The population of Bournemouth is diverse, and has a high concentration of elderly retired people, but also a significant younger population. Despite being a generally affluent area, there are significant pockets of deprivation, and problems such as alcohol abuse and teenage pregnancy are above the national average. The area appears to have lower levels of volunteering than might be expected, and below that of neighbouring communities.

BCVS aims to strengthen Bournemouth's Third Sector organisations by providing a range of services and facilities to meet their needs. One of these is the Information and Advice Service, aimed particularly at B&ME and disability and the smaller grass roots Third Sector groups.

3. The purpose and focus of the work

The purpose of this work was to provide an evaluation focussing specifically on the Advice Project measured primarily against the agreed aims and objectives as stated in the original Big Lottery application. The findings will support future development and delivery of the advice service and capacity building in the Third Sector in general.

4. The stakeholders

The key stakeholders are the evaluation target audience, with a focus on B&ME and disability groups. Other stakeholders to be included in the interviews were Bournemouth Borough Council, Poole CVS (geographically closest CVS) and the Adviser from BCVS.

5. Methodology

The study is designed mainly as a qualitative review, with some quantitative analysis of the records kept by BCVS and other materials. An interview approach was considered appropriate. A survey was not practical as several other surveys had been administered recently, with increasingly poor response rates, indicating over-burdening of the sector with questionnaires.

The evaluation questions were as follows:

- In what ways have the skills and knowledge of Third Sector staff, volunteers and trustees, and specifically those of B&ME and disability organisations, developed as a result of the information and advice service, and the various training and networking opportunities that have been part of the service?

- In what ways has this enabled Third Sector organisations to deliver their services more effectively to their clients?
- To what degree have these networking opportunities impacted on, and strengthened, the work of the local Third Sector?
- What would be the impact on the local VCS and on local service delivery in general should advice, information, training, support and networking cease to be available from BCVS?

6. Findings

The Advice Project provides a broad range of information, advice and training that support core capacity and skills development for the Third Sector. The service is accessible by telephone and email, and through one-to-one appointments. Web services have been extended over the time of the project; newsletters are published quarterly; training venues are local with about 8-12 courses provided per annum, reaching 38 groups in 2007. In addition there are various services that support networking.

Within the groups that have engaged with BCVS, awareness of all the information and advice services is reasonably good. Uptake of service from the initial publicity broadly met original targets, with 139 groups engaging with the service over 2005-2007. BCVS are now actively promoting the service through colleagues and pursuing other means of advertising to ensure the right groups are targeted and aware of the service.

For the 19 groups interviewed, the advice function provides them with the opportunity of active engagement through the one-to-one support and training, which has been crucial. In contrast, merely providing information is a passive one-way activity, and is necessary but not sufficient. Nor is it sufficient to provide groups with support just to obtain funding - they also need the skills and capacity to know how to manage this funding and organise themselves.

For all the organisations interviewed BCVS had a significant 'impact' on establishing status and transforming a potential idea into an organisation with a constitution. Eight of these have registered or are actively planning to become a registered charity. All operational groups which had worked with the Advice Service indicated they had some kind of management structure, and established policies and procedures. Most had at least one paid member of staff, four or more regular volunteers, and a strong sense and awareness of the importance of proper management, policies and procedures.

There is a sense that if the service were to be stopped, not only would Third Sector organisations progress much more slowly, several would not be able to progress at all. Time is often of the essence in keeping momentum going, and seeing positive results in organisational development are important milestones.

Unanimously, all interviewees, whether start-up groups or established branches of national charities, commend the approach, speed of response, thoroughness, overall quality and trustworthiness of information and the service provided by the Advisor. Follow-up, and referral to appropriate third parties, is also reported to work extremely well. A simple phone call or email provides the answer to many important questions:

Whether there is an ongoing dependency on the service is not clear. It is certainly something the groups appreciate and take advantage of, but the degree to which help is sought, say after achieving registered charitable status, appears to be far less.

The one-to-one support has been particularly appreciated by the groups, with generous time commitment to B&ME groups.

Feedback indicates that the service for B&ME groups is sensitive and patient, which is also corroborated by feedback provided to other officers. Data from the work record provided by the Advisor on the actual number of hours spent with a group indicate that B&ME groups averaged more than twice the time commitment than disability groups. People from B&ME groups have particular difficulty in accessing many specialist services (eg health) as a result of language barriers, lack of knowledge, and lack of confidence or trust^v. The 1-1 support provides a way of reaching these communities in a way that most mainstream services do not provide. This not only helps them develop as a Third Sector group, but also empowers them to gain confidence and knowledge to access other mainstream services. Provision of the 1-1 support from a mainstream CVS also provides opportunity to promote social cohesion with different ethnic groups (and other Third Sector groups) through the process of “bridging”^{vi}.

Networking opportunities are also appreciated by the Third Sector, and the annual conferences and AGM elicited positive feedback. The Trustees’ Network provides opportunity for further development, but for some groups was still of limited value due to perceived low attendance. The Register of Contacts, a directory of local services, is used routinely by the groups, and seen as an important part of the information service. The e-forums are growing in popularity, with 346 communications made in 2007.

Impact - long term sustainable change - is difficult to measure and attribute to any single intervention. Each of the smaller groups that have grown over the past two or three years has a proud story to tell. As growing organisations, the services they provide to users have increased and have changed from direct support to enablement of the client group. New projects or services have been started and capacity to innovate as well as sustain existing services has developed. New client groups have been engaged: for example a resident action group moved from providing a service to children, to services for disabled and older people, and then for younger people. Volunteering within these groups has

increased. Several organisations do report active collaboration with the statutory sector; all see this as an important goal for their sustainability and growth.

The evidence from the interviews suggests that the service has empowered B&ME groups to connect with other organisations and ethnic groups.

The interviews did not systematically explore the wider community and societal impact, though anecdotally there is some evidence of this. However, impact at this level is typically a result of a number of interventions and changes which develop the Third Sector and the wider community.

An example of this is the account of a small project which has grown into a thriving community group. Many of the impacts are synonymous with reducing social isolation and strong community development, for example:

- in improving physical amenities and safety
- developing social roles such as increased volunteering, employment, opportunities for leisure activities and exercise, working with neighbours and creative development
- and in relationships, creating new social networks, self esteem and a sense of affiliation.

This group has a good reputation and is held up as an exemplar by Bournemouth Borough Council, the councillors, and the police.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

The thrust of the Information and Advice Service has been on developing internal capacity and capability in the local Third Sector, primarily in the smaller grass-roots voluntary organisations. They are well placed to facilitate social inclusion, and there is evidence of this from the interviews, particularly for B&ME groups.

In addition, these smaller groups do not have the infrastructure and support to which many larger Third Sector organisations have access, often at national level, nor the funding to pay for technical or legal support. People from B&ME groups have particular difficulty in accessing specialist services partly because of language or culture barriers, but also through not knowing what is available.

The study found that virtually all who have engaged with the service commended it for its quality, responsiveness, thoroughness and friendliness.

The service has directly supported the development of the local Third Sector in improving the quality of their organisational arrangements and supported their development needs, mainly by increasing management and individual capacity and by creating a credible profile to the outside world.

The service has

- been actively used by 139 groups over 2005-07, of which over 28% are disability groups, and 10% B&ME groups
- helped organisations on the road to registered charitable status
- had a positive impact on most groups that have participated, on their ability to operate autonomously, achieve financial stability and develop services for their client groups
- developed good relations with many minority ethnic groups.

The 1-1 support has been a critical factor in the impact of the service, as it provides an immediate fit between the needs of the group and the intervention and advice provided. This provides good depth of support for the organisations that have participated.

Recommendations

1. Continue the service

Continue provision of the Information and Advice Service, develop a sustainable funding strategy for this service, and increase coverage of sector depending on findings from market research.

2. Market research and evaluation

Continue to obtain more intelligence about the size and nature of the Third Sector community in Bournemouth, their needs and how these are changing over time, to inform the work of the Information and Advice Project.

3. Communications and Marketing

Consider how to extend awareness and coverage of this capacity building service, continuing to target the B&ME, disability and smaller grass roots groups.

Consider the image of BCVS as a whole: there is a perception BCVS is Boscombe focused, not least because of its location. This image may be of less consequence for the Information and Advice Service, as much of this is conducted through email and telephone, and using a variety of venues. However, the perceptions of BCVS as a whole do reflect on the Information and Advice Service.

4. Service enhancements

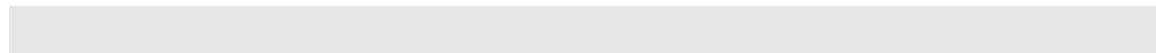
Continue to develop the Trustees' Network and recruitment and development of Trustees.

Provide an advance calendar of events and training, and consider further signposting to other training.

Consider opportunities for using peer to peer support within the Third Sector.

5. Ways of working and collaboration with other infrastructure organisations

Continue to work with Poole CVS and Dorset Race Equality to identify areas where resources can be usefully combined, potentially developing areas of expertise.



Main Report

1. Introduction

The Third Sector is a vital part of the local society in creating active and enterprising communities. The Third Sector provides a voice for marginalised people, campaigns for change, meets social needs, delivers services and influences local decisions and planning. The 'Future Role of the Third Sector' (July 2007) consultation report^{vi} estimates the contribution of volunteering to be equivalent to a million fulltime workers.

The report sets out the strategy for government support for the ongoing development of the Third Sector and partnership working, through recognition of their value in 5 key areas:

- enabling voice and campaigning,
- strengthening communities,
- transforming public services,
- encouraging social enterprise, and
- supporting the environment for a healthy third sector.

As part of the review, a study by the Young Foundation highlights the importance of small grass roots Third Sector organisations. These are crucial through their direct connection to the local area and priorities, and provide the opportunity for people to become involved in the design and delivery of projects tackling local issues and aspirations, and providing services to meet needs not directly addressed by mainstream organisations. They are well placed to facilitate social inclusion and positive community development, as well as economic benefits. They have a high volunteer to staff ratio and represent good value for money. Some are also the larger groups of the future. But they generally find it difficult to develop to a level of sustainability, facing initially a lack of skills, knowledge and funding.^{vii} These smaller groups do not have the infrastructure and support many larger Third sector organisation have access to, often at national level, nor the funding to pay for technical or legal support.

Two important components of the strategy in 'Future of the Third Sector' are the continuation of the 'CapacityBuilders Programme' and the provision of the 'Small Grants Programme' for small grassroots Third sector organisations. While there are a number of sources for grants to Third sector organisations there is evidence that many organisations lack the capacity to seek funding^{viii}, or to remain sustainable after any initial funding. CapacityBuilders has the objective of building this necessary capacity by encouraging and providing practical support. Such support includes responding to the needs of the local community, for example by helping groups become established; providing information and advice; training, advocacy and community representation; and in particular to

reach the smallest and most marginalised communities.^{ix} This is the context for the provision of the Information and Advice service at Bournemouth Council for Voluntary Service (BCVS).

Amongst the smaller and emerging groups, B&ME groups are a focus for these services. People from B&ME groups have particular difficulty in accessing specialist services partly because of language or culture barriers, but also through not knowing what is available. Thus these have been an important focus for BCVS, typically requiring a higher level of interaction and one-to-one support.

This evaluation seeks to identify the outcomes and 'impact' of the BCVS Information and Advice Project for voluntary sector organisations in the Bournemouth area. The report is written for BCVS, and is based on an independent evaluation. Recommendations are made about how BCVS in its community support role can build on the current information and advice service.

The voice of the Third Sector organisations and groups interviewed is reported in quotes extracted from the interviews, the author has tried to be faithful to the context and intention in which they were made. This voice has formed the majority of the evidence for assessing the impact of the advice service.



2. Background

Local Context

The population of Bournemouth is diverse, and has a high concentration of elderly retired people, but also a significant younger population. The area has a reputation for “clubbing” and attracts a large number of young people into the town centre during evenings and weekends. Despite being a generally affluent area, there are significant pockets of deprivation, and problems such as alcohol abuse and teenage pregnancy are above the national average.

The area is urbanised, merging into Christchurch in the East and Poole in the West, but with rural Dorset and The New Forest on its doorstep to the North and West, and the English Channel to the South.

The town enjoys an economically vital tourist trade, not just for British and Continental European visitors, but also a significant industry in “English as a Foreign Language” education. There is a large student population from the University and other colleges and the EFL education. See Appendix 5 for further key facts about Bournemouth.

According to the 2001 census, Bournemouth Borough had a population of 163,444 ^x.

- the area has a high elderly population, and a high young population...
- 21% of residents are aged over 65 years, compared to 16% in England;
- 3.4 % of the population are 85 years+, the 10th highest in the country.

The Ethnic breakdown shows a higher than average proportion of white population. Black people are at less than a third of the national average, with Chinese and other ethnic populations represented at about the national average. Most of the B&ME population is concentrated in the town centre. As with the rest of the UK, there has been a recent influx of Polish and other eastern European people.

Table 1: Ethnic breakdown of Bournemouth population, June 2005^{xi}

	Bournemouth	South West	England
White	94.8	96.1	89.1
Mixed	1.4	1	1.6
Asian or Asian British	1.4	1.3	5.3
Black or Black British	0.9	0.8	2.7
Chinese or Other			
Ethnic Group	1.5	0.8	1.3

The population density (35 persons per hectare) is comparable with major urban conurbations such as Croydon (38), Liverpool (38), and Manchester (33), but higher than Poole, Hillingdon or Torbay (all around 20 to 21).^{xii} The population density combined with the large elderly and young population (i.e. non-working) suggests there should be demand and scope for significant levels of volunteering activity.

There are more than 300 Third sector organisations in the Bournemouth area registered with BCVS. The South West has the highest level of informal and formal volunteering of all British regions^{xiii}. Guidestar^{xiv} (2006) indicates over 20,000 registered charities in the South West, with 408 registered with a Bournemouth address.

Nationally it is estimated that 44% of the population have carried out some volunteering work in the last year. In Poole (survey conducted Summer 2007) this figure is 33.4%, and in Bournemouth a survey (conducted Sep-Dec 2007, Bournemouth Borough Council) suggests this figure is much lower at 18%. This appears very low, and BCVS and the Council intend to continue to survey the population to monitor this rate.

The South West Forum report^{xv} suggests the sector is still insular in nature, with little cross fertilisation of ideas within the area, or with the voluntary sector outside the area, though this is changing with the development of a network of regional consortia and the development of forums. Bournemouth Borough Council has also identified the need to strengthen the voluntary sector so as to develop strategic alliances in health and social care and with the police.

Bournemouth CVS

Bournemouth CVS (BCVS) is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee registered in England & Wales, and is non-profit making and independent of both national and regional government.

BCVS aims to strengthen Bournemouth's Third Sector organisations by providing services to meet their needs. BCVS has a range of services and facilities available including:

- The provision of information through quarterly newspapers, other mailings, a searchable database of voluntary organisations in the Borough and an annually reviewed register of local contacts
- A range of audio visual facilities available for loan
- The provision of a specialist advice service offering individual consultations and helpline support for voluntary organisations

- Advocacy and representation of the sector on a wide range of local partnerships, including the Steering Group of the local Strategic Partnership
- Provision of an infrastructure to enable the sector to be represented in all key decision making bodies (See Figure 1 below)
- A recently re-established Volunteer Centre offering a range of services to potential volunteers and Third sector organisations seeking volunteers.

All voluntary groups in Bournemouth working with the community are eligible to become members of BCVS. These groups receive the newsletter and other mailings about events and items of interest and can nominate and vote for trustees to sit on the Board.

Bournemouth Borough Council (BBC) is an important partner in supporting the local Third Sector. In particular, their Community Development Officer supports initial advice for funding sources for the local Third Sector, a historical arrangement which continues to be supported by BBC and BCVS.

The Information and Advice Service

The Information and Advice Service started as a three year project funded by the Big Lottery to run from February 2005 to February 2008.

The project is designed to respond to the needs of the local voluntary sector, on both an individual and collective level, with the aim of building the skills and capacity of the voluntary and community sector (Third Sector) in the Bournemouth area. The target audiences are:

- individuals seeking to set up a voluntary organisation
- existing organisations seeking to develop further
- B&ME organisations
- Disability and health related organisations.

The objectives of the Project are:

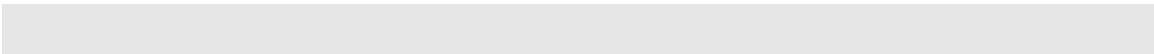
- (a) Improved quality of services provided to the Third Sector users/clients
- (b) Increased capacity within Third Sector organisations to deliver and run their services more effectively, e.g. achieving financial stability
- (c) Increased skills and knowledge for people working in and managing Third sector organisations to run their organisations more effectively, particularly B&ME and Health & Disability groups

- (d) Increased opportunities for networking within the Third sector in Bournemouth, and opportunities for the sharing of good practice and resources
- (e) Improved networks within the Third sector in Bournemouth, that will be able to form productive partnerships with the statutory sector to inform policy, influence funding decisions and future strategy developments.

An information service is provided by the advice officer (Advisor) through telephone, email, and personal appointments. In depth on-going support is also available through the Advisor. Networking is provided through various means, including a Trustees' Network, quarterly Voluntary Sector Forum meetings, and an annual conference or AGM. Specific capacity building support and education is provided through training. Currently first line information on funding sourced for the Third Sector is provided by the Bournemouth Borough Council Community Development Officer, with the Advice Service providing assistance in applying for funding. In practice this is often transparent to the Third Sector client.

The service involves the following aspects:

- a. Providing tailored advice to Third Sector groups face to face, by e-mail, letter and telephone. Meetings can be one-to-one or with whole trustee boards or groups of staff.
- b. Providing training sessions to staff and volunteers from the local Third Sector. Training topics to date include:
 - Constitution, Charity Regulations, Setting up as a Registered Charity
 - Business planning
 - Policies and procedures
 - Funding
 - Recruitment and Employment
 - Management and Governance
 - Health and safety
 - Evaluation.
- c. Providing conferences for the local Third Sector: 2005 & 2006; and AGM 2007.
- d. Compiling and issuing four newsletters annually containing information of interest to local Third Sector groups. Content includes changes to relevant legislation, local Third Sector and BCVS events, national news of interest.
- e. Developing and maintaining a web site containing information of interest to the local Third Sector.

- f. Implementing and co-ordinating a Trustees' Network involving three-monthly meetings with speakers and an e-mail support group.
 - g. Developing e-mail networks to share information more efficiently between groups.
- 

3. The purpose and focus of the work

The purpose of this evaluation was to provide an evaluation of the Advice Project measured primarily against the agreed aims and objectives as stated in the original Big Lottery application (see section 2). The findings will support future development and delivery of the advice service and capacity building in the voluntary sector in general.

The review was conducted by following-up some of the groups that have engaged with the advice service to gain more in-depth information about the outcomes, in addition to the monitoring data already kept by the Advisor.

The focus of the study is limited to the Information and Advice services.

Of specific interest are B&ME and disability groups and the outcomes for them. Research indicates that Third Sector B&ME groups may play a significant role by providing culturally specific community services and support. These groups help increase self-determination and individual confidence, reduce isolation, and provide an environment where trust in engaging with mainstream provision can be developed.^{xvi} Where the lack of trust or the ability to communicate and engage is part of the issue, the smaller grassroots organisation is more likely to be able to understand and meet the needs of the client group with empathy^{xvii}.

This can be seen to be equally important in the case of disability issues, which are often mistakenly assumed to be well looked after by big national charities and councils, whereas from a client group point of view, the issues are personal and local.

As a by-product, the review will also inform the development of BCVS against the NAVCA performance standards, in particular Standard 2, Development, Support and Liaison. This is briefly summarised in Appendix 2.

This report does not attempt to provide a full picture of outcomes and impacts that the successful small Third Sector organisations have achieved at societal level, but it is useful for demonstrating a sense of the community networks, enthusiasm and opportunities that have been grasped by small Third Sector groups. Undoubtedly there has been impact at community and society level, but this report mainly focuses on the outcomes and impact within the Third Sector groups and the Sector.

The review is non-participatory in nature to provide an objective independent perspective on the work of the Advice project, and outcomes for the Third Sector.

4. The Stakeholders

The scope and approach for this study were discussed between the Evaluation Trust (Sarah del Tufo) and the Chief Executive of BCVS (Viv Aird). A further meeting with the Advisor, David Leighton, and Toto Gronlund, evaluation consultant for the project, refined the approach and outline project plan.

The key stakeholders are the evaluation target audience, with a focus on B&ME and disability groups. Sampling is described in detail below.

In addition to the target Third Sector groups, other stakeholders to be included in the interviews were Bournemouth Borough Council (provision of funding advice service) and Poole CVS (geographically closest CVS, offering similar services to potentially some of the target Third Sector groups), and the Adviser from BCVS.

The local NHS Primary Care Trust (PCT) and other statutory sector organisations could potentially contribute to the evaluation, however this was not core to the main objective of understanding the outcomes for the Third Sector of the Advice Project.

Sampling was purposive, aiming to reflect the diversity in the target cohort. BCVS provided a list of groups, identifying all the organisations which had had some interaction with the Advice Service in 2007 (38 groups at end of October 2007). The profile for these is provided in Appendix 3. This was extended to include organisations which had not had much interaction with the service to ensure those not engaged were also part of the sample. The Advisor sent a letter to these groups explaining that they might be contacted for interview (see Appendix 7 for sample letter).

The consultant selected organisations at random from the list, but including at least four B&ME (out of nine) and four disability groups (out of nine), as well as four groups which had not had much contact with BCVS (according to the data held by BCVS and subsequently confirmed at interview).

A number of groups proved difficult to contact by telephone; however if contact was made, the response was welcoming and interested and all were willing to participate.

The organisations varied from small one-person initiatives to branches of major national charities. The full profile is provided in Appendix 3, but the majority were

- Community
- B&ME
- Disability & Health condition.

5. Methodology

Scope and approach

The study is designed mainly as a qualitative review, with some quantitative analysis of the records kept by BCVS and other materials (see Appendix 1). The evaluation questions therefore explore the nature of the service provided and its possible impact:

- 1) a. In what ways have the skills and knowledge of Third Sector staff, volunteers and trustees, and specifically those of B&ME and disability organisations, developed as a result of the information provided by the project via newsletters; training events; conferences; e-mail bulletins and one-to-one support?

b. In what ways has this enabled Third Sector organisations to deliver their services more effectively to their clients?
- 2) The project has provided two conferences; a number of training events; a local trustees' network and several e-mail networking groups. To what degree have these networking opportunities impacted on, and strengthened, the work of the local Third sector?
- 3) What would be the impact on the local Third Sector and on local service delivery in general should advice, information, training, support and networking cease to be available from BCVS?

An interview approach was considered appropriate. A survey was not practical as several other surveys had been administered recently, with increasingly poor response rates, indicating over-burdening of the sector with questionnaires. It also proved impossible to schedule focus group meetings, with only two voluntary sector groups indicating availability to participate.

The actual approach involved:

- A meeting between the Advisor and evaluator to gather materials and discuss approach
- Communication by a letter from the Advisor to all potential participants (38 groups)
- Two face-face interviews in place of the focus groups
- Telephone interviews (24) forming the bulk of the evaluation material
- Internet research of similar projects in other CVS services
- Review of communications material and data from BCVS
- Developing a pro forma for the interviews
- Piloting the pro forma in the face-face interviews

- Interviews with the Advisor and the BCC funding officer
- Analysis and preparation of a short report.

The interview pro forma is provided in Appendix 6.

Data collection

In practice, the telephone interviews were relatively unstructured, with the interview pro forma acting as a prompt for a “conversation” rather than as a structured pro forma to be completed.

Telephone interviews lasted typically 30 minutes though some took up to 1 hour 30 minutes; the two face to face interviews took approximately 2 hours each. The telephone interviews were not recorded. Notes were taken and key quotes repeated back to the interviewee for validation where these appeared to be descriptive of the interviewee’s views and statements.

Analysis

The study was qualitative in nature, aimed at exploring the areas of impact and effectiveness. Quantitative analysis is limited to the monitoring data provided by BCVS.

A thematic analysis was conducted on the transcripts of the interviews, initially with no reference to any specific outcome model, but seeking evidence of change in status or operation as a result of the Advice project. Once this had been completed, the themes and observations were mapped to the anticipated outcomes linked to the objectives of the project.

All analysis was conducted by the evaluator who had conducted the interviews. The interviews and the analysis are subject to the evaluator’s perspective, particularly in what information was desirable to elicit; however the approach has provided independence from the BCVS, with which the evaluator was not familiar prior to the interviews. The evaluator also had no pre-conceptions about the provision of information and advice services, or the way the voluntary sector engages with the BCVS. In practice, data validation and rigour in analysis^{xviii xix} involved multiple data sources in the BCVS documentation, telephone interviews and face to face interviews. As diverse a range of participants as possible were interviewed to ensure ‘fair dealing’. Respondent validation was made within the space of the interviews, for example playing back potential quotes.

6. Findings

The findings are reported against the outputs, outcomes and impacts, as summarised in Figure 1.

6.1 Outputs - Services provided

The main information and advice service is provided by a single Advisor through:

- One to one meetings,
- Telephone and
- Email enquiries.

Other services provided by BCVS as part of or relevant to the advice service include:

- Training
- Trustee Network
- Annual conference / AGM
- E-forum (new since 2006)
- Newsletters, Web site, Directory
- Voluntary sector forum.

Outputs

- 6.1 The services provided
- 6.2 The subject areas
- 6.3 Access

Outcomes

- 6.4 Awareness and utilisation
- 6.5 Networking
- 6.6 Status
- 6.7 Operational management & Governance

Impact

- 6.8 Service delivery
- 6.9 Collaboration
- 6.10 Community development

Figure 1

6.2 Outputs - Information and Advice subject areas

The training courses and advice are focused on subject areas that support core capacity and skills development, and work activity has been recorded against these main areas:

- Constitution, Charity Regulations, Setting up as a Registered Charity
- Business planning
- Policies and procedures
- Funding
- Recruitment and Employment
- Management and Governance
- Health and safety
- Evaluation.

In practice, a much wider range of subjects are covered or referred to others.

The current leaflet also includes:

- Conducting AGMs
- Setting up bookkeeping systems
- Personnel issues
- Roles and responsibilities of Trustees

- Staff and volunteer training.

The respondents also mentioned first aid, fire safety and food hygiene.

“...they [BCVS] do a fantastic job already in terms of the range of information they provide.”

Training courses provided in 2007:

- Religion and Belief Regulations
- Press releases and media training
- Presentation skills
- Introduction to bookkeeping
- Effective committee meetings
- Introduction to monitoring and evaluation
- Introduction to Health and Safety.

6.3 Outputs - Access and provision

The Information and Advice Service is available from 9.00 am – 5.00 pm daily, either by telephone or email, 1-1 appointments can be made either on the premises or at other convenient venues, sometimes the client site.

“The service is always easily accessible”

Web services have been extended over the time of the project. Newsletters are provided on a paper or electronic basis.

Some linked the accessibility of the Information and Advice Service to physical accessibility of the BCVS building, which operated in the past as a drop in resource centre.

“Shame the Link is not open; it would be a great resource centre for people”

Training venues are booked locally, but there is no dedicated training or resource facility. Training and Trustee network meetings are generally provided during working hours.

Feedback indicates some groups would prefer evening or weekend access to training and other events, but the Advisor reports that events scheduled at such times have had poor attendance. BCVS might consider other approaches to encouraging commitment to attendance, eg free participation but applying discretionary £20 cancellation fee.

Several participants suggested advance notice is required, ideally a yearly calendar for events and training. Another suggestion was to co-ordinate events

with for example Poole CVS: BCVS and Poole CVS now do share an internal planning calendar to avoid clashes of events.

Four indicative outcome areas for the BCVS Advice project formed the basis for the analysis; these are derived from the original project proposal and funding bid, also referencing the Charities Evaluation Service – NACVS Measuring Effectiveness toolkit^{xx} and from experience in the sector by the Evaluation Trust^{xxi}:

- Awareness and utilisation
- Status
- Operational management & Governance
- Networking.

Table 2: Outcomes for capacity and capability development for Third sector organisations for Information and Advice project.

BCVS targets indicated where available/relevant.

Outcomes	BCVS Information and Advice Service target outcomes* over 2005-07
Awareness & utilisation	
Improved quality of services provided to the Third sector	
Improved awareness of the CVS advices and services	Personal contact with all B&ME and Disability / Health related groups in Bournemouth 60 organisations to have gained access
Improved awareness of local and national developments	300 organisations circulated with quarterly bulletins
	* From Community Fund Grants Bid, 2004

6.4 Outcomes - Awareness and Utilisation ^{xxii}

In 2005 BCVS held a list of associate members, which was simply a long list of interested groups. Since then, membership has been formalised, membership conferring for example voting rights at the AGM, and entitlement to the BCVS newsletter. However, any voluntary sector or community organisation is entitled to call on the support of the Advice Service.

Similarly, the Register of Contacts, a directory of Third Sector and relevant statutory service providers, maintained by BCVS includes all eligible local organisations who submit an entry, whether members of BCVS or not.

At the outset of the Advice Project in 2005, the list of associates (approx 270 groups) was the target community for the mailshot advising them of the new project and the services that could be accessed. Disability and B&ME groups were specifically identified, see Table 3. The target audience has deliberately been kept to community, B&ME and disability/health type Third sector

organisations, generally excluding for example charities aimed at animal welfare. BCVS has a separate youth project supported by a part-time post, so work in this area is not addressed in this report, though several children or youth groups were included in the interviews.

Table 3: Groups told about the service

Total	270
Disability groups	36
B&ME groups	11

Since then, the newsletter and website have been the main form of publicity, along with word of mouth. Referrals come from the Bournemouth Borough Council Community Development Officer, who offers first line advice about funding sources for the Third sector in the area, acting effectively as a first level of triage. This is a good working relationship but dependent on the ongoing commitment of both organisations.

More recently BCVS staff and colleagues in the statutory sector are actively 'advertising' each others services. This seems to be effective in getting referrals, and from the Third Sector point of view access is relatively seamless. The Advisor observed:

"Most phone calls start with...your name was given to me by..."
"I guess people find out about BCVS by word of mouth"

Within the groups that have engaged with BCVS, awareness of all the information and advice services is reasonable, with few reporting they did not think they received newsletters or were not aware of the annual conference. This did remind them to check if their membership was up to date.

Four organisations that had not used the advice service were interviewed. Their comments reflect their impression that the service is mainly targeted at start-up and small groups [correctly]. They were not aware of the 1-1 support service being provided. See Appendix 4.

After the initial mailshot, the main uptake of activity was in 2006. Ongoing activity as groups progress through skill development and formal establishment means there is continued contact in subsequent years.

BCVS themselves acknowledge they have limited information about the potential 'market' of emerging small groups – there is no systematic means of obtaining such information, reliance is placed on networks and other core organisations. The drop in new contacts in 2007 (see Table 4) suggests that a new publicity drive may be needed for 2008 to ensure emerging new groups are aware of the

service. The newsletter is now sent to members only, so the current circulation is not an effective vehicle for attracting new groups.

If targeting emerging groups, B&ME and disability groups continues to be a strategic priority, it is recommended that an assessment is made of the potential need in the community and identifying means of contacting such groups. This could include working and gathering intelligence with Dorset Race Equality Council, the local authorities (Poole and Bournemouth), Poole CVS and Dorset Community Action. The existing B&ME and Disability groups may also have some intelligence of new organisations in the area.

Table 4: Breakdown of group contact by year and by service type
(Original target indicated in brackets)

	Initial mailshot	Total	2005	2006	2007
			Actual(target)	Actual(target)	Actual(target)
Total groups in contact *	270	139 (234)	32	111	101
New – ie not carried from previous year			32	93	14
Emerging / small groups		33 [^]			
Total disability groups	36		7	26	19
New contact disability groups		40(41)	7(5)	20(11)	13(25)
Total B&ME groups	11		4	7	10
New contact B&ME groups		14(14)	4(4)	5(5)	5(5)
Attended course			n/a	32 (30)	38 (35)
Attended BCVS Conference /AGM			68	26	26
1 to 1 meeting				38	34
Telephone enquiry				25	31
E-mail enquiry/letter				15	16
Trustee network				8	18
Newsletter x 4				121(300)	115(300)
<p>* The total group count includes 5 local infrastructure organisations: Bournemouth CAB, Poole CAB, BCVS, Poole CVS, Dorset REC. [^] Estimate provided by Advisor Source: Log Sheets from BCVS; Original Big Lottery Bid 2005.</p>					

The figures in Table 4 represent the number of groups in contact, not the total activity.

Without information on the size of the potential B&ME and disability/health Third Sector in Bournemouth, it is difficult to assess whether the project has been successful in targeting a significant proportion of B&ME and disability/health

groups, though it has met the expectations stated in the project funding bid. The number of B&ME and Disability groups that have been in contact meets original BCVS targets.

1 to 1 support, telephone and email enquiries

The Advisor provides opportunity for 1-1 support, often as the first line of support following an enquiry, which may be done at the BCVS premises, or on occasion visiting the client. The Advisor is most often contacted directly by phone or email. If the Advisor does not have the information to hand, interviewees report that he is usually able to obtain that information or refer the enquiry to an appropriate expert.

Table 5: Breakdown of uptake by support activity

2007 Data	
Groups receiving training	
Total	38
Disability	7
B&ME	3
Groups receiving 1-1 support	
Total	24
Disability	3
B&ME	4
Groups receiving telephone support not included in 1-1 above	
Total	8
Disability	4
B&ME	0
Total number of groups receiving any one or more of training, 1-1 support and telephone support	
Total	61
Disability	14
B&ME	6

This 'personal service' is the most commended part of the service, and mentioned most often. The interviews revealed a significant amount of personal interaction with the Advisor, either through phone calls or emails, and 1-1 meetings. The level of reported (perceived) interaction far exceeds that recorded on the BCVS log – either suggesting that the log under-reports activity; or that the interaction has had a significant impact on the clients and is memorable, giving rise to strong and positive feedback. If resources permit, this service is worth continuing.

These services are grouped as one, the Third Sector clients rarely differentiating between these different modes of personal service provision, though recognising

that different level of resource / time commitment must be involved. The Advisor reports spending 30% of time on all aspects of 1-1 support, including preparation and follow-up.

Unanimously, all interviewees, whether start-up groups or established branches of national charities, commend the approach, speed of response, thoroughness, overall quality and trustworthiness of information and the service provided by the Advisor. Follow-up, and referral to appropriate third parties, is also reported to work extremely well.

“He knows his stuff – usually off the top of his head!”

“He is very objective”

“Not like the bureaucrats in the town hall - make you feel like you are wasting their time”

A simple phone call or email provides the answer to important questions:

“Employment law is now so complex; it is good to be able to pick up the phone and ask David”

Feedback indicates the service for B&ME groups is sensitive and patient, which is also corroborated by feedback provided to other officers.

“The advisor uses immense diplomacy and tact, especially with B&ME and groups with language or communication difficulties”

“BCVS has good relationships with most of the minority ethnic voluntary sector groups in the Bournemouth area, particularly of Asian and Middle East origin.”

“He helped set up our Constitution – he is very patient – we did not realise a lot of things”

“Soon I will contact him for how to run an AGM”

Though there is a growing population of Polish and other eastern Europeans in the locality, there were no such groups in the interview cohort. This is likely to present a changing picture.

Data from the work record provided by the Advisor on the actual number of hours spent with a group indicate that B&ME groups averaged more than twice the time commitment than disability groups. People from B&ME groups have particular difficulty in accessing many specialist services (eg health) as a result of language barriers, lack of knowledge, and lack of confidence or trust^{xxiii}. The 1-1 support provides a way of reaching these communities in a way that most mainstream services do not provide. This not only helps them develop as a Third sector group, but also empowers them to gain confidence and knowledge to access other mainstream services. Provision of the 1-1 support from a mainstream CVS

also provides opportunity to promote social cohesion with different ethnic groups (and other Third Sector groups) through the process of “bridging”^{xxiv}.

Continued working with Dorset REC and other established B&ME groups in the area, eg through a B&ME Forum, may help target the support more effectively.

The larger and more established groups also appreciate the availability of the e-mail / telephone service which they feel free to access, and they do make occasional contact for advice, for example on employment issues.

The interviewees were also asked “What are the main sources of information or training you would use?” without prompting suggestions. All (19) mentioned BCVS as a primary source for the technical support information currently being provided.

New groups find the range of information provided useful and necessary. In particular they appear **not** to feel the need to go to any other sources of information, with word-of-mouth being the next common source, and web searches used by the more computer literate members of the groups.

Other sources mentioned include:

- Go to national parent organisation (3)
- Other kindred organisations (9)
- Poole CVS (10)
- Dorset Community Action (1)
- Borough Council (community support officer) (5)
- DEALS (1)
- Volunteering England (2)
- IDEA (1)
- Trustees (2)
- ACAS (1)
- Sure Start (1)

Training & Skills development

The training events organised by BCVS have been well received.

Eight courses were provided in 2007, with an average attendance of 11 and total attendance of approximately 100. None of the courses hold recognised accreditation.

Managing and delivering the training agenda takes up an estimated 7% of the Advisor’s time, not including research.

Of the groups interviewed, eight specifically reported their members had been on courses. The attendance figures show equal participation by groups whether purely local or of national affiliation. Key points mentioned include:

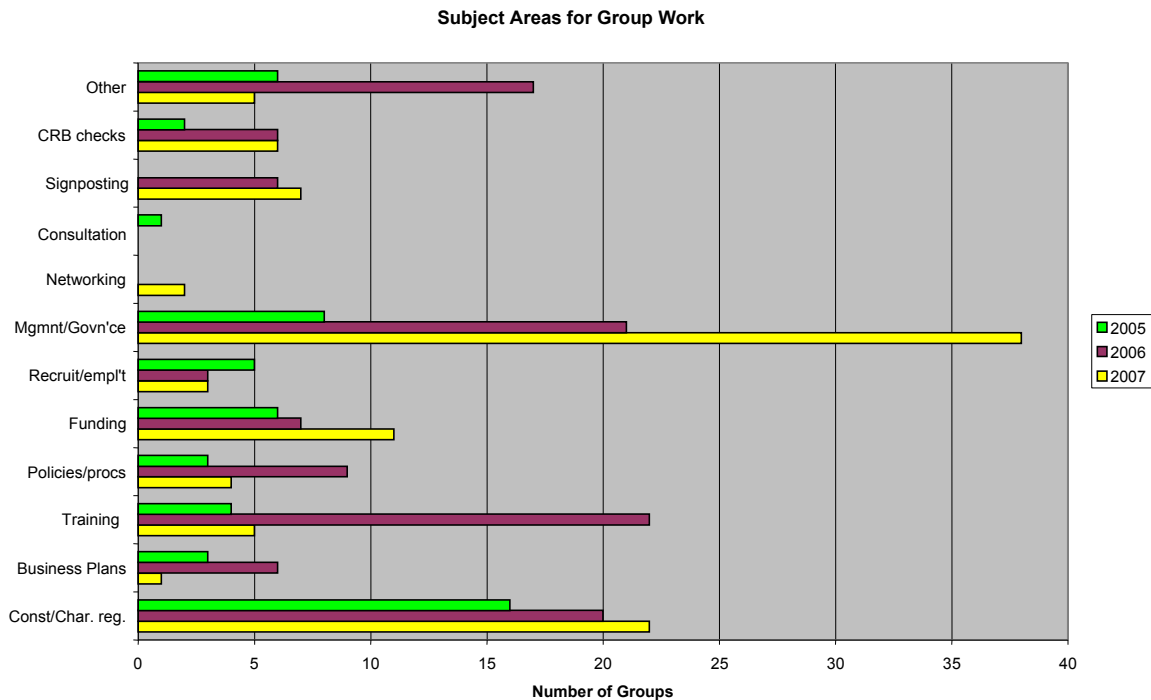
- Local training is important and appreciated, keeping travel costs and time down
- The training provided is of high quality
- The subject content is varied and useful for a variety of people in the Third sector groups
- Training events provide an opportunity to network.

The dilemma for BCVS is a familiar one – training is appreciated and courses provided on request, yet attendance can be very poor.

Both from interviews and from the data provided, the biggest demand for support is around governance, management and charity regulations, and more recently employment law. The Advice service clearly provides and meets a significant interest serving the needs of smaller start-up groups. This is a core service and contributes to the status and management quality of Third sector organisations and should be continued.

Feedback at course events should be sought systematically, particularly to elicit the effectiveness of the training and the role it serves in relation to 1-1 support and other functions such as networking, and the training programme modified if necessary.

Figure 2: Frequency of subject areas covered in training and 1-1 contact with groups.



A large part of funding advice is provided by the BBC Community Officer, otherwise this would also show much higher levels of activity in Figure 3.

Some get training support from their national parent organisation. Two interviewees reported also communicating with similar national B&ME groups, but local training is still considered useful and necessary as it is more relevant and accessible, reducing travel and time expenses. There may be opportunity to explore collaboration with national B&ME and other specialist groups.

Topics for training were suggested by the interviewees. Both systematic needs analysis and feedback should be sought to update the training programme:

- Constitution and set up
- Employment law
- Managing volunteers
- Laws related to working with children
- Registering as a charity
- Responsibilities of Trustees
- Negotiating with the Statutory sector
- Tendering
- Health and Safety, First Aid
- Mental Capacity Act
- Insurance
- Information confidentiality, Data Protection Act
- Web skills
- Computer skills
- Internet issues
- Public relations, writing press and publicity material.

As the Third Sector groups complete initial training, there is then a sense of wanting to catch up with the bigger picture, and learn more about the Third Sector in general. Interest was expressed in support for how to tender and provide services. The need for training and technical support in this area was mentioned by several interviewees, and this is now planned by BCVS with training scheduled in April and July 2008. Additional Third Sector development support in this area is also provided through other BCVS work and initiatives.

“The strategy part eludes me at the moment. We do need to have a feel for all of the issues, the bigger picture, what is happening in the voluntary sector”
“Local social services seem to find the slick presentations from the big nationals more impressive than our offering – yet we believe we can do the work and we are local and understand the community better and we are motivated”

Other training functions typically provided by Third Sector support organisations but not currently provided at BCVS:

- Needs Analysis for Project Work
- Project Management
- Quality Standards.

Newsletters

The newsletters are published quarterly, and contain a mix of sector news, material submitted by the local Third Sector, and advertisements for events. The newsletters are generally regarded as being informative. The interviews elicited a mixed response about the newsletters, most found them very useful. Others were less interested or perhaps did not receive them.

“The drip feed communication is really excellent”

“Newsletters? I guess we do get them, not something I have read”

When negative feedback was quizzed, interviewees felt they had other information sources which they used for the things they needed.

Three of the organisations interviewed had limited or no email/web access. They reported feeling concerned that they were not getting all the communications. The newsletter continues to be an important means of dissemination for those who do not have routine internet access.

The newsletter only goes to registered members, so it may be that an important target group is missing out altogether, though it does provide an incentive to join BCVS.

“We really need a better computer, it is hard to look at the website, it takes a long time”

“I am not on email – so I do not get newsletters and emails. Or at least it seems like communications have dried up. It used to be much more personal. I am worried we are missing out.” [interviewee without web or email access]

“It seems to have gone quiet.”

A comprehensive Welcome Pack has been developed for those interested in registering with BCVS, which includes leaflets about the services, resources and networks supported by BCVS. Details and examples are included in Appendix 1.

6.5 Outcomes – Networking

There were mixed messages about networking. Some felt more events should be provided, whilst others observed

“There is enough available if you put yourself out to go to them”

Some of the networking opportunities provided by BCVS are reported below.

Trustees network

The Trustee Network was launched in May 2006. It provides charity trustees with the opportunity to learn from each other, gain confidence, and make strategic links. Development of trustees is a key factor to the development of strong Third Sector groups.

The Network spans Poole and Bournemouth and meets quarterly (see leaflet in the publications Appendix 1), with 47 having attended one or more of the meetings in 2007. Subjects addressed at meetings include:

- Recruitment and selection of Trustees
- Financial controls
- Strategic planning
- Risk assessment
- Conflict of interest.

Some organisations, such as Help the Aged, are single national charities and their trustees can live anywhere in the country. Other charities, such as Age Concern, are independent charities but are part of a national federation, or 'umbrella body'. These people are welcome to attend the trustee network meetings and the occasional one or two from nationals have attended in the past. BCVS have taken additional steps, such as advertising in the local paper, to reach these, as well as the local charity trustees. One interviewee explained trustees might take more notice if contacted directly by BCVS rather than having the invitation passed on by staff – BCVS are doing this where possible.

“Hard to get them to take notice – it might help if they were contacted directly”

The response on the value of the network was mixed, with two groups enthusiastic about the network, and two groups suggesting it is still too small to be of value and with concerns about the value of the subject matter discussed.

“The membership is not that large, BCVS has not been able to get a huge number attending”

Many would like to come but cannot make the timing. Evenings will exclude some, daytime meetings will exclude others. Others are not aware of the network, or thought not to be interested.

“If local voluntary groups recognise they need professional trustees, they need to recognise these people are typically in full time employment”

Clearly it is difficult to have a time slot that fits everyone. BCVS and the Third Sector jointly need to foster a sense that these events are in fact an important part of the role of a trustee.

Where Trustees and other volunteers are also employees in other organisations, their volunteering activity should be respected by their employers, if volunteering is to be valued in the local community. This is an area of campaigning for the local infrastructure organisations to consider.

BCVS should actively review the Trustee network meeting themes in consultation with both the trustees and Third Sector staff, and actively promote the Network's value in personal as well as Third Sector development.

Themes for Trustee events were suggested:

- Sustainability of funding
- Risk and risk management
- Employment
- What should a good board meeting look like
- Difference between management and governance
- Updates in the sector,
- Trustee role,
- Governance frameworks,
- Regulatory framework,
- Working with the statutory sector.

Some constructive suggestions include:

- More senior trustee 'training'. Many organisations have matured and Trustees have graduated beyond the basic skills and knowledge required
- Opportunity for developing mentoring relationships between novice and experienced Trustees, a kind of buddy system
- Encourage use of the Trustee Skills Audit [tool]
- The results of the audit could be used to invite participating Trustees to contribute and present to the meetings about the expertise they have, or an issue or experience they might share for the benefit of the group.

Annual Conference (AGM in 2007) and Voluntary Sector Forum

An Annual Conference has been held in 2005 and 2006. This was held as part of the Annual General Meeting in 2007. The event is generally welcomed; the Third Sector sees this as a major opportunity for networking, and organisations have made long lasting contacts through the event.

Table 6 Conference Attendance

Conference attendance *	
2005	68
2006 (also held a separate Youth Conference)	29
2007 (AGM)	65

*This table shows the number of people table 4 refers to organisations.

BCVS prepared a comprehensive response to a consultative event which took place during the conference in 2006, which is available in Appendix 1. This is an excellent example of good practice, and BCVS should follow this up internally by reviewing whether all of the intended actions have in fact been achieved.

In general feedback is constructive and includes critical comment as well. Overall, there is clear agreement on the value of the event for networking. Topics covered include:

- Producing and working with a funding strategy
- Engaging the community
- Full cost recovery
- Social Enterprise
- Funding for small groups
- Negotiating contracts
- Lottery grants for social projects
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Recruiting volunteers.

BCVS has acted on many of the comments and suggestions from the feedback.

One group mentioned running a workshop at the conference and has also been asked to run a similar event for others who did not make the conference. This is good use of peer-peer support, provides personal development, and helps to develop Third Sector skills. BCVS should actively seek opportunities for enabling this to happen.

“I have been asked to run a workshop at the conference – about best practice - we include our service users – ex offenders – as volunteers. They will be there too”

Voluntary Sector Forum (VSF)

In late 2004 a Voluntary Sector Forum (VSF) was formed. It meets three times a year, led and chaired by the Chief Officer of BCVS (see publicity leaflet in Publications Appendix 1). This was mentioned by more than half the interviewees, and was seen as a positive development, very helpful in supporting networking. Though the VSF is seen as an integral part of the BCVS services, this is not part of the information and advice service and is not further reported here.

The Register of Contacts

The Register of Contacts was mentioned positively by more than half of the organisations, and was routinely used by them. This was seen as an important part of the information service.

“The directory is great. I am looking forward to the new one – we are still on the 2006 version”

BCVS could enhance the directory for internal use by profiling the Third Sector organisations in more detail, eg using the NAVCA tool 1^{xxv} or similar to get a consistent profile for groups registering with BCVS, allowing better targeting of services and assessment of potential need.

The web based version of the Register is routinely updated as changes are notified. The search functions are helpful. The cost and effort of updating paper based publication is recognised by the Third Sector, though an annual update might also provide the incentive to ensure details are up to date and correct, and an opportunity to collect new information and feedback as required.

E-forums

E-forums are open to all Third Sector groups in Bournemouth. These have effectively become part of the Advice Service. The networks are moderated by BCVS, i.e. communications go through a BCVS network administrator. E-forums and other information technology communications solutions offer potential for information sharing, for networking and enabling peer-peer support, and for rapid communications. BCVS should investigate options together with the Third Sector. Significant experience in this field exists in other CVS organisations. The majority of use is to share information between the Third Sector organisations (Table 7).

“The e-forums are great. Everyone can contribute”

Table 7. E-forum use in 2007 by topic

E Forums – topic / theme	Total communications	%
	346	
Local representative meetings	16	4
Networks	7	2
Training	55	16
Event details	98	29
Requests/ offers	27	8
Information sharing	89	25
Job vacancy details from group	50	14
Board vacancy	4	1

6.6 Outcomes - Status

For the 19 organisations interviewed, BCVS had a significant ‘impact’ on establishing status, transforming a potential idea into an organisation with a constitution, and then becoming a registered charity. Of the 19 interviewed:

- (8) have Registered or are actively planning to register, using the support of BCVS
“We are now working with [Advisor] to become a registered charity”
- (1) one single individual is ill and unable to proceed at present
“I have been too unwell to take the idea forward. [Advisor] helped to get it started. I must contact him again; this has been a good prompt to me”
- (2) organisations are new and considering, but say they will contact the Advisor for support when ready
- (2) are not registered, with no plans to do so (1 new, 1 established)
- (6) are long established registered charities.

Outcomes		BCVS Information and Advice Service target outcomes* over 2005-07
Status	Target	Achieved
Constitution	26 advised on operation within charity and company law	16 in 2005 20 in 2006 22 in 2007
Charitable status	40 achieved charitable status	Data not collected systematically. From interviews, 8 of 12 possible organisations have achieved this
* From Community Fund Grants Bid, 2004		

The interviewees expressed their pride and the usefulness of formalising their status, whether planned, in progress or completed. They recognised that a formal status gives them **stability and credibility** and better fundraising opportunities. This is important to their clients, other groups and to any chance of working with the statutory sector.

“We really need to become registered and then we can apply for a wider range of funding – and we will have a much better chance – we have put in a lottery funding bid for £185,000”

“I felt fragile when we were small, now we have a chance of working with the bigger organisations”

“Being [name of charity] creates a presence”

BCVS could consider some means of celebrating such milestones, for example by awards at an annual conference or AGM. Encouraging celebration of such achievements naturally provides incentive for evaluation activity and the opportunity to promote evaluation as good practice.

Notably, one interviewee observed that perhaps the Third Sector itself was not good at providing feedback to BCVS in terms of the success achieved by the groups that had been helped by BCVS. Encouragement and facilitation of this type of feedback – outcomes and impact – should become part of BCVS routine monitoring.

6.7 Outcomes - Operational Management and Governance

An important outcome for the Third Sector from information and advice is in improved internal working practices and policies.

Table 8 BCVS Outcome Targets

Outcomes	BCVS Information and Advice Service target outcomes* over 2005-07	
	Target	Actual
Management and Governance		Groups accessing information or training
Business plans		10 in total
Management and Governance	38 with improved governance	8 in 2005 21 in 2006 28 in 2007
Policies and Procedures	32 improved policies and procedures (eg data protection, health and safety, equal opportunities)	15 in total*
Recruitment and employment	44 improved employment practice	11 in total
Financial stability	40 with access to improved funding	24 in total
	* From Community Fund Grants Bid, 2004	

*Model policies are available on the website therefore additional groups may benefit from these without contact with staff members.

BCVS' original targets (Table 8) were ambitious in terms of number of groups reached and in being very specific about the outcome areas. Though the review cannot provide systematic information about outcomes for all groups, the interviews reveal that all operational groups which had worked with the Advice Service indicated they had some kind of management structure, and established policies and procedures. Most had at least one paid member of staff, and four or more regular volunteers, and had a strong sense and awareness of the importance of proper management, policies and procedures.

Model policies and procedures are available on the BCVS website. There is now an increasing need to meet specific standards and statutory requirements and the BCVS provision is essential for these smaller Third Sector groups:

*“Working with children involves so many different requirements”
“Employment law is so complex these days”*

Some groups had very specific requirements, usually to do with children or vulnerable adults, and had well established policies in these areas. Many interviewees expressed the need for more help in employment law and relevant human resources policies and procedures. The e-forum was mentioned as a useful way of sharing policies. Policies and procedures mentioned as being needed or having been implemented include:

- Vulnerable adults
- Child welfare
- Laws related to working with children
- Employment and recruitment
- Health and safety
- First aid
- Food hygiene
- Disaster recovery
- Duties of trustees
- Risk management
- Mental Capacity Act
- Data Protection Act
- Financial accountability
- Fire safety.

The trustee skill audit tool provided by BCVS was mentioned by four organisations enabling them to identify gaps in their Board, and to develop trustees further. Recruitment of ‘good’ trustees was noted as a problem by several groups, whether new or established.

In practice, the issues highlighted in relation to trustees actually represent the issues in relation to governance functions, and are an important component of Third Sector viability and sustainability. There may be scope in developing more trustee and senior management training and support, as well as raising the profile of this important function.

6.8 Impact – Service delivery and collaboration

BCVS had set no specific targets for the impacts of the advice service. Impact - long term sustainable change - is difficult to measure and attribute to any single intervention. It is often unpredictable, being highly dependent on the context. ^{xxvi}

In this report the impact is represented through the voice of the Third Sector in quotes from the interviews.

“Having an idea is not enough...”

From recognising a simple need and having an idea about how to help meet this, the one passionate individual sought the support of BCVS and the idea has grown into a thriving group of 10+ active volunteers. They now have a constitution, organise regular weekly sessions to support their client group, have a programme of events, arrange outings, are still growing, starting to advertise, and planning to become a registered charity.

“Last year was the first time, only one day per week to start with, it was hard to take on any major project. We used the church, maximum of 12 could come: we coped. Now we have a structured programme, a team of volunteers – four of us and others help out too. We have started new projects. We support each other; some mums are single and trying to get work, so now we support each other and not just the children; for example we have been practicing what job interviews feel like, we teach other where some have already been through the experience”

The community has gained from the establishment of a new child care support service for disadvantaged children. The service now actively invites clients and volunteers from B&ME groups met through BCVS events. A positive side effect is reduced social isolation for the mothers whose children participate; in turn mothers often become volunteers.

Each of the smaller groups that have grown over the past two or three years has a proud story to tell. As growing organisations, the services they provide to users have increased and have changed from direct support to enablement of the client group.

New projects or services have been started and capacity to innovate as well as sustain existing services has developed.

New client groups have been engaged: for example a resident action group moved from providing a service to children, to services for disabled and older people, and then for younger people. Another group has been able to invite more clients from B&ME groups which they met at a networking event.

A disabilities support group has grown to become a large organisation providing information, advice, training and consultancy services, and has ambitious plans for the future:

"We have grown from small beginnings in 1998 to now employing 10 staff, 20 volunteers, and have a turnover of £300,000. We started initially just by providing information and advice to people with disabilities. In 2005 we started providing the direct payment support service – we also provide training and consultancy services. Accommodation and funding are still a real problem all the time. We've gone a long way along thinking about ambitious plans to support independent living for disabled people, and intend to become a stronger lobbying force for the sector."

Table 8 below lists a number of Third Sector accounts of the impact they are making for their service users. This impact will be at least partly attributable to the advice service, without which the organisations would not have had the capacity to expand and make the links to enable this level of service delivery.

Table 9 Development of service delivery in the Third sector

<i>"Our volunteers are 'graduates' from the playground. They come back when they are older. Some do not have the confidence to get jobs – this is a way into employment."</i>	Enabling service users
<i>"Our 'graduates' come back and become mentors [substance misuse]"</i>	Enabling service users
<i>"We hold workshops twice a week [victims of domestic violence]; now we can put into place other things to benefit members, we pass on information so they too become empowered. We have over 50 members, and now have a chance of working with the bigger organisations. We would like to make contact with the police and others, build networks"</i>	Enabling service users Increasing volunteering Potential for active work with Statutory sector
<i>"When you are small it feels pretty fragile; we now have two paid part time staff and are looking to employ an administrator. We are growing!"</i>	Expanding group
<i>"We are expanding, and have signposted people to jobs [faith group]."</i>	Expanding group Enabling service users Increasing volunteering
<i>"We have volunteers who work with the children and now have paid staff - a centre manager, deputy, and four part-timers."</i>	Expanding group

6.9 Impact - Statutory Sector and other collaborative relationships

Building relationships with the Statutory Sector is now an area where many groups recognise they need to develop. This is being addressed in the VSF meetings. The need for technical support in terms of training and sample

documentation was mentioned by several interviewees, and such training is now planned by BCVS for April 2008 and July 2008.

Specific comments relate to information on the implications of recent changes in the Third Sector, and on how to engage with the Statutory sector, and on tendering.

“We need to get access to these people in the council. They know we exist. We have no way of reaching them – I haven’t got the status”

“They [the council] never make contact with us. It is always the other way around – we invite the Council but they never turn up. The government is telling the councils to provide these services – you would think they would bite our fingers off to support what we do”

“I am not sure how we would develop alliances with the council”

“Bournemouth Borough Council have been very helpful, but only because we have asked and nagged”.

“If we had better liaison with social workers, we might get a better mix [of clients, i.e. the more socially isolated]”

A Black and Minority Ethnic group that has grown and developed strong networks

“We started in 2003, to teach Farsi and Iranian culture, reading and writing for Iranian children. The Iranian Community is about 800 people here – or more – we haven’t got an exact count. We then worked with older people and women as well, to help them not be isolated, and to help women get to work. We give them confidence and information. We now work with many other organisations, as a network, like Age Concern and the Iranian community in London. Recently we held a multicultural day, to integrate with all communities, English society and see all communities working together. This was advertised in the Echo, and we got help with language and sentences for this. We are now planning an International Women’s day.”

Amongst the smaller and emerging groups, B&ME groups have been a focus for BCVS. People from B&ME groups have particular difficulty in accessing specialist services partly because of language or culture barriers, but also through not knowing what is available. Typically they require a higher level of interaction and 1-1 support than other groups of equivalent size or maturity. The evidence from the interviews suggests that this investment has not only resulted in establishing the organisation, but also empowered the groups to connect with other organisations and ethnic groups.

Several organisations do report active collaboration with the statutory sector; all see this as an important goal for their sustainability and growth. Comments from the Borough Council reflect how the Third Sector can be a positive asset for the

Statutory Sector: there is an opportunity for the Statutory Sector to learn from the Third Sector. Secondments and work placements between the sectors have been suggested as ways of learning and enabling collaboration, but these are currently barred because of difficulties in resolving personnel and employment issues. An unfortunate sense of the lack of equality between the Third Sector and Statutory Sector remains within Local Authorities.

BCVS should also seek feedback from funders, who see many applications which are weak or incomplete, and an exchange with the BCVS might allow better targeting and support for these groups.

Table 10 Development of collaborative relationships

<i>"We give talks in the community, we do a college talk on volunteering"</i>	Collaboration outside Third sector
<i>"We already work with other groups in the creative work we do with clients; but we want to develop as a signposting organisation – be better at providing information. We really need to collaborate with other groups, to develop training opportunities, help people move onto college or work [substance misuse support]"</i>	Collaboration outside Third sector
<i>"At the Trustees network I met three ladies who will be very helpful – none of them knew about us – so now I can reach these people – I do not want to advertise in the Echo, but we do want to reach children who have a need because of socio-economic or physical issues, as well as B&ME groups"</i>	Collaboration within Third sector
<i>"We have an service level agreement with the council, and we get a grant towards salaries"</i>	Collaboration outside Third Sector Service provision with Statutory Sector
<i>"We have a network and working group dealing with the Statutory Sector, just so we can match what their expectations are vs what we provide. "</i>	Collaboration outside Third Sector
<i>"We have volunteers supporting an entry to employment programme"</i>	Enabling service users Collaboration outside Third Sector
<i>"We too got involved in the Afro-Caribbean carnival in Bournemouth. It was a great event and we had fun"</i>	Collaboration within Third Sector

6.10 Impact – community development and social inclusion

The interviews did not systematically explore the wider community and societal impact, though anecdotally there is some evidence of this. However, impact at this level is typically a result of a number of interventions and changes which develop the Third Sector and the wider community. Further research would be required to produce good quality case studies or any quantitative analysis. The concluding account below is indicative of the potential of the Third Sector in producing positive changes in the community, particularly for ‘social roles’ and ‘relationships’, see Table 11.

Table 11. Indicators of community development and social inclusion

Demographics	Safety	Housing	Income	Education attainment	Age	Ethnicity	Disability Physical & Mental Health
Social Roles	Employment	Education	Volunteering	Leisure Exercise	Faith communities	Neighbours	Arts & culture
Relationships/ Psychological	Family networks	Social Networks	Friends and acquaintances	Support and contribution	Self esteem	Sense of affiliation	Attitude toward excluded people

Source: Indicators of Strong Communities ^{xxvii}

This report concludes with the account of a residents’ association that started out in April 2006 as a group of five neighbours who wanted to create a safe play area for the children. They achieved their play area and quite a bit more. What started out as a small project has grown into a thriving community group. Many of the impacts are synonymous with reducing social isolation and strong community development, for example:

- in improving physical amenities and safety
- developing social roles such as increased volunteering, employment, opportunities for leisure activities and exercise, working with neighbours and creative development
- and in relationships, creating new social networks, self esteem and a sense of affiliation.

This group, which used the Advice Service from an early stage in the development of their idea, has a good reputation, and is held up as an exemplar by Bournemouth Borough Council, the councillors, and the police:

“There are rails now around the green to provide safety for the children...

We are finally working with the council. We managed to get the kerbs changed so disabled people had better access to the common.

We got funding for cleaning up the scrub land here, and have turned this into a rookery. Parks and Countryside wanted to get involved, and upped the bid and added their contribution. It used to be dark and full of rubbish including used needles and didn't feel safe; it is clean now, people can walk through it, brownies clubs and others can use it now. We had an open day there with over 140 survey forms filled out. There are owl boxes, plants to attract birds and butterflies.

I have a job at the council now, that was really just because we started this group and I got to know people and now I can help others. The secretary of the group started using email for the first time in her life – now she wants to do a web site course.

We put on a variety show; we run regular luncheon clubs for older people and various visits, a Friday evening youth club with 50 on the books and 30 turning up regularly, we hire a gym at the community centre for them, the kids feel safe here from bullying.

We have put in for lottery funding of £185,000. We send out 600-700 newsletters, more and more people come along to different events”



7. Conclusions and recommendations

Aim: To respond to the needs of the voluntary sector on both an individual and collective level, with the aim of building the skills and capacity of the voluntary and community sector in the Bournemouth area.

Conclusions

The thrust of the Information and Advice Service has been on developing internal capacity and capability in the local Third Sector. The service has provided an ordered approach to development, with an attention to detail that brings the Third Sector viability and sustainability. Enhancing the drive, passion and enthusiasm of the Third Sector, BCVS support shares and demonstrates the same sense of commitment and dedication to the sector and its potential.

The smaller grass-roots voluntary organisations are the target audience for the Information and Advice Service. These groups provide the opportunity for local people to become involved in the design and delivery of projects tackling local issues and aspirations. They are well placed to facilitate social inclusion and enhance positive community development, and there is evidence of this from the interviews, particularly for B&ME groups. In addition, these smaller groups do not have the infrastructure and support to which many larger Third Sector organisations have access, often at national level, nor the funding to pay for technical or legal support.

Amongst the smaller and emerging groups, B&ME groups have been a focus for BCVS. People from B&ME groups have particular difficulty in accessing specialist services partly because of language or culture barriers, but also through not knowing what is available. They typically require a higher level of interaction and 1-1 support than other groups of equivalent size or maturity. The evidence from the interviews suggests that this investment has not only resulted in establishing fledging groups, but also empowered the groups to connect with other organisations and ethnic groups.

The study found that virtually all who have engaged with the service commended it for its quality, responsiveness, thoroughness and friendliness.

The service has directly supported the development of the local Third Sector in improving the quality of their organisational arrangements and supported their development needs, mainly by increasing management and individual capacity and by creating a credible profile to the outside world.

The service has

- been actively used by 139 groups over 2005-07, of which over 28% are disability groups, and 10% B&ME groups

- helped organisations on the road to registered charitable status
- had a positive impact on most groups that have participated, on their ability to operate autonomously, achieve financial stability and develop services for their client groups
- developed good relations with many minority ethnic groups.

The 1-1 support has been a critical factor in the impact of the service, as it provides an immediate fit between the needs of the group and the intervention and advice provided. This provides good depth of support for the organisations that have participated.

It has not been possible to assess the spread of impact. The Third Sector groups reached to date are probably a relatively small percentage of the overall Third Sector population. The Community Development Officer suggests up to 50 new individuals or organisations are in contact per month regarding funding, however these are mostly causal enquiries, and include a large number of individuals with ideas which may not be well formulated or who are not committed. Referrals from BBC to the Information and Advice Service tend to self-filter down to those who are ready, serious about their ideas and plans.

A systematic and structured understanding of the nature and needs of the local Third Sector and how this is changing will continue to be a challenge for B CVS and other local infrastructure organisations. This will help inform whether the breadth of Third Sector engagement supports strategic Third Sector development priorities in the area, and what practical steps can be taken to extend support to a wider audience.

What if the Information and Advice Service were to be stopped?

There is a sense that if the service were to be stopped, not only would Third Sector organisations progress much more slowly; several would not be able to progress at all. Time is often of the essence in keeping momentum going, and seeing positive results in organisational development are important milestones. A view from the Community Development Officer:

“Probably most of these organisations would not have done it. The advice service provides sustainability, several groups survive only because of the Advisor’s support”

For the groups interviewed, the advice function provides them with the opportunity of active engagement through the 1-1 support and training, which has been crucial. In contrast, merely providing information is a passive one-way activity, and is necessary but not sufficient.

Nor is it sufficient to provide groups with support just to obtain funding - they also need the skills and capacity to know how to manage this funding and organise themselves. Whether there is an ongoing dependency on the service is not

clear, it is certainly something the groups appreciate and take advantage of, but the degree to which help is sought, say after achieving registered charitable status, appears to be far less.

Strengths of the Advice Service

- ❖ Individual support (via 1-1 meetings, email or telephone) is highly valued and produces results
- ❖ Credibility and trustworthiness of information is excellent
- ❖ Personal knowledge and competency of Advisor
- ❖ Availability and access to 1-1 is good via email and telephone
- ❖ Speed of response is excellent
- ❖ Content of support and training events well designed for start-up organisations, and reflects the content suggested by NAVCA for community development
- ❖ The Register of Contacts (directory of local services) is appreciated and used by the Third Sector in the area
- ❖ The pragmatic approach to dual mode delivery is appreciated (ie electronic and paper/personal), and likely needs to be continued as some still do not have access to web and email
- ❖ BCVS has good relationships with many of the minority ethnic voluntary sector groups in the Bournemouth area, particularly of Asian and Middle East origin
- ❖ The current monitoring logs and data maintained by the Advisor on the use of the service are excellent and have supported this review.

Depth of impact

- ❖ Good outcomes and impact in those groups with whom engagement has been achieved
- ❖ Good results especially in the start-up groups, the community groups, and also with B&ME groups, with extensive engagement with several minority ethnic groups.

Recommendations

1. Continue the service

Continue provision of the Information and Advice Service and develop a sustainable funding strategy for this service. All aspects of the current service are appreciated by the Third Sector clients, with 1-1 being most appreciated, and likely to be the most effective with the B&ME groups and other marginalised groups.

Increase coverage of Sector depending on findings from market research. However, to sustain this service if awareness and hence demand is extended across the Sector, BCVS should consider: increasing resources directly; more effective use of cascading within the Third Sector and collaboration with other infrastructure organisations; continue improving and extending web and other Computer and Communication technologies.

2. Market research and evaluation

Continue to obtain more intelligence about the size and nature of the Third Sector community in Bournemouth, their needs and how these are changing over time, to inform the work of the Information and Advice Project.

BCVS is in the second year of a three year annual 'State of the Sector Survey' funded under the Local Area Agreement, and working with other local infrastructure organisations.

Continue and enhance routine efforts to get feedback at events, and after enquiries, intervention, training, or referral, to allow more effective design and targeting of services, and assessment of outcomes and impact, for example:

- *Use of an enquiries monitoring form, plus check on follow-up made*

The Third Sector itself recognises that they are not good at giving feedback at their own initiative.

"We [the Third Sector] are not very good at telling him what we achieve after he has helped us. Maybe giving feedback could be made easier somehow"

3. Communications and Marketing

Consider how to extend awareness and coverage of this capacity building service. If targeting emerging groups, B&ME and disability groups, it may be helpful to work more closely with Health, Dorset REC and other Statutory Sector organisations to identify best means of reaching these organisations. BCVS do already employ approaches to engage these groups in the first place, for example in offering to help with a specific problem – and once engaged, the groups tend to return for further support and advice as needed.

Consider targeted marketing of the service to increase awareness amongst those already registered, and increase numbers attending training and other events to improve the effectiveness of these activities.

Consider the image of BCVS as a whole: there is a perception BCVS is Boscombe focused, not least because of its location. This image may be of less consequence for the Information and Advice Service, as much of this is conducted through email and telephone, and using a variety of venues. However, the perceptions of BCVS as a whole do reflect on the Information and Advice Service.

4. Service enhancements

Continue to develop the Trustees Network and recruitment and development of Trustees, eg through mentoring, and use of the Trustee Skills audit tool. BCVS recognise the difficulty for the Third Sector in getting trustees with the time and skills required.

Advertise events and training as far in advance as possible, ideally on an annual calendar.

Consider opportunities for using peer to peer support within the Third Sector, sharing their specialist knowledge through open days or training; eg disability issues, child protection, B&ME issues. There may also be opportunities in sharing facilities.

Consider physical availability and accessibility issues: although the Advice and Information Service was highly commended for its responsiveness and accessibility, comments were made about the less forthcoming physical accessibility of BCVS as a whole. These perceptions inevitably reflect on the Information and Advice Service.

5. Ways of working and collaboration with other infrastructure organisations

Continue to work with Poole CVS and Dorset Race Equality Council to identify areas where resources can be usefully combined, potentially developing areas of expertise.

Appendix 1 Documentation from Bournemouth CVS

BCVS Newsletters x4, 2007

Contact Logs – Excel Spreadsheets for 2005, 2006, 2007.

Advisor work time analysis

Network Usage Statistics 2007

BCVS database of voluntary sector organisations

Publicity material / welcome pack including: Advice Leaflet; Contacts Leaflet; Registration information; Trustee Network; Resources; Voluntary Sector Forum; Children and Young People's Forum; Volunteer Centre; Volunteer Coordinators' Network; Volunt Youth Project; Representation; Job Vacancies.

Feedback from Conferences 2005 & 2006; AGM 2007

website: www.bournemouthcvs.org.uk

Appendix 2 NAVCA Performance Standards

Reproduced from the NAVCA performance standards with minor changes in wording^{xxviii}

The Information and Advice Service supports BCVS in achieving Standard 2, and to some extent Standard 3. BCVS has in fact initiated a number of activities over the course of the past four years which would support work in the area of Standard 3, though these have not specifically been included in the remit of this review.

The table below provides a brief summary of the areas of work that support Standard 2, and recommendations for BCVS from the review. Areas of evidence are cross referenced in Table 11.

Table 12 BCVS and NAVCA Standard 2 & 3

Standard 2	The organisation assists local voluntary and community organisations to function more effectively and deliver quality services to their users, members or constituents.
Example Outputs	Produces newsletters; maintains a Register of VCO organisations; provides regulatory updates and information about admin, management and governance; signposts; advises on funding; consults with membership on needs;
BCVS Provides	<p>Quarterly newsletter, website, and directory of local voluntary and community organisations and the services they provide.</p> <p>Newsletter are sent quarterly updating the local registered Third Sector population of developments in the field, regulatory matters, local news and events.</p> <p>BCVS provides 1-1 development support through meetings, emails and telephone. BCVS also provides training, events, signposting, advice on funding, and signpost to more the more specific funding support provided locally; other signposting provided via 1-1 group, website and newsletter.</p> <p>Training – includes foundation subject areas, information about charity admin and regulations, policies and procedures.</p> <p>Training events include a feedback form to assess any unmet needs. Some collaboration with other training providers is evident.</p> <p>Consultation through members newsletter, training and event feedback, and the recently formed Voluntary Sector Forum</p>
Recommendations	<p>Ensure newsletters include all updates, which may have been sent electronically to some groups, or appear on the website.</p> <p>Enhance the directory for internal use by profiling the Third Sector organisations in more detail, allowing better targeting of services and assessment of potential need.</p> <p>Enhance the directory for external use by regular updates both on web and paper media. The directory could include further information about the groups subject to confidentiality concerns.</p>

Example Outcomes	VCO has awareness of CVS and other infrastructure services; increased skills and knowledge; knowledge of local and national developments; improved access to funding; improved performance and operational management; diversity of groups represents community.
BCVS provides	<p>The 1-1 group work has been the critical factor in the positive impact of the project. This has allowed a depth of support that has enabled the Third sector groups to develop significantly, to have increased skills and knowledge, and improve the quality of their organisational arrangements.</p> <p>Of concern for BCVS is to establish whether the service is reaching most of the groups with these needs, and whether current resources and ways of working would allow the service to support a much larger number of organisations.</p> <p>Options may include: more effective use of training e-networks, web site, other statutory sector or Third Sector information and advice groups, and other networks, and of training, so that the Third Sector cascades and shares the support.</p>
Recommendation	<p>A proportion of training should provide accreditation, or lead to accredited training. Collect training feedback and actively act on this. Engage with other training provider</p> <p>Routine analysis of feedback about identified needs through various mechanisms, with a specific event targeted to discuss sector needs.</p> <p>Ongoing publicity to those organisations not registered about benefits of the BCVS and the opportunity to identify needs.</p>
Standard 3	The organisation facilitates effective communication or networking and collaboration amongst local voluntary and community groups. Representation and Strategic Partnership work
Example Outputs	Information on models of partnership working; conferences and network forums; means for inter-group communications in newsletter and web spaces; involvement in community networks promoting CVS
BCVS provides	<p>No evidence emerged on information on models of working from the interviews, and information was not sought from BCVS on this.</p> <p>Networking groups have been formed. These include a Trustee Network, Annual Conference, subject based forum meetings, and an e-forum and a Voluntary Sector Forum.</p> <p>No evidence was sought on BCVS involvement in other community networks, nor was any apparent from the interviews.</p>
Recommendation	<p>Develop and promote e-forum as a member-member forum</p> <p>There appears to be further potential in networking activities, and getting like-minded Third Sector groups to be aware of each other.</p>
Example Outcome	Better communications, collaborative working, better use of resources for VCO and LIO
BCVS provides	Each networking event has had a positive impact for communication and collaboration between the Third Sector groups. In many instances this has resulted in sustainable co-operation.

Table 13 Evidence for NAVCA Standard 2 & 3

	Indicator	Evidence
Improved quality	Awareness of CVS services; Feedback Range of services provided; Skills of Third Sector	See Outcomes for awareness of service, range of service and means of delivery. Recent development of web based services encouraging. There remains a need to provide paper based information
Increased capacity within Third sector	Proportion of organisations obtaining legal status	50% of new groups achieved Registered Status 50% considering or planning to do so 4 reported they are expanding
Improved skills and knowledge in Third Sector	Skills of Third Sector; Number of groups planning ahead, including expansion, employing staff, sustainability,	100% of interviewees reported increased knowledge 20/23 were aware of most services. See Outcomes and Impact section for evidence
Increased opportunities for Networking within the Third Sector in Bournemouth, and for sharing good practice and resources.	Number of networking activities and participation rate. Contribution from Third Sector to activities	Trustee Network – quarterly, attendance increasing. Sharing good practice group – recently started Voluntary Sector forum E forums Access to building by appointment only – several comments on this, with preference expressed for the previous ‘drop-in’ facility. This continues to be a resource issue.
Improved networks between Third Sector and Stat Sector		Not quantified. Newsletters provide some information. More updates were suggested by approx 25% of those interviewed. See Outcomes- Networking, and Impact for evidence. Some collaboration taking place, but the market is in early development.

Appendix 3 Organisation profiles

Profile of 38 Third sector groups participating in the Information and Advice Service 2007 and eligible for interview

38	Participation in the advice service, contacted by letter
1	Currently non-operational groups (Teddy's Learning Centre closed for refurbishment)
1	Artemis Foundation, in process of setting up a charity
1	Life Housing, no contact
35	Groups included for potential interview
9	Linked to national organisations
35	Profile of the groups
4	Infrastructure linked groups (Community Mediation, Community Foundation, Millennium Volunteers, North Bournemouth Crime Prevention Panel)
1	An author
9	B&ME
10	Disability, health, older people
1	Faith
8	Community
1	Marriage guidance
1	Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transexual Youth Group

Organisations interviewed: at least one contact with Advice Service	Registered charity	Spiritual Faith	Community	Disability Health	B&ME
1. Age Concern Bournemouth	Yes			Y	
2. Blend	No				Y
3. Bournemouth Community Church	Yes	Y			
4. Body Positive	Yes			Y	
5. Bournemouth Table Tennis Association	Yes		Y		
6. Butterfly Foundation	Yes		Y		
7. Cherry Tree Nursery	Yes			Y	
8. Community Development Foundation	Yes				
9. Disability Wessex	Yes			Y	
10. Dorset Bengali Association	Not ready				Y
11. Dorset MIND	Yes			Y	
12. Dorset REC	Yes				Y
13. Eczema Support Group	Planning			Y	
14. Fernheath Play Association	Yes		Y		
15. Help the Aged	Yes			Y	
16. Iranian & Farsi Association	Yes				Y
17. Millenium Volunteers	Yes		Y		
18. NAPRA	Planning		Y		
19. Vita Nova	Yes			Y	
Organisations: no contact with Advice service					
20. Charminster community youth project	No	Y	Y		
21. NACRO services, Wallisdown Rd	Yes		Y		
22. Victim Support Dorset	Yes		Y		
23. Alzheimers Society	n/a			Y	
Infrastructure organisations					
24. Bournemouth Borough Council Safer Stronger Communities	n/a				
25. Poole CVS	Yes				
26. BCVS	Yes				

Appendix 4 Additional Observations

4a Groups that had not actively engaged with BCVS

Some of the bigger Third Sector groups observed that BCVS had little to offer them – this was not in criticism, but merely to note that the work of the BCVS and in particular the Information and Advice Service is designed to target and support small and new organisations.

One reported they have their own working group for dealing with the Statutory Sector, and have been involved in joint meetings with Poole and Bournemouth regarding joint working across Poole and Bournemouth and the Statutory Sector.

However, many linked with national charities found the locally provided information relevant and distinct from that provided through their parent body. Many said they would use the training, and would appreciate the opportunity to link to local groups.

Of the smaller groups, one preferred to use Poole CVS for support largely for historical reasons, and one was no longer actively using BCVS because their objectives were more aligned with another infrastructure support organisation, Sport England.

None of these comments suggest any fundamental issue with BCVS. Two considerations arise:

1. BCVS may wish to consider rekindling more active engagement of mature Third Sector organisations to facilitate engagement and collaboration across the spectrum of Third Sector groups and with the Statutory Sector
2. BCVS could actively link with other Third Sector local infrastructure organisations to consider potential areas for collaboration and pooling resources, to best support the Third Sector – this approach is already established by BCVS with respect to training and Capacity Builders.

4b Third sector Information and Advice providers

Several of the groups are also information and advice providers themselves, to their own client groups and to other Third Sector and mainstream groups about their specialist knowledge and services.

This does not overlap with the type of information and advice provided by BCVS, but

When searching the online register for Third Sector organisations of the 'information category', a list of some 120 organisations is generated. A network of local advice organisations is apparently in place, but there may be further opportunity to consider if BCVS has a role to help:

- provide practical tools to be made available to local advice services,
- -increase cross advice network resources, eg supply of immigration advice, language services, policies and procedures
- support advice services
- use a participative approach, including wherever possible the Third Sector groups in developing and designing the current and new services.

Appendix 5 Key facts Bournemouth^{xxix}

Population

- Size – 17.83 sq miles (46.15 sq km)
- Population from Census 2001 is 163,444 and is projected to reach almost 180,000 by 2021
- Over 14,500 students attended Bournemouth University in 2004/05 - (65.4% over 21 years of age)
- Total of 40 schools with over 21,000 pupils
- Just over 10,100 blue badges (personal and institution) issued in Bournemouth in 2004/2005.
- Unemployment rate for July 2006 was 2.0%

Environment

- 7 miles of curved sandy beaches with three European Blue Flags and six Seaside Awards
- 2000 acres (800 hectares) of parks and gardens with eight gardens holding the Green Flag Award (recognising environmental protection, community use and safety & cleanliness)
- Civic Trust Awards (2001): Bournemouth was awarded two awards, for the conversion of The Square from a roundabout to a Civic space and for transforming Knyveton Gardens to a sensory garden for those with disabilities
- 1,227 new dwellings constructed 2005/06
- Bournemouth Airport: over 465,000 passengers (in 2003) to 36 destinations including USA, Europe and Channel Islands and over 10,000 tonnes of freight
- 95 minutes rail journey to London Waterloo
- Fast Ferry from Poole to France (Cherbourg) or Channel Islands

Appendix 6 Interview questions

The proforma below represents the types of questions that were asked and the areas covered. Not all questions were asked in all interviews; the interviews were in practice far less structured than the proforma suggests.

Introduction

As you probably are aware, I am calling today to have a discussion with you about your views and opinions on what you know of the work of the Bournemouth CVS, especially for information and support such as training or networking.

You have been selected as someone who is likely to provide views and comment!! Consider it as an opportunity to feedback !

First – a bit about you and your organisation

What does your charity do ? Target groups ? How many actual and potential "clients"
Minority group?
How did it get established / When was it established ?
How big is it ? Staff, volunteers, number of establishments, spread
How is it funded ? How is it managed, Trustees ?

And about Bth CVS

How did you find out about BCVS information & advice ?
Why did you go to Bth CVS? what problem did you have, / what attracted you ?
Is there anyone else who you do / would /could go to for information /training/ advice?
What sort of information and advice has been useful / what would be useful?
<p><i>Aide memoire:</i> <i>Charity regs; Business plans; Data protection; Policies procedures</i> <i>Funding; Recruitment and employment; Management and governance</i></p> <p><i>Networking; Consultation; Signposting ; CRB checks</i> <i>Other</i></p>

How is this provided – how would expect or like it to be provided

How is information / advice provided Eg Timing, frequency, internet, telephone email ?
What was good / bad about it
In particular, any comments on 1-1 meetings Telephone enquiry service

<p>Email enquiry service Training courses Trustees network Bcvs conference Letter enquiry service</p>
<p><i>Aide memoire:</i> <i>Note, BCVS does not provide advice on funding – these are referred to BBC, namely Gary Bentham and colleagues.</i></p>
<p>Is there any ongoing information you receive or access from them Eg feedback, newsletters, website etc</p>
<p>Have/could other people, experiences etc have been brought in helpfully?</p>
<p>What opportunities are there for information exchange? [networking] with Bth CVS, or other orgs?</p>
<p>Technologies: have ICT technologies been provided and used optimally</p>
<p>Accreditation: is the information trusted, trustworthy, and how and why</p>
<p>Have local needs for advice been assessed? What capacity building is needed in the locality?</p>

Outcome and Impact

<p>Investigate in telephone interviews their current status, and whether the information and advice service has had (or will have) an impact in for example these areas.</p> <p>Has the information / training / advice assisted organisations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve local organisational capacity, financial stability Improve infrastructure Improve ability to get funding Become sustainable Improve local organisational arrangements Make local contacts Develop partnerships Cascade skills, knowledge Uplift quality of advice and work of local organisations to their constituents and clients Reach excluded groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assert their rights, influence local policy Operate as equal partners with statutory orgs Make demonstrable impacts in community development and planning <p>Other...</p>

Appendix 7 Invitation letter to participate

Boscombe Link
3-5 Palmerston Road
Bournemouth
BH1 4HN
Tel & Fax: 01202 466130
Email: david.leighton@bournemouthcvs.org.uk

Date

Dear Colleague,

Bournemouth Council for Voluntary Service (BCVS) is currently looking at its information and advice services seeing how effective they have been in supporting you in your work. We hope you will be able to spare some time to give us your feedback about the support you have received in the past and how we can improve and develop our services in the future.

An interviewer from the Evaluation Trust will be phoning you over the next few weeks and agreeing a convenient time to talk. They would like to spend a few minutes asking you some questions and getting your comments about any support you had from BCVS. If you would like to be interviewed in a language other than English this may be possible. The interviewers will take notes but what you say will be completely confidential and nothing will be attributed to individual people or organisations they are connected with.

If you would prefer not to be interviewed will you please let me know as soon as possible and you will not be contacted.

We would also like to invite a small number of people to participate in a focus group discussion. In addition to enabling a more in-depth discussion around the questions this will also provide an opportunity for you to influence our future service delivery. This discussion will take place from 2-4pm at East Cliff Church, Holdenhurst Road, Bournemouth (opposite ASDA and the travel interchange) on Tuesday 18th December 2007. I would be really grateful if you could come along to this meeting. If you are able to attend could you let me know please as soon as possible? We hope you will feel able to give a little of your time and help us in this way.

Best wishes,

Dave Leighton

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