faith to engage

Faithfully meeting local need:

Exploring partnerships, policy and faith in English faith-based organisations delivering services to the community.

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Table of Contents

7 - Sustaining Delivery

8 - Key messages and policy recommendations

References and Web links

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List of Acronyms

CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
CS	Case studies
CV	Curriculum Vitae
EIYCT	Enfield Island Youth and Community Trust
FBOs	Faith-Based Organisations
FtE	Faith to Engage
HCHfH	Hull Churches Home from Hospital
HSCVF	Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund
LA	Local Authority
PCFCD	The Plymouth Centre for Faith and Cultural Diversity
RE	Religious Education
RPs	Regional Partners
RSA	Royal Small Arms Trust
UDB	Urban Devotion Birmingham
WRAP	Working to Raise Awareness of Prevent

Introduction

This report presents the findings of a small-scale qualitative research study that explored:

- how faith-based projects delivering community services are involved in cross-sector partnerships;
- their ability to influence policy development both locally and regionally;
- the role of faith.

The study was undertaken by the Centre for Learning in Community Transformation (CLiCT) which is part of Oasis College of Higher Education. The research was funded by Faith to Engage, and took place between July 2012 and June 2013.

The aims of the study were to:

- draw out key principles and transferable lessons that might be of benefit to other faith-based organisations delivering services in the community;
- to provide recommendations for policy that will increase the effectiveness of faith-based providers.

About Faith to Engage

Faith to Engage was a five year regional Big Lottery Funded project which ran from June 2008 to June 2013. The project was managed by Faithworks in partnership with nine regional delivery bodies known as Regional Partners. Faith to Engage aimed to strengthen the voice of faith-based organisations in policy-making across the nine government regions of England[1] that existed at the time the project was established. The project aimed to work alongside, and complement, the work of Regional Faith Forums and other existing regional networks.

Study design

This research study involved two main activities: qualitative data collection between October and December 2012 and the dissemination of the research findings at regional Capacity Building events, held as part of the Faith to Engage project, between March and June 2013.

The qualitative research phase consisted of five case studies of faith-based organisations delivering community services across a different region of England. Each case study involved a one or two day visit to the project. During the visit interviews were carried out with key stakeholders, namely staff, volunteers, trustees, partners and clients. Project activities were also observed. In total 70 interviews were carried out, the majority of which (65) were conducted in person at the time of the visit; the remaining five by telephone at a later date.

1 The nine government regions were: the South West, the South East, London, the East of England, the West Midlands, the East Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber, the North East and the North West.

Synopsis of participating case study projects

Case study 1: Plymouth Centre for Faith and Cultural Diversity (PCFCD), The South West

Established in 2001 with support from the local authority, the Plymouth Centre for Faith and Cultural Diversity aims to promote the understanding of religion and cultural diversity for the well-being of the local community. The Centre's main activities are: working with schools through faith and cultural speakers; networking and outreach in the local community; providing a meeting place for minority religions; and the delivery of training programmes around the Prevent agenda.

Case study 2: Hull Churches Home from Hospital (HCHfH), Yorkshire and the Humber

A Christian organisation established in 1994, Hull Churches Home from Hospital was the longest running of the case study projects. In response to a household needs survey a short term task-orientated befriending service was developed to help vulnerable people convalescing after being discharged from hospital. The organisation has grown and diversified and now delivers a raft of services including: the Telehealth Care Service; Specialist End of Life support; and support for children and families where the mother has breast cancer.

Case study 3: Boaz Trust, The North West

A Christian organisation established in 2004, the Boaz Trust serves destitute asylum seekers and refugees. Its primary activity is providing accommodation for asylum seekers who are homeless and whose appeals have been refused. Three types of accommodation are offered by the Trust: a hosting service which takes place in people's spare rooms; a winter night shelter for men; and shared housing. Clients also have the opportunity to engage with the 'Meaningful Lives' programme.

Case study 4: Urban Devotion Birmingham, (UDB), The West Midlands

Established in 2003, Urban Devotion Birmingham is strongly rooted in a Christian ethos in which prayer plays a significant role. The project works in three housing estates in Birmingham aiming to support, serve and inspire disadvantaged communities through prayer. It also aspires to achieve community, family and individual transformation. The project has three main priorities: outreach and engagement; personal development; and resourcing transformation. Their activities take place in a range of environments across the community and in local schools.

Case study 5: The Enfield Island Youth and Community Trust (EIYCT) and Oasis Children and Family Project, London

The newest of the projects to participate in the study, the Oasis Children and Family project, is based in Enfield Island Village and offers activities and support to the local community. The children's project was established in 2010 in complete partnership with EIYCT. The aim of the project is to provide opportunities for local young people, children and their families and to bring about community transformation by creating spaces in which they can engage with each other.

Findings

The findings of the study are identified in the report under the following six broad themes:

- vision and leadership;
- staffing and volunteers;
- partnership working;
- policy influence and impact;
- the role of faith; and
- sustaining delivery.

Vision and Leadership

Each project had a founder who drove the initial vision forward. The vision needed to be clear and limitations understood. The 'need' was identified and corroborated through some form of evidence, for example, the result of a needs survey to the potential client group or by drawing on official figures for the area in question. Support from others who shared in the vision, including church members, trustees, family and friends, helped the founders to develop the services required to meet the identified need. Support from 'the Church' and other institutions of faith varied, but more often it came from individuals within the church rather than from the institutions themselves.

Staffing and Volunteers

Projects were staffed with a mix of paid staff and unpaid volunteers. The age of the workforce generally reflected the type of service they provided and the client group they served. In many cases an individual undertook multiple roles within the organisation, for example, they may be both a client and a volunteer at the same time. Volunteers were seen as vital to the delivery of services. Without them projects reported they would not be able to deliver their services as fully or effectively as they did. However, the number of volunteers was not important; what mattered was getting the right balance of people within the team.

Partnership Working

Effective partnerships played a key part in the success of projects. The partnerships included working alongside others, building on and complementing existing services to maximise resources, good communication, sharing a vision or common goal and trusting each other. Partnerships worked best when they were two-way and mutually beneficial. Partner engagement operated at both practical and strategic levels. At a practical level partnership working was a reciprocal arrangement that enabled each to deliver their services on the ground more effectively. Strategically, collaboration helped them develop strategies to improve services in their common area of need. Partners valued the projects for delivering a good quality service, reliability, being trustworthy and flexible.

Policy Influence and Impact

Projects were engaging with policy, at least locally, and they were making a difference. However, the level of policy influence and impact was often extremely difficult to measure and more readily recognised by those around them rather than by the projects themselves. Projects were most effective at influencing policy when they worked jointly with their partners. The Big Society was viewed as nothing new, potentially helpful but ultimately unsupported and unworkable.

The Role of Faith

Faith played a pivotal role in each of the projects and was a key motivator in their establishment. Projects were open and upfront about their faith. However, it was not obligatory for staff, at any of the projects, to be a person of faith. All of the projects were very clear that they were not in the business of converting people to their faith; their primarily concern was meeting the needs of clients in a professional manner. The projects offered an inclusive service open to staff, volunteers, partners and clients alike; regardless of age, gender, race or faith. They all believed that their faith was exhibited through their actions. In the main, partners welcomed the faith element of the projects. In many cases partners felt the faith aspect was beneficial to both the partnership and their mutual clients. Clients were largely ambivalent about the fact that the projects were faith-based judging them by the service they provided, not whether or not they were faith-based. This study found that there is a proven resilience in faith-based projects and that it comes primarily from a position of faith.

Sustaining Delivery

All projects actively and regularly reviewed their services. They were conscious of the need to be 'client led' at all times but also of the economic and policy constraints under which they operated. The biggest challenge facing the projects in this study is how they can continue to meet their clients' needs with diminishing resources and support. Disappearing networks and traditional avenues of support, along with an expectation from government that they will fill the gap left by an ever shrinking public sector are all further challenges. To this end, all projects were exploring potential areas for diversification, new income streams and innovative models of service delivery; notably the re-investment model.

Key messages

A number of key messages came out of the study:

Leadership: A key component to successful faith-based projects is having a leader with a clear and inspiring vision which is based on evidenced need.

Volunteers: Volunteers are one of faith-based organisations' most valuable assets and need to be valued and supported.

Partnerships: The most successful cross-sector partnerships are those which offer mutual benefits and where there are shared values and common goals.

Policy: Influencing policy was not a pririty for the faith-based organisations

in this study; their primary concern was meeting the needs of their clients.

Faith: Faith motivated, inspired, shaped, gave meaning and increased the resilience of faith-based organisations. Therefore, there is no reason for faith-based organisations not to be open about their faith.

Challenges

The main challenges facing faith-based projects in this study centre on issues of sustainability and succession planning:

Funding: Everyone is struggling to secure sustainable, long-term funding.

Grow responsibly: How to grow responsibly whilst retaining the organisations' vision, ethos and quality of service and simultaneously meet increasing staffing obligations, particularly around wages and legislative compliance.

Fulfilling expectations: Meeting the increasing and changing needs of clients and fulfilling the expectations of others that they will plug the ever growing gap left by a shrinking public sector whilst resources and support diminish. Therefore, all projects were looking at new models of delivering services that will be both sustainable and cost-effective.

Project visibility: Ensuring projects and their services are promoted locally so that all potential clients can be reached and partnership opportunities maximised.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the report recommends investment in four areas:

1) Faith entrepreneurs: The government should consider investing in, and supporting, visionary leaders through seed funding. Because such entrepreneurs have the potential to develop and deliver innovative community projects to meet local need and the autonomy to take risks which other organisations would be unwilling to take.

2) Building active partnerships: Non faith-based organisations, including those from the statutory sector, should be encouraged to work in partnership with faith-based organisations to enhance services to clients and maximise resources.

3) Promoting added value: Faith-based organisations are for people not for profit. Statutory organisations should consider the additional benefits and the social added value of commissioning faith-based organisations, rather than awarding contracts to the cheapest or biggest contender.

4) New approaches to facilitate policy engagement with local community organisations: Policy-makers need to proactively engage with, and listen to, faith-based organisations delivering services in the local community to establish how they can support them to meet locally identified need. The onus should not be on the faith-based organisation to engage with policy since their resources are limited and their priority is to meet client need.

1. Introduction

Background to this report

Oasis College of Higher Education was commissioned by Faith to Engage (FtE) to carry out a piece of research into how faith-based projects delivering community services are involved in cross-sector partnerships, to examine their ability to influence policy development locally and regionally and to explore the role faith plays in delivering services.

Faith to Engage is a five year, regional, Big Lottery Funded project which began in June 2008 and came to an end in June 2013. The project has been managed by Faithworks in partnership with nine regional delivery bodies termed Regional Partners (RPs). Faith to Engage aimed to strengthen the voice of faith-based organisations (FBOs) in policy making across the nine government regions of England which were in existence at the time the project began. The nine regions were: the South West, the South East, London, the East of England, the West Midlands, the East Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber, the North East and the North West. The project aimed to work alongside, and complement, the work of Regional Faith Forums and other existing regional networks.

However, since the project was launched there have been numerous changes to both the political and economic landscape under which it operates, including a change to central government in May 2010 which led to the dismantling of the regional governance system. In addition, the statutory public sector, for example, the local authorities, the police service and the health service, have all been subject to deep and on-going cuts to budgets as a result of government austerity measures. These have severely impacted on the way the statutory sector now delivers a whole range of community services as well as the support they are able to offer third sector organisations, faith-based or otherwise. It is in this context that this research study was conducted during the fifth and final year of the FtE project.

This report is divided into eight sections. Sections 2 to 7 thematically present the findings from the research whilst Section 8 presents some key messages, challenges and recommendations. The remainder of this section provides a brief overview of the historical and current role FBOs play in delivering community social welfare services before outlining the methodological approach taken for this research study. The section concludes with a short synopsis[2] of each of the five faith-based projects that participated in the research and on which the findings of this report are based.

2 A range of sources were drawn upon to compile the project case study profiles including the project websites, documents provided during the research visit and information collected during interview.

The role of faith-based organisations in delivering welfare services

The Church has long since played a pivotal role in caring for the poor, sick and those who are vulnerable in society (James, 2011; Jawad, 2012; Birdwell, 2013). As an institution, 'The Church' has also been a significant provider of education and accounts for the long-standing existence of faith schools. However, it is not a UK-only phenomenon, but one that can be found around the globe. Jawad (2012) notes the role of 'The Church' in the delivery of social welfare services, especially the Catholic Church in America and Europe, is well documented. Tadros (2010) examines the literature on the social welfare role of organisations that come from a faith perspective across several continents including Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the United States. However, there is comparatively little analysis of their role, or comment on their contribution, within UK scholarship (Jawad, 2012). In an attempt to fill this vacuum of knowledge and understanding, Jawads' recent book 'Religion and faith-based welfare' tracks their historical and theoretical origins specifically in the English context. Jawad finds that between the 11th and 15th centuries 'religiously based social welfare provision was the norm' (Jawad, 2012: 35). It is only in relatively recent times that such provision has been seen as the responsibility of the State.

According to Jawad, it was not until the 16th Century, and specifically the introduction of the Poor Law in 1601, that the role of 'The Church' began to decline in the area of social provision. This also tied in with the Reformation which resulted in England's shift away from being a predominantly Catholic country to a Protestant country. The responsibility for social welfare was finally and fully handed over to the State after the Second World War with the birth of the Welfare State. It began with the 1944 Education Act which was swiftly followed by a raft of social legislation over a five year period covering housing, health and the setting up of a universal benefits system. Furthermore, at this time 'The Church' found itself less well-resourced than it had been in the past with reduced membership, personnel and finances. Following the rise of the Welfare State the significance of 'The church' in social welfare delivery gradually became subsumed or 'lumped' into the wider voluntary sector where it became almost invisible; however, their work continued. Subsequently some of the most prominent British political leaders and welfare reformers in modern times from across political parties have drawn on their faith for inspiration, motivation and direction.

Another important development has been the shift in recent times, notably in the 1990s (Tadros, 2010), away from using the term 'The Church' as a provider of social welfare to 'faith-based organisations' (FBOs) or 'faith-based groups'. According to Tadros (2010: 3) this shift, at least in the United States, was in part a result of the rise in identity politics which coincided with 'the demise of the welfare state and the emergence (or re-emergence in some cases) of civil society organizations (CSOs) as service providers.' Religious institutions in America have a long history of delivering social services and there is a strong tradition of people of faith influencing government policy in this area (Ebaugh et al., 2003). This was exemplified in 2001 when President George W. Bush established the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI), now the Office of Faith-Based and Neighbourhood Partnerships (OFBNP). However, exactly

what is meant by an FBO is somewhat unclear.

Whilst some scholars have tried to devise a typology outlining the characteristics that might constitute a FBO (Ebaugh et al., 2003; Jeavons, 2004) there still does not seem to be a consensus. One reason for this could be that several different terms are often used to describe them, for example, 'faith groups', 'faith organisations' and 'faith communities' (Jawad, 2012) are all in common usage. For Jeavons (2004) the term FBO is so ambiguous and confusing that it has simply become a 'catch-all' phrase that is taken for granted, so much so that many scholars no longer feel the necessity to define it in their writings. However, what is clear is that FBOs are hugely diverse, both culturally and in terms of the different religious traditions out of which they have grown. James (2011) points out that they are not simply Christian in nature but may be Islamic, Jewish, Hindu or Sikh, to name but a few. In this report the term FBO is used in the broadest sense to describe projects that may or may not be connected to a formal religious institution, but they are projects driven by an individual's underlying ethos of faith.

Whatever their characteristics and however they may be termed, FBOs have been providing social welfare to the most needy in our society for many centuries. They are a huge contributor to the economy. It is estimated[3] that between a quarter and a third of all registered charities in England and Wales are involved in some form of religious activity and that they generate a combined annual income of some £4.6 billion (Jawad, 2012: 106-107). Some of the longest-standing UK charitable institutions arose from faith-based roots and were established by religious philanthropists. For example, Joseph Rowntree, the founder of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) in 1904, and other subsequent related Societies, was a Quaker. Thomas Barnardo, the Founder of Barnardos Children Homes, the first of which opened in 1867, was a Christian Evangelist. Likewise, Thomas Bowman Stephenson and a small group of Methodist friends established Children in Action (formerly National Children's Home – NCH) also in 1867. All are what might be described as FBOs where individuals were inspired into action in the face of abject poverty, by their faith.

Finally, to bring us up-to-date, when the Coalition government came to power in May 2010, the new Prime Minister, David Cameron, brought with him the latest policy position on the role of FBOs in helping to deliver welfare provision; the Big Society. According to Demos (Britain's cross-party think-tank), who recently carried out an Inquiry into the contemporary role of faith in UK society and politics, 'the idea of engaging faith groups in the delivery of public services has played a prominent role in the rhetoric of the Conservatives in coalition as a part of the broader goals of the government's Big Society ambition' (Birdwell, 2013:20). As part of this the government has '…stressed the importance of interfaith dialogue and social action as opposed to single faith groups providing services to their followers' (Birdwell, 2013:21). Jawad (2012: 122) believes that FBOs are currently being 'mainstreamed like their secular volunteer counterparts through national legislation such as the Localism Act' (2011) to help the government enact their Big Society agenda. However, some, including the Bishop of Leicester (Birdwell, 2013:21), have cautioned that FBOs cannot and should not be used as alternatives to public sector provision.

3 The subsequent figures come from the NCVO 2007 report, 'Faith and Voluntary Action', London, NCVO.

Methodology

This research study was commissioned in July 2012 as the FtE project entered its final year of operation and funding. It involved two main activities; conducting the research and disseminating the findings. The fieldwork was carried out between October and December 2012. The findings of this report were disseminated at the Regional Partners' final Capacity Building Events which took place between March and June 2013. In addition to this report a guide for practitioners has also been produced. This is a shorter more accessible version of the study which summarises the key findings and profiles the participating projects. The aim of the research was to draw out key principles and transferable lessons that will be of use to other FBOs delivering community services and to provide recommendations for policy.

The study took the form of qualitative research comprising five case studies. Not only is this a recognised and appropriate methodological way of gathering rich, in-depth information about a specific area of, or activity within, society; it was also the preferred approach of FtE. As a direct result of FtE stakeholder feedback during the project, it had emerged that people wanted to read about success stories and the real-life achievements of FBOs delivering services in the community. Therefore, a case study approach was deemed the most appropriate method of data collection.

Each of the case studies were located in a different region of England; case study 1 in the South West, case study 2 in Yorkshire and the Humber, case study 3 in the North West, case study 4 in the West

Midlands and case study 5 in London. Due to budget constraints it was not possible to undertake one case study for each of the nine English regions over which the project had operated. Regional Partners were asked to submit a shortlist of faith-based projects that they thought might be suitable for the research. In addition, other sources were drawn upon such as the knowledge of the field by the FtE project team through their connection with Faithworks and a range of other networks. Potentially suitable projects were then shortlisted using a selection criterion. This included the need for projects to be well established but have a local rather than a national reach; for projects to have a track record of partnership engagement, especially with the statutory sector; and that projects should have direct engagement with service users or clients. In recognition of the limited resources available to an FBO and the time and resources required to participate in research, the projects that agreed to take part in the study were given a moderate amount of financial remuneration by FtE. However, it should be noted that all five participating projects agreed to take part in the research prior to being aware that financial compensation was available.

Each case study consisted of interviews with a range of stakeholders including staff, volunteers, partners, trustees and

those accessing the projects services and activities; henceforth referred to as 'clients'. In total 70 individuals took part in interviews. The majority of these (65) were conducted in person at the time of the fieldwork. The remaining five were interviewed over the telephone at a later date. The number of interviews conducted for each case study varied according to project size.

All interviews were digitally audio recorded. Whilst they were not fully transcribed the recordings were referred back to for accuracy when quoting interviewees.

All of the participating projects agreed to be named in the final report. It was felt this was important because of the distinctiveness of each project and the need for the reader to have an overarching understanding of each project's context, aims and objectives. However, whilst projects are named, confidentiality and anonymity of the individuals who participated in interviews was assured. Nevertheless, due to the unique nature of the projects it may be possible, in some instances, to identify the individual person interviewed.

Quoting and referencing conventions

In the findings sections (2 to 7) of this report, direct quotes from those interviewed as part of the study have been divided into six categories: Directors, Staff, Volunteers, Partners, Trustees and Clients. In some instances an interviewee may have had multiple roles within the organisation, for example, they may have been both a client and a volunteer. On such occasions they are referenced according to the role they were primarily interviewed for. For the purpose of this report all of the project leaders are referred to as the 'Director', since each person leading the project had a different title.

Following the profiling of the case study projects, which comes next in this section, the projects will subsequently be referred to as Case Study 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 for the sake of objectivity.

Case study profiles:

Case study 1: Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity (PCFCD)

The Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity (PCFCD) based in the South West of England aims to promote the understanding of religion and cultural diversity for the well-being of the local community. Established as a charity in 2001, it was, and continues to some degree, to be supported by Plymouth City Council. The Centre's Director and founder is a Buddhist with a Religious Education (RE) background. He is also the RE Adviser for Plymouth schools and in 2009 he was awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours list for his contribution to the Plymouth community.

Plymouth, which has a population of some 240,000 people, is traditionally a naval town with low rates of cultural and ethnic diversity. However, largely as a result of the government's dispersal policy in the late 1990s, it is currently estimated that over 70 languages are spoken in the City. This has brought many challenges to the City; some of which the Centre has tried to address through its work in the local community and through partnerships with all of the faiths present in the area.

The Centre's main objective is to promote education of world religions and cultural diversity based upon the common values of respect and tolerance. It aims to achieve this by creating opportunities for interfaith and multicultural awareness, dialogue, understanding and celebration through a range of services and activities. All of the major faiths present in the City are represented namely: Baha'is, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs as well as Pagans.

The initial idea for the Centre came from the Director's experience of teaching RE in secondary schools during the late 1990s; which led him and a group of like-minded teachers to ask how RE might be more skilfully and authentically taught and if teachers need to have a spiritual life to teach RE.

Activities and services offered by the Centre fall into the following main areas. Working with schools forms the main bulk of their work and includes the Faith and Cultural speakers. Networking and outreach into the local community, including being involved in the local Churches Together network, is an important activity. The Centre is also available for use by minority religions as a meeting place. Finally, they have a programme of training days which are delivered free of charge to both the public and private sector. The training days explore beliefs, faiths and culture in the workplace and the community. In addition to these activities the Centre has a range of faith and cultural resources that can be freely accessed by schools and the general public including more than 2,000 books and DVDs and a selection of faith and cultural artefacts.

The Centre's timely opening the week after 9/11, gave added importance to the work they hoped to do and 'cemented why we needed such a Centre' (CS1/Director). It also meant the Centre was linked to some extent with government policy, particularly policy relating to issues of community cohesion and the Prevent Agenda. (www.pcfcd.co.uk)

Case study 2 – Hull Churches Home from Hospital (HCHfH)

Hull Churches Home from Hospital (HCHfH) is a 'task orientated' befriending service that is neither medical nor religious in nature but it is fundamentally a Christian organisation. Established in 1994 it is the longest-running of the five projects that participated in this study. It is also the only one where a woman is the Director and founder. Born in the City of Hull the Director trained as a nurse and worked as a Senior Child Protection Officer in the East Midlands before giving up her role to set up the service. She is a Christian and a member of the Church of England. The project has won several awards including in 2008 the Queens Award for Voluntary Service.

The Director was initially asked by a senior member of the Church of England to set up support for local people in need. Before this could be achieved she consulted with the local community, through a household survey, to find out what they felt they needed help and support with. From this a free, short-term six to eight week support service for older people on discharge from hospital was developed, known as the Adult Service.

The project aims to help vulnerable people whilst they are convalescing to remain confidently in their own homes.

Over the years the organisation has grown and diversified. It now offers a range of care-based services to those in need including the Telehealth Care Service, Specialist End of Life support and support for children and families where the mother has (predominantly) breast cancer. They also offer training to volunteers.

The project emerged at a time of medical advances and changes to the way post-hospital care was supported in the community by the Health Service. Medically, at that time, there had been significant improvements made to anaesthetics which meant patients could be discharged from hospital much earlier than was previously possible; in most cases within three days. At the same time district nurses were withdrawn. This meant some elderly patients were sent home without support or help with their post-operative surgical stockings. Changing the stockings, befriending the client and collecting shopping are the main services offered.

(hchfh.wordpress.com)

Case study 3 – Boaz Trust

The Boaz Trust is a Christian organisation serving destitute asylum seekers and refugees in the North West of England. It primarily provides accommodation for those asylum seekers who are homeless. The Boaz Trust was established in 2004 in response to the growing problem of destitution amongst refused asylum seekers that its founder had encountered in his previous role within a local homeless charity. Successive government policies aimed at reducing the number of asylum seekers in the UK had led to large number of applications being refused. When an asylum appeal is refused, the asylum seeker is given 21 days to leave the asylum accommodation. At that point they are not entitled to any public funds or allowed to work. This is the political context within which the Boaz Trust was established. The overarching objective of the Trust, therefore, is the abolishment of destitution for asylum seekers. To this end the Trust offers a range of services.

The Director began by asking people within the church to host asylum seekers in their spare rooms; this formed the start of their hosting service. In addition to its hosting programme, which accommodates between 11-15 individuals at any one time, it also runs a night shelter in the winter months between November and March. The night shelter has 12 places for men and it is located in a different church over the course of a week on a rolling basis. People from the respective church commit to staffing the shelter and providing food, washing facilities and transport where necessary.

The Trust also has 12 shared houses providing accommodation for around 50 individuals including women deemed 'at risk' and increasingly for refugees that have been granted permission to stay in the UK but have nowhere to live.

Finally, they offer the 'Meaningful Lives' programme which looks at the five ways of well-being. This aims to provide their clients with a programme of weekly activities for example craft classes, ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) lessons, opportunities for gardening and trips out with volunteers; through which they can develop new skills and socialise with others. (www.boaztrust.org.uk)

Case study 4 – Urban Devotion Birmingham (UDB)

Established in 2003 and gained charitable status in 2005, Urban Devotion Birmingham (UDB) is strongly rooted in a Christian ethos in which prayer plays a significant role. From the outset the project was committed to prayer. It operates on an incarnate model of delivery with the majority of their staff and volunteers living and working in the community they serve. Initially UDB worked in one of the most deprived housing estates in the West Midlands where levels of criminal activity were extremely high. During the first year UDB worked on the estate crime figures reduced by 47 per cent. They currently work across three communities in the area, all of which face a different set of challenges.

The project has three main priorities: outreach and engagement; personal development; and resourcing transformation. These take place in a range of environments across the community and in local schools and are expressed through a range of activities that reflect the skill, passion and vision of the team. Specific activities include street level work with young people and families which are comprised of a range of clubs and activities for different age groups. They also offer schools a suite of activities including small group and one-to-one mentoring sessions with pupils and many craft and drama-based activities. They work in schools and frequently lead assemblies, especially around Easter and Christmas.

Their main aim is to support, serve and inspire disadvantaged communities through prayer and relationship to achieve community, family and individual transformation. Its founder and director was a pastor at the Vineyard Church and previously worked with young people who came from difficult backgrounds. He felt he was directed by his faith and called by God to set up the project and moved to the area with his young family. The political climate in which they operate is one of declining youth services.

Whilst the majority of their activities do not have a religious focus, they do run a Kids Club once a fortnight that is specifically Christian based. In addition, they have termly family events to which everyone is invited. (www.urbandevotion.org)

Case study 5 – Enfield Island Youth and Community Trust (EIYCT) and Oasis Children and Family Project

The newest of the projects to participate in the study, the Oasis Children and Family project, is based in Enfield Island Village and offers activities and support to the local community. The children's project was established in 2010 in partnership with the Enfield Island Youth and Community Trust (EIYCT). The EIYCT is a charitable organisation funded by the Royal Small Arms (RSA) Trust, who themselves are funded by the RSA Island Village Ltd; a company limited by guarantee which runs the Village Centre for the 1,300 homes on Enfield Island Village. EIYCT aims to work with all young people, especially those who might be deemed to be on the edge of society.

The Oasis Hub already worked with EIYCT to deliver youth activities to the 13 to 19 year olds. The Oasis Hub had the expertise in youth work whilst the EIYCT had received funding for the work. At that time there were no youth activities available for the new development provided either by the statutory authorities, i.e. the local Borough, or privately; for example, numbers attending groups such as the Scouts were nominal.

Whilst youth work with the over 13s from the Island was already underway, when the leader of the Oasis Church in Enfield and his wife arrived they found a gap in provision to children between the ages of 5 and 13. EIYCT funded the expansion of the provision with Oasis to fill this gap. After running a pilot project for six months the EIYCT / Oasis partnership secured a five-year lottery grant. At that point it was agreed that a manager would be appointed to take the work forward. This is the only project where the founder and the current director are not the same person.

The aim of this project is not dissimilar to that of UDB (Case Study 4), to provide opportunities for local young people, children and their families and to bring about community transformation by creating spaces in which they can engage with each other. They also aim to provide all-through provision from age 5 to 19 including family support and facilitating adult contribution.

This project is also run along the incarnate model with staff and volunteers living and working in the community they serve; indeed, the appointed manager (henceforth referred to as the project Director) moved to the area to take the post with his young family.

In addition to weekly after school clubs once a month the Oasis Church Hub organise family events for the community.
(www.rsaic.org/index.php/51/5218-youth-club)

2. Vision and Leadership

This section explores the origins of each project; how and why the vision[4] materialised, the driving force behind the vision and how they were initially operationalised. It also considers the importance of receiving support from others and where that support is most likely to come from during the early stages as well as the inevitable challenge of funding the vision.

The vision - Identifying the 'need'

Each of the five projects was established to meet a specific 'need' within a community that had been identified by an individual of faith. Four of these individuals were Christians coming from different backgrounds and denominations; the fifth a Buddhist. In each case the 'need' materialised in different ways. For some the need had clearly manifested itself through their professional life, as was the case for Case Study (CS)1 and 3, whilst for others, for example CS2, it began with a desire to help the needy and vulnerable within a particular community but the exact nature of the 'need' was initially unclear.

In all instances, one individual was instrumental in driving forward the idea and developing it into a workable project to meet the identified need; it was their vision. Others, who worked both for and with these individuals, acknowledged that they were the driving force behind the vision and the reason for the project's continued growth and success. Through their leadership they had taken people with them; inspiring them to meet the same need that they were passionate about meeting and to buy into their vision. Interviewees described them as "incredibly inspiring" (CS1: Trustee); as having a "positive attitude" (CS1: Partner); offering "24/7 support…it is just amazing" (CS2: staff); "humble" (CS4: Trustee) and "an exceptionally good youth worker", (CS5: Partner and Trustee).

With the exception of CS5 where a manager was employed early in the project once funding was secured to take the vision forward, the original founder remains project Director. Whilst some Directors have recently shifted their role from 'hands-on' to a more strategic role, for example the Director of CS3 is now focusing on networking and external profiling, others remain actively involved in the day to day running of their projects. The Director of CS2 still matches all referred clients to a suitable visitor as and when they come in.

Initially three of the projects, CS1, 2 and 5, conducted some form of 'needs' survey. This provided evidence of the type and level of 'need' and helped shape the subsequent nature of services offered by the projects. Having been asked by a senior member of the church to set up support for people locally, the founder and Director of CS2 carried out a household survey which asked the community what kind of support they would like to receive. The survey showed that many people wanted help when they were discharged from hospital. This materialised as a high area of anxiety. From this CS2 was established as a task-orientated befriending service. Likewise, the founder of CS1 surveyed local schools to establish if there was a need for a Centre that could resource and assist schools in the delivery of RE and in promoting understanding of religion and cultural diversity. A secondary school RE teacher himself, he felt there must be a better way of delivering the subject in schools. The survey was unequivocal with

4 Vision is used here in the context of an idea or concept rather than a faith-inspired apparition.

98 per cent of respondents supporting the development of such a Centre. From this a Centre was developed that aimed to 'promote the understanding of religion and cultural diversity for the well-being of the community' (CS1: Director). At CS5 the gap in local statutory youth services to those aged 13 to 19 was first identified by both the case study organisation and its partners. The local community survey carried out by Faithworks shaped the nature of the youth provision delivered. However, once delivery was underway, a further gap in services available to children aged 5 to 13 was identified.

For CS3 the 'need' for accommodation and support for destitute asylum seekers and refugees did not come from a survey, rather it appeared to the founder when the usual signposting for the homeless was found to be unhelpful for this group of individuals. The need became ever more apparent as the number of asylum seekers and refugees amongst the homeless increased significantly around 2003 following the impact of the government's dispersal policy. The Director of CS3, who ran a homeless charity at the time, realised that a growing number of the 60 per cent of clients that were asylum seekers and refugees were actually destitute and as such not entitled to any form of state assistance, including emergency accommodation. In response to this 'need' he established the current project with the aim of ending destitution for asylum seekers and refugees. Finally, the level of 'need' on the estate where CS4 began was clearly evident in official crime and deprivation figures, such as unemployment levels for the area. This meant a separate survey by the Director was unnecessary; their key aim for the locally community was, and still is, to make a difference through community transformation.

In essence, all of the project founders validated the perceived 'need' through some form of quantifiable, tangible evidence. This evidence was subsequently used as the basis for promoting their idea to others by demonstrating there was a legitimate 'need' that needed to be met. The evidence was also used to gain funding and develop an appropriately targeted service; in short, it enabled them to operationalise their vision.

Operationalising the vision

Support from others

It is evident from the research that without support from a range of different people the founders would not have been able to take their vision forward. The Directors felt that having like-minded people around them from the beginning was important because they were all clear that you cannot do it alone. One of the initial main sources of support for the projects came from their Board of Trustees.

Trustees

All of the projects are overseen by a Board of Trustees. Trustees were seen as an invaluable source of support and especially helpful for the Directors in enabling them to realise their vision. The role of the Trustees was said to be to steer projects strategically, ensure that they met appropriate legislation and to act as a critical friend to the Director. They also ensured that Directors were not over-stretched or in danger of becoming 'burnt out'. All project Directors agreed that such support was vital.

Trustees came from a wide range of backgrounds, both professionally and personally, and brought with them a variety of skills. In some cases they were close friends or even family members, for example the Chair of Trustees for CS4 was the Directors brother-in-law. Getting the right mix of people onto a Board of Trustees for a particular project was seen as crucial. Case study 1 reported that, largely due to the transient nature of the local population, appointing the right blend of individuals to the Board of Trustees that were both committed to the project and representative of the full diversity of faiths in the local area had, at times, been challenging. At CS3 the Director initially 'pulled together' people he knew and trusted and who liked his idea to constitute his Board of Trustees. He believed this enabled him to 'get up and running quickly.' Initially, the Director of CS4 did not consider a Board of Trustees to be a project priority. A Board was only appointed once it was evident that such a body would be advantageous to the development of the project and would help to sustain the vision. Subsequently, the Director had found his trustees not only helpful and supportive but 'deeply passionate' about the work he was undertaking.

In many instances trustees had multiple roles in connection to the project. For example, many trustees were also partner organisations in terms of funding and/or service delivery. Whilst most trustees were not found to be involved with projects on a daily basis, one CS3 trustee was also an active volunteer.

The Church

Support from, and attachment to, 'the Church' as an institution (however 'the Church' might be defined) varied greatly between projects and came predominantly from individual church members within churches rather than the organisation of the church itself. In one case the Church and its institutional structures seemed to have actively hindered the initial development of the service.

For CS3 the involvement of local churches, at both institutional and individual level, has always been key to their ability to deliver services. For example, the night shelter accommodation project, which runs during the winter months at a number of local churches on a rota basis, would not be possible without both the permission and support of each participating church Council and the active commitment from individual members of the church to staff the night shelter. Their hosting programme relies mainly on individual volunteers from local churches. In addition, the Director of CS3 initially received three months of living expenses from his church.

Whilst individuals from across Christian denominations help to deliver the service at CS2, they do not come through the Church in any organised or coherent manner. Despite the Director being asked to establish support in the community for those in need by a senior member of the Church of England, the institution itself was reported to be less than supportive during the initial stages of the project. The Director said she had found the Church of England difficult to engage with, largely because of their institutional structures explaining:

> They liked the idea…and there was a generosity, because I know that there are not a lot of people within any church that are 'action geared' so if you've got them you'd probably like to hold on to them.
>
> (CS2: Director)

Conversely, at CS5 the project sits firmly within the work of the local Church Hub. Not only is the Church fully supportive of all youth, children and family work taking place in the area, it was the CS5 Church leader and his wife, in conjunction with their youth work partners EIYCT, that initiated the delivery of activities for children aged 5 to 13 in the area. Whilst it was decided that a dedicated Children's and Family Manager was required to take the project forward as an independent entity, the appointee has always been directly managed by the church leader whose vision it was.

Despite the Director being a former Vineyard Pastor, CS4 did not have any formal church connections on the estate where the project was first established and therefore no direct church support on which to draw. However, they do use the premises of several local churches to help them deliver their youth provision; one of which is a permanent dedicated space underneath a local church. They also use the same church as a meeting place for their collective community worship. Therefore, whilst the local churches have not directly inputted to the projects they have facilitated their work by providing suitable premises for activities to take place.

The situation for CS1 was slightly different to the other projects due to their multi-faith and multi-cultural focus and their desire to affect religious education delivery in schools. Their main support initially came not from the church but from the Local Authority (LA). The Centre's role was both to support other faith groups and for other faith groups to support the Centre; in a symbiotic relationship. For example, over the years the premises have been used as a meeting place for many religions including Bahai's, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, as well as minority Christian groups such as the Eritrean Christians. The Centre also had links with many of the local Christian churches, and all of the main faiths represented locally.

With the exception of CS1, projects appeared to have limited engagement with and support from other faith groups. The absence of other faiths in the delivery of services was noted by the Director of CS3 and some of its non-Christian clients who found it difficult to understand why local Muslim groups were not actively involved in helping asylum seekers; many of whom were also Muslims. One Muslim-born client commented, '…there are a lot of Mosques in the area but the Muslims don't help as much as the Christians. I don't know why this is so,' (CS3: Client).

The evidence from this study would suggest that the church, as an institutional body, is not always supportive of FBOs wishing to deliver services to the community. It is more likely that support will come from individual church members, rather than the institutions as a whole. The study also found projects received very little engagement or support from other faiths. This is potentially an area for further investigation to establish if this is representative of the sector or simply an anomaly pertaining to the specific projects in this study.

Accessing funding

The challenge of financing projects came after the vision had been established and support from others secured. In some cases it also came after delivery had commenced. It was common for projects to be funded through multiple sources. One strand of funding was financial donations from individuals within the church and the local community; this applied particularly to CS3 and 4. The Director of CS3 described funding as coming in the form of 'miraculous gifts from donations'. Here approximately 49 per cent of their funding comes through individuals giving on a regular basis, church donations and fundraising events. The remaining 51 per cent comes from Trust funds. Case study 4 also has a core of regular givers. They received a number of gifts in the first year that 'kept them going', including £10,000 from a local resident from his pension fund and some funding which came 'out of the blue'. In total, they 'somehow managed to raise about £38k in the first year,' (CS4: Director).

Funding also came from successful funding bids. Some came from bids to charities such as The Big Lottery, MacMillan and Tearfund, and some from bids to statutory organisations including the LA, the Police and Health Care Trusts. Case study 1 received corn seed funding from the LA to establish the Centre, which they believed gave them a level of local kudos amongst the different faith groups operating in the area.

All of the founders were extremely successful with funding applications, especially during the early stages; despite, in several cases, not having had a great deal of previous experience of applying for funding. The Director of CS3 reported a success rate of one in three and the Director of CS4 made three initial funding applications during one month at the end of their first year in operation, all of which were unexpectedly successful; as he explained:

> "I spent August writing funding applications which I'd never really done before, which was a big learning curve. I wrote three funding applications and felt quite good about it. I chatted to some people and they said "oh crumbs now you will probably need to fill out 100 more and you will maybe get one or two responses from those." I put all three of those applications in and we actually got all three of them. I haven't quite had that success rate all of the time." (CS4: Director)

In addition, one of the funders subsequently came to visit the project and decided to increase the funding by 25 per cent.

It was not common practice for projects to appeal for money as a method of fundraising. However, occasionally this was found to be necessary. For example, in summer 2012 CS3 had a short fall in their budget of £20,000 and through an appeal to local churches they received just over the amount they needed.

Occasionally, projects were offered resources other than direct funding. For example, the premises used by CS1, the annex of a local primary school that they shared with other LA departments, was initially rent free. Houses were donated by individuals and charities to CS3 to enable them to establish shared refugee accommodation, the first of which was used to house five destitute women.

There was a consensus amongst the

project Directors that they were not restricted by the resources at hand, such as funding, but only by the vision; finances was very much 'an afterthought' (CS4: Director). There was also a strong belief, not just amongst the founders but staff and trustees too, that if a project was meant to run it would be funded, that 'God gives it,' (CS3: Director).

However, the Director of CS2 did feel that the church, as an institution, should be more aware of the potential financial implications on the founder, especially during the early stages of establishing a project. For example, consideration to how that person will meet their basic needs such as buying food and paying utility bills as well as the consequences for their pension contributions. She explained she could not sign on for benefits as they needed workers in her profession but she was not actually available for work; and neither did she feel she could ask the church for money when she was unsure if the project would work or not:

> There were a lot of things I didn't really work out financially. It would have been really good to have forced the issue with the church. There are church urban fund grants which I did when I'd got it all up and running and I knew it would work. Your integrity gets in the way of your finances. But I thought, "I can't ask the church for money when I don't know whether or not it works." I should have not thought like that. I should have thought, "I'm giving up a job, I've got no income, I'm important as well", but you don't when you are busy.
>
> You are, if you like, a Christian action person and I think you have to be allowed to survive. And I think if people are encouraging you to be active then I think there is…more of a responsibility on the people that are encouraging you to be active. God will look after you, yes, but there are some practicalities. For those who are encouraging you to be active to just say, "hang on a minute, what's happening to you? How are you going to manage? How can we help you to do what we want you to do?" Rather than standing back and not getting involved. You've got to look after them. (CS2: Director)

Other valuable resources came in the form of volunteers who gave their time for free which is discussed fully in the next Section.

Initial learning

All of the founders encountered a number of challenges during the initial stages, notably operationalising the vision and funding the project. But from these challenges they had all reportedly learnt valuable lessons on how to establish a faith-based project.

Having a clear vision of what you want to achieve and an understanding of your limitations was a key learning point. Projects were said to work best when 'driven by what you stand for' (CS4: Trustee) not necessarily by the ability to resource the vision (CS2: Director); funding was always a secondary consideration. Frequently the founder began service delivery without any clear idea of how they would finance and resource their project. In general there was faith that the resources would come if the project was right. It was also deemed important to have someone locally who knows how things work.

Finally, it was imperative that projects were led by actual not imagined need. Once the

overarching need had been identified, how that need can be met should be established through a process of dialogue and consultation with the potential client group, rather than assumed by others, taking a bottom-up approach to developing the service.

Section summary

Each project had a founder who drove the initial vision forward. The vision needed to be clear and limitations understood. The 'need' was identified and corroborated through some form of evidence, for example, the result of a needs survey to the potential client group or by drawing on official figures for the area in question. Support from others who shared in the vision, including church members, Trustees, family and friends, helped the founder develop the services required to meet the identified need.

Support from 'the Church' and other institutions of faith varied, but it more often came from individuals within the church than from the organisations themselves. With the exception of CS1, there appeared to be little involvement with projects by non-Christian faith groups. The Demos Inquiry also found that faith groups – Christian and non-Christian alike - frequently work in siloes rather than pooling their resources and expertise to meet local need. They recommend that those commissioning public services '…should require, or at least strongly encourage, faith-based providers to work with organisations of different faiths to tackle local area problems they share,' (Birdwell, 2013: 13).

Further, the Church as an institution was not always helpful in equipping the founder with the tools and support they needed; this was particularly the case for CS2. It was not necessary to obtain funding prior to starting the delivery of services. There was a belief amongst the Directors that the funding would come; that God would provide.

Key messages:

- A successful project needs both a clear vision and a leader to drive it forward.
- There can be tensions between individuals of faith wishing to act and faith institutions. This can be an obstacle when establishing projects. Individuals will often achieve more on their own than they will as part of an institution or organisation.
- Founders need the support of like-minded people who believed in their vision.
- Successful projects have a clear vision focused on an area of evidenced, rather than perceived need.
- Inspired by the vision, service delivery often begins before funding is secured or partnerships established.

3. Staffing and Volunteers

This section explores the projects staffing structures, both paid and unpaid, that they employ to deliver their programmes and help them meet the needs of their clients. It also considers models of recruitment and training as well as progression and the importance of valuing volunteers.

The term volunteer is contentious and means different things to different people. Sometimes volunteers do get paid in some form or another, for example in CS2 volunteers were paid travel expenses, but in most settings no remuneration or payment in kind was available.

Overview of staffing structures

Each of the projects differed in size, structure and composition of staff and volunteers. Their configuration was reflective of how long projects had been running and the type of service they delivered. All employed some paid staff, most of which were part-time. Some were sessional, for example, the cultural and faith school speakers in CS1, and some were students on placements as was the case for CS5. Here there was a mix of students including international gap year students, students on College of Higher Education placements and part-time post-graduate students; all of which were provided with living accommodation and expenses. Across the projects the number of full-time staff was small, ranging from

none in CS1 to four in CS2. In all cases the proportion of volunteers, paid or unpaid, was significantly higher than that of paid staff.

Case study 2 had the largest workforce when the number of paid staff (18) and regular volunteers (80) were combined. Here recruitment of volunteers was on-going. Case study 4 also had a sizable workforce with 15 members of paid staff, 40 to 50 regular volunteers and 25 ad hoc volunteers on their books. Approximately one-third of the work in CS3 was reportedly carried out by volunteers. However, whilst CS3 had a substantial number of volunteers on their mailing list, (140 to 150), only around 40 were said to be regular contributors to service delivery.

Case study 2 also had the oldest workforce and CS4 and 5 the youngest. The majority of CS2 volunteers were described as mature and retired; the oldest recorded volunteer had been 90 years old. In contrast, approximately half of all CS4 volunteers were reported to be under 18 years of age. Further, the majority of their paid staff were university graduates coming to the project directly, or soon after, graduating. Such staffing compositions were reflective of the type of need projects addressed. For example, the vast majority of CS2 clients (around 98 per cent) were over the age of 60, whilst CS4 and 5 services were targeted towards children, young people and families. Across all projects staff and volunteers were a mix of genders.

In many instances there was a blurring of an individual's position and role within the organisation. For example, in CS1 many of the cultural and faith speakers also accessed the Centre's resources or attended activities such as workshops, seminars or drop-in sessions. Some of the speakers also worked for partner organisations such as the police or the LA. A CS3 trustee also volunteered one or two days a week and some clients offered their skills, particularly in the area of language translation, as well as their time back to the project as volunteers. Similarly for CS4 and 5 the client/volunteer distinction often became interchangeable as people who were receiving services grew in confidence and skills and began to re-invest their time and knowledge back into the project to help others. For example, in CS4 one of the young men who volunteered at the project was originally one of the young people on the estate the project was established to help. He explained:

> "I was a normal young person for [the project] to come to. They came around once or twice a week to speak to us to get me and my group of people who were used to hanging around. We were, like, involved in some activities and I was coming towards the end of school and they, like, asked me to start up a youth forum."
>
> (CS4: Volunteer and Ex-client)

His reasons for volunteering were very much about giving back to the project and helping others out of the situation he was once in:

> "Just making my community and the communities [the project] are working in just a better place for young people who are getting bored on the streets or growing up in bad times with the police. We try and help them out."
>
> (CS4: Volunteer)

This model of client re-investment was also emerging at CS3 and 5. Case study 3 was looking at how they might utilise the

skills of their clients to get them more involved and to improve services, for example, translation skills for clients whose English might be poor. At CS5 re-investing the energy and skills of clients was seen as vital for sustainable community transformation. Here, for example, young people were being encouraged to coach the 8 to 13 year-olds in football skills and parents were involved with running after school clubs; so that it was '… not just people consuming, but giving back,' (CS5: Director). In addition, CS4 only employs staff once they have worked for the project as a volunteer.

With such a diverse workforce across and within the projects, recruiting the right people into the right roles and providing relevant training and support was crucial for the on-going successful delivery of services.

Recruitment and training

Recruitment and training procedures varied across projects depending upon operational requirements. Case study 2 had by far the most comprehensive and rigorous processes in place. This was partly because they employed a dedicated part-time recruitment and training officer two-days a week and partly because of the structured yet sensitive nature of the service they delivered. Certain skills and aptitudes, such as a good standard of literacy and a compassionate nature, were deemed essential particularly for carrying out the role of visitor for the Home from Hospital Adult Service. Case study 1 has a formal training programme for some staff whilst for CS3, 4, and 5 training primarily consisted of an induction to the organisation and ensuring compliance to legislation such as Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks or Health and Safety for the relevant sector.

In addition, CS2's vigorous training programme also covered issues such as how to carry out the work of listening, respecting confidentiality and befriending. The training was developed by the project's Director who extracted and combined the most 'useful parts' of several professional training courses across the areas of nursing and social care. This led to what she described as a 'mini apprenticeship'. All CS2 policies are regularly updated and new volunteers and members of staff are given a handbook summarising the organisation's policies and procedures. In addition to the initial training, volunteers are offered a range of ad-hoc training opportunities aimed at enhancing service delivery, for example, training around boundaries, communications and endings. Much of their training was delivered for free by other charities in the area. Volunteers also receive on-going support through bi-monthly meetings and newsletters. Finally, the director has an 'open-door' policy for all members of staff, paid or unpaid, which is also extended to clients.

Case study 1 provides compulsory training for their school speakers in the form of a three-day non-accredited training course. However, course completion does not guarantee individuals will be accepted as a school speaker.

On-going training and personal development opportunities for staff, and where appropriate volunteers, was offered by CS4. Although most of their staff were university graduates, their degrees were not necessarily related to youth and community work. Further, it was recognised that a degree did not necessary mean an individual was 'work ready'. Investing in staff progression and development was

viewed as mutually beneficial for both the organisation and the individual. Volunteers also have a six-weekly review with a member of staff.

At the time of the study CS3 was in the middle of comprehensively reviewing their work and in particular their recruitment and training procedures with volunteers. To date these had mainly consisted of a member of the management team meeting new volunteers to give them an induction and overview of the Trust. The review was being carried out free of charge by a local voluntary centre.

Unfortunately, the point was made across projects that not everyone who volunteers will be suitable. When this was deemed to be the case, prospective volunteers were directed to other areas of volunteering or offered advice on how they might gain the skills required. Case study 2 was particularly good at signposting volunteers to other opportunities in the local area to fit an applicant's skill set or to improve their skills; I've not a problem interviewing someone and then sending them on somewhere such as adult education and pointing them in the right direction, (CS2: Staff).

Getting the right people into the right roles was seen as key to delivering services effectively and making the most of limited resources.

Retention

Not all volunteers stay once they have been trained. Case study 2 reported that sometimes the younger volunteers, often from the University, leave quite quickly. This can be costly and time consuming to the organisation. Many younger volunteers were reportedly looking to gain work experience in the area of social care or simply wanted to enhance their CVs for entry into university as this extract of dialogue illustrates:

> A lot of the younger ones are coming for experience. They may be at the College or the University. The older ones are maybe changing their jobs or have lost their jobs and are wanting to go into health and social care. It's about getting a good balance. We really need the more mature ones that are going to stay. Recently we have lost five volunteers either they were going on to university or finishing university and going back home.
>
> (CS2: Staff 1)

> It's such a shame because we train them up then at the end of their course we tend to lose a lot.
>
> (CS2: Staff 2)

> Which is fine if we get them in year one, it's when we take them on year three or if they are just getting their A levels or whatever, they want extra to go to university. As soon as we have them trained and up and working on their own they are off…and we have put a lot of hard work into them.
>
> (CS2: Staff 1)

At the time of the study, CS3 was trying to grow the number of young people volunteering and looking for ways to retain volunteers in the longer term. To this end they recently offered a new eight-week volunteering programme to university students with the aim of keeping the students as volunteers. However, interviews with the students revealed

that they were not planning to volunteer at the Trust immediately after completing the course. Whilst they all said they had found the course valuable and engaging, and all agreed they would recommend it to others; most were in their final year of studies and planned to concentrate on their dissertations in the next semester rather than on volunteering.

There were many reasons why staff and volunteers chose to work for a particular project. They may wish to maintain skills on retirement or at times of unemployment or whilst recovering from illness, the latter was certainly the case for one volunteer at CS3. Many of the CS2 volunteers were reported to be retired senior professionals, frequently from the Health and Social Care sector. Often, staff felt volunteers simply wanted to 'give something back,' (CS2: Staff). One of the main reasons many people worked, paid or unpaid, for the projects was because of their faith and this is explored further in section 5, in the 'Role of Faith'.

Valuing and progressing the workforce

Staff and volunteers were seen as valuable assets for each of the projects. As one member of staff at CS3 commented, 'we are able to do a darn sight more than if we didn't have them,' (CS3: Staff). The Director of CS2 likened volunteers to 'gold', and one member of staff called them and the commitment they showed as 'stunning'. Case study 4 was conscious of not letting neither staff nor volunteers 'burn out.' Not surprisingly, there was a general consensus that you should take care of your staff and especially your volunteers.

Section summary

Projects were staffed with a mix of paid staff and unpaid volunteers. The workforce generally reflected the type of service they provided and the client group they served, for example, youth and community based projects tended to have a younger workforce. In many cases an individual undertook multiple roles within the organisation, for example, they may be both a client and a volunteer at the same time.

Volunteers were seen as vital to the delivery of services. Without them none of the case study projects, perhaps with the exception of CS1 whose delivery model actively relied more heavily on sessional workers paid hourly, would be able to deliver their services as fully or effectively as they did. However, the number of volunteers was not important; what mattered was getting the right balance of people within the team.

Recruitment and training procedures varied across the projects but CS2 probably had the most vigorous and comprehensive processes in place. However, maintaining good quality volunteers can sometimes prove challenging as CS2 and 3 had both discovered. Valuing and supporting staff and volunteers was vital for both retention and service delivery.

Key messages:

- Volunteers are one of the most valuable assets FBOs have since many projects mainly employed part-time or contracted workers with only a few full-time permanent posts.

- Many of the services provided would not be possible if it was not for volunteers. It is vital that volunteers are both valued and supported.

- There are significant benefits to growing a diverse volunteer base, in terms of expertise, age and gender.

- Whilst appointing the right volunteers to the right roles is crucial for successful service delivery; FBOs should not be afraid to signpost potential volunteers to other voluntary opportunities or to where they can develop the skills needed to volunteer, if they do not have the particular skill set required for a specific project.

- Training volunteers can be costly and time consuming for a project with limited resources. The availability of small local grants to help a FBO build capacity and invest in and develop their volunteers, such as the Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund (HSCVF) Local Grants and Capacity Building Scheme, should be more widely publicised. Such schemes are designed to build the capacity and capabilities of all voluntary organisations.
(www.volunteeringfund.com/news/local-grant-and-capacity-building-scheme-2012-now-live)

- Keeping volunteers, especially young volunteers, can be difficult. It is therefore important to have a strategy for developing and retaining volunteers.

- The client re-investment model is something that several of the projects are looking to further develop to help them meet future client need.

It is neither possible nor advisable to deliver services in a particular area of need without the help of others. Therefore, this section considers the importance of partners and the benefits and challenges of partnership working.

Cross-sectional partnership working

The projects all worked with a large number of partners from both the statutory and non-statutory sectors to help them deliver their services. Statutory organisations included the police, the health service, local authorities, housing associations and youth services. Case study 3 was the only project not to work with statutory partners. This is because their client group were not recognised as legally being in the country and therefore they were not the responsibility of any statutory organisation. However, their partner situation may change in the future if they extend their service of multiple occupancy housing to those who are granted permission to stay.

Non-statutory partners are drawn from the third and private sectors and include, for example, national and local charities such as The Red Cross, MacMillan and the RSA Trust, community associations, universities, private training providers and employers. Case studies 1, 3 and 4, particularly, worked in partnership with churches and other FBOs. Running the winter night shelter would not be possible for CS3 without the help of local churches, and CS1 would not be able to offer workshops or school speakers without the help of local religious leaders. In addition, projects were actively involved with a number of local networks that had an interest in delivering services to their client group. However, with the exception of CS1, there was little evidence of joint working using a 'Churches Together' model.

It was recognised by those working within each project that services cannot be effectively delivered in isolation. From the start CS4 worked collaboratively building local partnerships with the community, schools and the police:

> "...the foundations we have come from have really harnessed our focus to really prioritise partnerships at a local level. We aren't the whole pie but we do think we have a bit to play in the pie. We want to work with partners to support them, to bless them and to encourage them and to work alongside them and see what we can bring and what they can bring." (CS4: Director)

Case study 3 also developed partnerships early on, particularly with The Red Cross who provided their clients with practical help such as food parcels. According to the Director of CS3, it was important from the outset to work with partners and to establish who was delivering what locally to avoid duplication of services; especially in an area of need where everyone's resources were fully stretched. As well as facilitating the delivery of services, working with others had reportedly allowed CS3 to access training for their staff in areas of specialism, often free of charge. For example, one partner provided training to staff on understanding the needs of women been traumatised by acts of torture. These examples highlight the importance of building relationships and investing in good effective partnership working to ensure client need is met.

However, partnerships can take time to develop and this was certainly the case for CS2 with local hospitals and health care

professionals. The Director of CS2 began by regularly visiting local hospitals:

> Every week I would go down, they didn't know who I was, but they got used to seeing me. Little by little a Charge Nurse or a Sister would grab me. I made them discharge files…Little by little I got into Ward meetings. Over and over again, little by little. You've got to be known to them, you've got to be a face that they know.
> (CS2: Director)

One member of staff at CS4 had a similar experience when trying to initially build relationships with local primary schools. The member of staff responsible for establishing projects with children in primary schools found it to be a:

> ...long slow process. It took a long time to gain trust. So the first year I was here I just remember vividly feeling it was so hard. I was constantly making phone calls and nobody wanting to know me… it's really hard to access schools. I really did feel quite redundant for the first year.
> (CS4: Staff)

After sometime this member of staff started going into schools to listen to pupils read and helping with lunchtime clubs; activities that the schools needed extra help with. They got to know her and the project, 'but it did take a while' (CS4: Staff). They now work successfully in the five local primary schools.

However, what is meant by the term 'partner' can vary depending on context even within a particular project, and not all partnerships are seen as equal, as one trustee explained:

> It all depends on how you define partnerships as and what the expectations are from the parties. It all depends on the nature of the partnership. Truly altruistic partnerships are quite hard to find where both parties are looking to support. Most people have some agenda. So the thing for me is let's get to that agenda quickly so we can find out if this partnership is feasible. I'd rather cut to the chase and ask "what are you looking for" and on that basis we can decide if a partnership is feasible. I think on the whole partnerships are good if they are defined properly and there is clear expectation. True partnerships are harder to find, where there is a true sense of together we can achieve more. Sometimes people are just looking to promote their portfolio or their idea.
> (CS4: Trustee)

This trustee strongly believed that partnerships are generally beneficial, but that they have to be explored properly and that being honest and up-front from the start is what matters.

Several partners and trustees expressed concern about the current partnership model of delivery favoured by the government; whereby contracts for service delivery are awarded to big or national providers and then franchised out to smaller third sector organisations to be delivered on the ground, but often without any support or funding. This was not viewed as true partnership working. One partner of CS2 was extremely critical of this practice which he viewed as trying to cut small voluntary organisations out of the equation:

> Things will be driven more from a dictate point of view where something will come down say from the Department of Health that says "you must provide

this service" and it will then simply be outsourced, probably to a technology provider which will effectively cut [CS2] out of the loop and quite possibly us as well. That will fail because they have tried exactly that in [other areas] and that failed, but it will waste years whilst that happens in the meantime there will be no funding for [the case study]. Effectively they will destroy the local organisations to bringing in a national player who will then drop the ball and when they realise this and they go back to local players they won't necessarily be here. It's incorrect to assume that larger organisations are always cheaper or more effective.

(CS2: Partner)

The CS4 trustee quoted earlier agreed, commenting:

I'm always cautious of franchised models that get passed out…The trend now seems to be to dissolve out whilst retaining centrality. But this means that locally you have the burden…They tend to want you to have all the liability locally, you'll employ the staff, you'll have all the responsibility that goes with that, but we will call the shots centrally.

(CS4: Trustee)

Such models of delivery were not viewed as true working partnerships, nor were they seen as beneficial to either small third sector organisations or the clients they serve.

At CS5, the EIYCT were not seen so much as a partner but as an equal. However, according to the Director, where the boundary lay was somewhat 'blurred'. Others expressed similar difficulties in identifying partners. Drawing the line between supporter, funder and partner was often unclear, especially when partners took on multiple roles, as was the case with EIYCT. Whatever the label one thing was clear, that partnership working when it was with the right organisation, be they statutory or non-statutory, was viewed as mutually beneficial; as the Director of CS5 commented about their relationship with EIYCT, 'we couldn't do without each other'.

Benefits and impact of working in partnership

Working with others brought many benefits to the projects, their partners and their joint clients. For the projects it meant they were not only able to deliver their services more effectively, but it allowed them to keep up-to-date with the latest practice and policy developments in their area and, in some cases, develop strategic approaches to address the need in question. Case studies 1, 4 and 5, particularly, engaged with strategic partnerships as discussed in the Policy section of this report later.

The referral of clients, particularly for CS3, was viewed as a two-way process which depended upon the projects and their partners knowing what each could offer. For CS4 referrals from statutory organisations, namely the Police, was seen as an indicator of impact and faith in the service they provided; 'it shows they can rely on us,' (CS4: Staff). Working in partnership helped projects gain a better understanding of the sector, particularly in terms of what was available to meet the often multiple needs of their client group. This was especially true for CS3 as one member of staff commented:

[Partnerships] are healthy, it keeps us up dated, the more we build relationships with them the more we

> understand who we can refer to them; it's not a one-way thing… we may get referrals from different places and when we see what the needs of the client are and what experiences they've had we can get a better understanding of what organisations do, we can then see if that one is appropriate to refer a client on to.
> (CS3: Staff)

Partnership working also meant projects were able to improve services and achieve more, 'what we can offer has grown. It strengthens what we do', (CS5: Staff).

Partners, both statutory and non-statutory, expressed gratitude toward the projects for enabling them to deliver their services in challenging areas. They all valued their professionalism, their flexibility, especially schools in CS4, the quality of their service and their reliability and sustainability. Services offered by the projects were seen by partners as complementary or supplementary to that of the statutory sector; not encroaching or repeating a service. One statutory partner in CS4 commented how well the work of the project linked in with their own, helping them to identify young people and families in need of support.

Similarly, a statutory partner of CS2 explained how their partnership helped them deliver their specific services more effectively:

> From the Council's point of view and from the projects that we have been specifically working on, compliance is massive, huge. If people drop out then they are in there, we don't have the staff that can go in and give the people that level of support and that level of input from our point of view. Whereas [CS2] here has that capability.
> (CS2: Partner)

In CS3, where all partners were non-statutory, the work they undertook was also highly valued by their partners. One partner described them as 'one of their best partners' (CS3: Partner) and another as carrying out 'life saving work', stating 'we wouldn't know what to do without them' (CS3: Partner). Working with CS3 meant clients were able to find safe and secure accommodation which then enabled their partners to concentrate on other aspects of rebuilding the clients' lives, such as counselling as a result of trauma:

> It's great we can get going with counselling as other resources are available, i.e. some clients sleep in phone boxes or under cars etc. they are traumatised and in danger but when they are housed by [CS3] their protection level means that they can engage in trauma counselling. They need to be safe first. Counselling is second; mostly it's harder and takes longer if they are not secure and safe.
> (CS3: Partner)

A non-statutory partner of CS4 described the impact their partnership and the work of the CS4 had brought to the area:

> You only have to look at the ASB [antisocial behaviour] statistics and the feedback from young people hanging around. It was noticeable in a short space of time after they arrived. It wasn't anything you could put your finger on. There was a different attitude.
>
> Before there was one young person who spat at me, in front of his friends, on my boot, I said to him, "the colour looks terrible, I'd get your mum to take you to the doctors" and then I walked away. They didn't get the reaction they were looking for. 12 months later the same young person was a volunteer at CS4,

> he is now working for them. He still says hello five or six years on. There was a change in attitude.
>
> We [adults] are not seen as a threat anymore. They shout 'to' us not 'at' us which is nice. When they are with friends they are not afraid to just wave, which is a brave thing for a young person who doesn't really know you.
>
> (CS4: Partner)

Staff at the projects were conscious of the impact working in partnership had on clients beyond meeting their immediate need. For example, a member of staff at CS3 was aware that by providing people with a place to live, it also enabled partners to help clients rebuild people's lives in a number of different areas:

> The accommodation usually has the effect of allowing people to feel more secure. Once they have been in the accommodation for a month or two they are able to start working on other parts of their lives, for example, the legal side of their case…start to rebuild their life. I think the biggest impact we have for partners is that we offer an accommodation service. It's a massive relief for them that they can refer people that have previously been homeless to be properly housed. That not only has a huge impact on what we do but on what our partners deliver as well…Without it you can't really start to build on other parts of their lives.
>
> (CS3: Staff)

According to this member of staff, partners had often told them how grateful they were for the accommodation provided by CS3 because it allowed them to carry out their work more effectively.

Likewise, at CS4 a member of staff recalled how working in partnership had allowed both parties to deliver their objectives and meet the targets of funders. 'We were able to do things for them that they couldn't do just as for us they were able to do things that we couldn't do. In that sense we enabled them to fulfil a contract and succeed in that contract' (CS4: Staff). Their work with the police had proven to be particularly mutually beneficial:

> Similarly with some of the police work… shortly after we started working [on the estate] we were told by the police that there was a hotspot area for antisocial behaviour and gang recruitment, and the police asked if we could start doing things in that community and the police effectively pulled out their teams when they knew we were going to be there. In the first quarter of us being there – and all we were doing was praying and walking the streets – there wasn't one instance of domestic violence or antisocial behaviour reported in that time.
>
> (CS4: Staff)

Partners supported the projects in their development, for example, a CS4 statutory partner had acted, on several occasions, as an independent referee for funding applications. He had also made them aware of funding streams and additional resources available within his organisation because, as he pointed out, 'ultimately it benefits me and my organisation' (CS4: Partner). He also felt that the project, and other third sector organisations, cannot be expected to deliver services without funding.

In some instances partners believed that certain services would not have been delivered if it was not for the work being carried out by the project. For example, the

delivery of the Home Office Prevent training WRAP (Working to Raise Awareness of Prevent) undertaken by CS1. The Prevent group meets at the Centre and all of the Prevent training is run out of the Centre. It also advertises the training which is free to everyone in the public sector. One partner described the Centre as 'the hub of it…if it wasn't for the Centre it wouldn't run', (CS1: partner)

Several projects could provide hard evidence regarding the impact of their partnership working. Not only was this highly visible at CS4, which saw a significant decline in the crime figures of some 47 per cent as a result of their partnership work with the local police but also at CS2. One CS2 partner had evidence of the substantial financial benefits their partnership had brought to the local Health Service by reducing the number of heart failure readmissions. He had conducted a cost benefit analysis which showed, that by working together, readmissions had been cut by some 20 per cent and reduced costs to the Health Service by approximately £30,000 per month, gross. Therefore, partnership working, where it worked well, was reportedly beneficial to everyone.

Partnership challenges

Few challenges of partnership working were identified by either the projects or their partners. However, it should be noted that the partners interviewed were selected by the projects and therefore their experiences were likely to be favourable. When problems did occur they appeared to have been swiftly resolved. These seemed to be mainly around the logistics of delivery, for example, when a partner working with CS4 suggested that a menu of services on offer, with costs, could be provided at the start of the year to make planning and budgeting easier this was soon produced by the project.

Some did comment that better communication (CS4: Partner and CS4: Staff), especially when there was a change of personnel within an organisation (CS2: Staff) and more time (CS4: Staff) would benefit partnership working. Challenges were sometimes reported at the start of a relationship. According to one member of staff at CS3, new partners often perceived them to be bigger than they actually were. This occasionally led to an expectation that they would be able to house clients quickly and frustration when this did not happen. However, these were all seen as relatively minor issues of partnership working that were easily resolved. The partnerships that worked most effectively were those that meet regularly, preferably face-to-face, where ideas could be shared and challenges worked through.

There was some concern, especially at CS1, 2 and 4, that, on occasions, partners perceived the projects as simply a way of fulfilling their own targets, enabling them to tick the right boxes. A member of staff at CS1 commented, 'sometimes the Centre is seen as a place others can tick the Equality and Diversity box', (CS1: Staff). One of the CS1 Trustees, with the dual role of partner, was particularly wary of schools using the Centre purely to meet their obligations in this area for Ofsted inspections. A trustee at CS4 commented of such partnerships that, '…it's about looking at what we can both get out of it [the partnership]. Sometimes it just makes you part of their portfolio rather than it being an opportunity for a true partnership', (CS4: Trustee).

The research found a growing concern amongst both the projects and their

partners around the increasing reliance and expectation on the third sector to delivery services traditionally delivered by the statutory sector; an expectation by some that they will plug the gap. Statutory partners such as the Police, the LA and various departments of the Health Service were all concerned with the effect of public sector spending cuts, not just on services, but on the statutory sectors ability to support third sector organisations - faith-based or otherwise - to take up the slack and meet the need they once met. The Demos Inquiry expressed similar concerns noting that the government '… cannot assume that faith institutions will be able to step in where services are cut, even if they are motivated to do so by the needs of the community and their concern for the vulnerable in society' (Birdwell, 2013: 45).

There was a perception amongst many interviewed in this study that the public sector would eventually have to expand their services again to meet demand and that there would be, 'a change of wind' (CS3: Partner) in the long term.

Future partnership working

Most partners were positive and enthusiastic about future partnership working. One partner described the future as 'bright' (CS2: Partner), another as the partnership having 'a lot to offer' (CS3: Partner). Most were planning to continue with, and in most cases grow and develop, their partnership working according to level of need. This was particularly the case for statutory organisations that were looking for new ways to fulfil their obligations at a time of deep spending cuts and staff reductions, with one CS2 partner commenting:

> "We'll never have the people power they have. With £33m of cuts in the next two years there will be an impact on services. These organisations will grow. Even though the City Council has cut by 75 per cent the funding to the third sector, there is strength here in the delivery."
>
> (CS2: Partner)

The ever changing socioeconomic and political climate was viewed by some as presenting opportunities for new ways of working with new and existing partners. For example, cut backs in the area of youth inclusion by the police in CS4 had left a void which the project, in conjunction with a new national partner, had been able to help fill. This was seen by the Director as an opportunity for the expansion and development of their services.

Some of the projects would like to develop new partnerships. Case study 3 would especially like to work more closely with the Church of England as well as those from other faiths, in particular the Muslims, given their strong Muslim client base. The absence of the involvement of other faith partners at CS3 was noted by several of the interviewees, across staff, clients and partners.

Section summary

The key to successful partnerships had several elements and included working alongside others, building on and complementing existing services to maximise resources, good communication, sharing a vision or common goal and trusting each other. As one partner commented; 'I knew immediately we would be able to work together. They had a similar vision for the community', (CS4: Partner).

Partnerships worked best when they were two-way and mutually beneficial. Partner engagement operated at both practical and strategic levels. At a practical level partnership working was a reciprocal arrangement that enabled each to deliver their services on the ground more effectively. Strategically, collaboration helped them develop strategies to improve services in their common area of need.

Partners valued the projects for delivering a good quality service, being reliable, trustworthy and flexible; for doing what they said they would do.

In all cases, the Directors of the projects were viewed by partners and staff as one of the key people driving forward partnership working. For example, the attendance of CS4's Director at local partnership groups was seen by one statutory partner as 'crucial' (CS4: Partner). The pivotal role the Director played in developing partnership working was also recognised by members of his own staff, 'I think a lot of the work [the Director] did really early on framed the ability to build partnerships…he was really good at being very, very clear about who we were and what we did,' (CS4: Staff). The Director of CS2 was also described by one member of staff as 'good at partnership working' and instrumental in setting up the partnerships from the start. The determination and persistence of the Director of CS2 ensured the project had a clear referral route and ultimately a good working relationship with a range of local health service partners in the local area.

Projects reported that the level of need was growing, especially for CS3, making effective partnership working and with on-going spending cuts, the pooling of resources increasingly important.

Overall, good cross-sector partnerships were seen by everyone as mutually beneficial, especially to the client. It enabled all parties to deliver services more effectively and helped to maximise scarce resources. They were viewed positively and as complementary rather than competitively.

Key messages:

- Cross-sector partnership working is important for successful service delivery.
- The most successful partnerships are those where the partnership is mutually beneficial and where there are common goals and shared values.
- From a partner's perspective, it is important that the service delivery is of high quality and that projects deliver what they say they will.
- Building successful partnerships and gaining partnership trust takes time.
- Effective communication is essential to building strong and sustainable partnerships.
- Successful partnerships can prevent a duplication of services and help meet client need more holistically.
- There is some concern that the franchising partnership model of national organisations sub-contracting to local Third Sector providers is damaging the sector.
- Statutory partners highly valued the services delivered by FBOs recognising the "people power" and depth of commitment and relationship they brought to their work.
- Partnership working can often result in greater impact and value for money.
- Some partners simply perceived FBOs as part of a 'box ticking' exercise; a way of fulfilling their own targets.
- There is a danger that spending cuts and austerity measures could lead the statutory sector to expect the Third Sector to fill service delivery gaps without offering support to increase its capacity to deliver.

5. Policy

This section considers one of the main foci of the research brief which was to investigate the level and nature of FBOs policy engagement and impact over the lifetime of the FtE project.

Influence and impact

This study found that none of the projects viewed influencing, or engaging with, policy as a major focus of their work. Neither did they see themselves as having directly influenced policy, either locally or nationally. A Trustee of CS5 was clear that they were not linked to any kind of political bias. Their aim being primarily to try and stay 'neutral and push the agenda of [local] people and community' (CS5: Trustee). The Director of CS2 believed they needed to be 'non-political' at all times. Further, any political engagement was viewed by staff as the responsibility and role of the Director. Staff did not generally have knowledge of, or an interest in, this area of work; their primary focus was meeting client need.

The projects all accepted they were working within a predefined policy context, usually set by central government, over which they had no direct control. This was particularly evident for CS3 and their work with asylum seekers and refugees; an area of policy that was described as 'inflexible' by one of their partners. This partner commented; '…there doesn't seem to be any chinks where we can alter the way people are supported. There aren't changes to be made on a local level to it; it's a national policy,' (CS3: Partner). Another senior member of staff was unsure how much impact they have had since the backlog of asylum seekers awaiting decisions is now 'bigger than ever.' If projects had any engagement with policy at all, it was influencing policy implementation not the policy itself; to contribute to rather than change policy.

However, whilst policy influence and impact were reportedly hard to measure, some Directors felt they had indirectly influenced policy, at least locally; in some cases simply by existing (CS1: Director). However, their partners were likely to take a more favourable view regarding the influence of projects on policy with several linking changes in local policy and improved service delivery to the client group directly to the work of the projects.

For example, according to one partner in CS1 the Prevent policy in the City had been strengthened and progressed in a large part because of the Centre's work. This partner firmly believed that the Centre had driven forward the local Prevent agenda and that the key driving force behind its success was the Director and his positive attitude towards partnership working. Part of the Centre's collaborative work across the city has been to play an active role within the local 'Prevent' Partnership. The Centre has been supportive of this important and sensitive work and has been commissioned over the past three years to host and deliver the WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) training package. This work has enabled Prevent to move forward with the involvement and support of local Muslim representatives. The Centre had also been involved in a number of local strategic groups in their area of expertise.

In CS3 several of the non-statutory partners interviewed commented that the projects input had impacted positively on policy and helped the asylum seeker and refugee voice to be heard both nationally and locally. A representative of CS3 sits on the advisor group led by one of their charity partners. The head of the group believed that over the years the group had influenced several policies in the area of asylum seekers and refugees. This partner had also drawn on the expertise of CS3 when responding to government consultations on asylum seekers and refugees. In addition, because the project had direct contact with the clients, their partnership had reportedly allowed the charity to provide the UK Boarder Agency with examples of 'live' cases where decisions were still pending; something the charity on its own did not have the capacity to do. Therefore, their partner believed that the project had indeed been able to directly influence policy. Another charity partner of CS3 working in the same area of need felt that the project was 'very political'.

The research showed that relevant statutory bodies (who were in many cases also partners) worked with and consulted the projects on their area of expertise. For example, the LA at CS1 regularly draws on the expertise and knowledge of the Centre and uses it as a base to run consultation events. A Health Service partner working with CS2 reportedly utilised what he had learnt from their service delivery into his own work when he took over the temporary management of a local Day Care Centre. The Director of CS4 works closely with the local police helping them to deliver their strategies and in this way provides the project with the opportunity to influence policy.

Members of each project, usually but not always the Director, were involved in a number of local forums concerned with influencing policy. For example, the Director of CS4 is a member of numerous local delivery and strategy groups looking at community, crime and youth work in the area. They also represent the voluntary sector on the Constituency Panel. Other members of the Panel include the Chief of Police, the Chief of Fire Brigade and local Councillors. Similarly, CS5 is represented on several local strategic partnership committees and involved in writing the new Local Strategic Plan. They are also actively involved with community groups that have, for example, successfully campaigned to keep their local library open. Through these networks they know their Ward Councillors and they are connected to their Member of Parliament; potentially giving them a voice at a range of political levels.

On several occasions 'policy' was interpreted by interviewees as how they met their legislative obligations such as safeguarding, CRB checks, employment legislation and Health and Safety requirements, rather than policymaking per se. This illustrates the point that for the majority of the staff, most of the time, influencing policy was not a priority activity.

Whilst policy engagement may not be a priority and even viewed as a distraction to their main body of work, most of the projects would like to have a greater level of influence

in their area of need. According to the Director of CS3, 'impact on policy has not been as great as we would have liked' (CS3: Director). However, they do not have sufficient resources, namely time, funding and staffing capacity to do so. This means, alongside the fact that polices are decided in Westminster, that in terms of policy engagement the projects are usually working more reactively rather than proactively.

A note on the 'Big Society'

Interviewees had little to say on the political concept of Big Society. It was generally viewed as something they were already doing and had been doing for some time. As one CS4 Trustee commented, 'Big Society is the language of what's already there'. The Manager of CS5 commented that he had never really understood it. He liked the concept but he did not think it was something he could 'take hold of it and run with'. The Directors of CS3 and 4 also liked the idea in theory but had found it difficult to operationalise in any meaningful way; mainly due to the lack of government's clarity, support and financial resources.

The Director of CS3 had considered tendering for a Big Society initiative around Work Clubs but on further investigation he found there was no funding attached. He felt that in theory it should have resulted in greater opportunities for charities but in practice this did not appear to be the case. He was not alone in finding a big gap between political rhetoric and practice.

Despite initial enthusiasm the Director of CS4 had also found the idea of Big Society restrictive and unsupported on the ground, 'the ability to deliver and the support for delivery is not there [yet] they were promised support.' He further commented:

> "We have generally found that some of our ability to grow and deliver stuff has been with the support of the statutory sector…and so the rather diminishing capacity of the statutory sector means we've not had the support we have had when it was promised there would be more to support the third sector. It doesn't really feel like it has materialised in any way. It seems that if you are 'big hitters' and you know the right people in the right environments then you can maybe work strategically to do that but…for the grassroots…they don't have the time to exist in those environments. If the agenda is to get more people to do more for free, I don't think that's a realistic understanding of Localism or Big Society.
>
> It seemed like a really positive opportunity for the third sector to receive some endorsement and recognition and support but actually the opposite seems to have happened. It's a nice concept but…unsupportive."
>
> (CS4: Director)

Section summary

Projects were engaging with policy, at least locally, and they were making a difference. However, the level of policy influence and impact was often extremely difficult to measure and more readily recognised by those around them rather than by the projects themselves.

Projects were most effective at influencing policy when they worked in partnership with others, be they local community groups (CS4 and 5), statutory organisations (CS1 and 2) or other third sector players such as campaigning charities (CS3). The work of CS1 directly led to the LA establishing a Council of Faiths. A partner of CS3 believed the group had influenced several policies in the area of asylum seekers and refugees and had drawn on their expertise when responding to government consultations in this policy area.

Whilst most had not directly influenced policy, they were all aware of policy changes that could potentially affect their clients and there had been indirect influence on policy through partnerships. Whilst policy changes have the potential to bring about reduced client need, in reality most result in an increase in need or a change in need.

The Big Society was viewed as nothing new, potentially helpful but ultimately unsupported and unworkable.

Key messages:

- The primary focus of many FBOs on delivering services and meeting client need means they have limited resources, including time, to devote to influencing policy development.

- Most projects saw themselves as working reactively rather than proactively.

- None of the projects viewed themselves as politically active or as lobbyist. Nor did they view themselves as being in a strong position to influence policymaking decisions. There was a perception that you have to be a "big hitter" and know the right people in the right environments to realistically have an impact on policy.

- The FBOs in this study were most effective at influencing policy, albeit indirectly and most likely at a local rather than a national level, when they worked with partners that shared similar interests and goals.

- The Big Society was viewed as something they were already doing. Projects liked the concept but the lack of government's clarity, financial support and resources meant it has made very little difference on the ground.

- Surprisingly, the Localism Agenda was not mentioned by any of the projects. Further research would be required to ascertain if FBOs have the capacity to engage with this agenda.

6. The Role of faith

This section examines the role faith plays in each of the projects. It is broadly divided into two parts; the role faith plays within the projects and the visibility of faith to those outside the projects; notably partners and clients. The section begins by exploring how integral faith is to the recruitment of staff and volunteers, how faith is drawn upon on a daily basis to facilitate service delivery and from the perspective of the projects, the importance of showing their local community that they are people of faith.

The role of faith within the organisation

All of the projects were founded on faith. Four projects, (CS 2-5), were based on what was described as Christian principals, whilst CS1, a secular organisation required to remain neutral in terms of promoting a particular faith perspective, viewed faith in broader terms. Here the focus was on shared values and common philosophies found in all faiths. Faith was viewed as integral to what projects did, how and why they did it and faith was instrumental in what they had been able to achieve. Faith was the foundation on which most of the projects were built and framed how they operated.

How the organisation draws upon faith to help deliver services

Faith and motivation

Many interviewees across projects felt that it was their faith that motivated them to become involved, 'it's absolutely vital, we are all doing this work because of our faith. That's what motivates us, inspires us more than anything else' (CS3: Staff). Their faith was reported to be one of the main reasons why the Directors had become involved in their particular area of work, if not the reason. This was particularly evident for the CS4 Director who had found his faith in God directing him to set up incarnational youth and community work during a time of retreat and reflection, he explained:

> "I was spending time reading the gospels, particularly John's gospel, I began to see something in the life of Jesus, of a level of impact on people's lives that seemed to be the same thing that I was called to…So I began to pray and asked God to bring us more fully into that."
>
> (CS4: Director)

Faith was said to sustain staff at times of challenge and frustration and gave them hope. Without faith many of the interviewees felt that meeting the need in their area of work would be almost impossible, that it would be a constant struggle:

> "Faith is really important. I think at times working with this client group in this situation, it can be overwhelming. If I had to carry that without that feeling of God is holding me up, I think it would be really difficult. You're dealing with a lot of very distressed people. I think it really helps because at times you really don't know what you are going to do to find someone a home or somewhere to stay... Just having that sense that you can give it to God's hands is really helpful. It's my motivation for doing it but it also sustains me."
>
> (CS3: Staff)

> A lot of people get burnt out quickly because you don't get a lot back from young people and it takes a lot out of you. You can spend a lot of time feeling like you're banging your head against a brick wall… Without my faith underpinning everything, I'd get tired and frustrated very fast. (CS4: Staff)

> I think [faith] is total for me, I don't know if it's possible to do without [faith], I would find it really, really difficult if I didn't know that there was a God who cared about asylum seekers behind it; you'd give up. Relying on your own strengths would be so, so difficult.
>
> (CS3: Director)

> [Faith] is a hugely motivating factor. I think that's a really positive thing because I think if people look at why we are involved at a community level, the fact that they are motivated by faith isn't something to be ashamed of or to hide from… I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing if I didn't have faith. It has brought about in me a desire and a commitment to serve…also it's what my heart is motivated to do because of my faith.
>
> (CS4: Director)

> I think if we were just doing youth work for youth work's sake then I would have given up on it a long time ago. But actually seeing there is a purpose to what we are doing is to help bring about transformation, to see them as God sees them not as the world that there is hope that things are going to change and be transformed; that's at the heart of it. So I think without that when kids are stabbing each other it's quite easy to give up.
>
> (CS5: Staff)

For many, their faith was what made their work possible and sustained them in continuing their work.

Staff and volunteers, and particularly the Directors, had faith that what they were doing was right, that it was God's will and that he would provide what was needed, including strength to carry on. When the projects were established all of the Directors lacked the necessary human and financial resources but they all had faith that resources would be provided if it was the right thing to do. Some also claimed to have evidence through answered prayers and their continued presence and growth, that they were doing God's work and that he had provided the resources they needed including funding, as the following comments from the Directors of CS3, 4 and 5 show:

> You don't have to have everything in place to get started. You just have to believe that you have got God's call. Abraham didn't know where he was going but he knew who was telling him to go and he went. I think that's an important principal because some people never get started, never get out of the pew... My favourite book is John Ortburg, if you want to walk on water you've to get out of the boat. I think that's absolutely key. God will come through. If you start walking on the water you might sink a bit but you will get some help. When people say where do you get your funding from? I say, "well, God gives it". Yes it comes through all sorts of ways and you have to work hard for it, but the bottom line is he will supply.
>
> (CS3: Director)

> We get to mid-August and that money drops out. Me and my wife were talking about it and she is far more pragmatic than I am and she was like, God if this is you we really need you to provide some

kind of answer in the next 48 hours. The next day one of the parishioners at the local Anglican Church, who has lived on the estate for 25 years, offered a loan from his personal pension. He knew of the circumstances and he came forward and offered a loan of ten thousand pounds from his personal pension, which is a huge investment of faith because we were complete non-entities really to him... He just so believed in what we were about and had a heart for the community. We took that as a sign, the fact that it came in the next day was amazing. (CS4: Director)

Without our faith what we do wouldn't make sense. It motivates us in how we work. I think it's true, Christian values run through everything we do. (CS5: Director)

The importance of prayer

Faith was frequently operationalised and supported through prayer. Prayer played an important active and practical role at several of the projects, especially CS4 which had been committed to prayer from the outset; 'all our work is underpinned by prayer' (CS4: Staff). During its first year of operation prayer was said to be the key. Individually and together staff and volunteers (who were few in number at that time) amassed some 70-80 hours of accumulative prayer a week. For CS3 and 4 it was important that staff participated in prayer as part of their day to day duties. At CS3 the staff prayed every morning as a team. This was seen as essential to their ability to carry out their daily tasks. The model for delivery at CS4 was street level prayer walks with 20 per cent of all staff time given over to prayer as a matter of course, 'at any point we can go off and pray' (CS4: Staff). It was also common to pray in small teams before youth activities commenced. A member of staff explained the role and importance of prayer in the work they did:

We will always try and pray directly before the activities and maybe a few issues that came up from previous week's group or club, like fallings out, or difficult children we will pray about and equally we will reflect, isn't that good that situation has improved. As a team we pray every day…The fact that we give a lot of time to prayer, it's part of our hours, praying together, praying individually…being faith-based it just puts it there every day what you're there for, it establishes God in it and God in the community. Especially with lots of situations where there can be no almost human way of doing anything. That is where it has been really exciting, where you think the only thing we can do is pray about this and some amazing answers have been given. (CS4: Staff)

Active prayer was therefore seen as integral to the work of some projects, particularly CS3 and 4. It gave the projects additional meaning and direction and was drawn upon on a daily basis.

The significance of faith in the local community

All projects emphasised the importance of working, living and engaging in their local communities and showing their faith through their actions and commitment. Whilst faith was generally covert in nature – project members did not visibly carry bibles with them or preach the gospel in meetings or to clients for example – it was implicit in what they did and how they conducted

themselves. Further, they were always 'up front' about their faith. It was often visible in their name, for example, CS2 has the word 'Church' in its title and CS1 is known locally as the 'Faith Centre'. As one member of staff at CS4 commented; 'pretty much everyone knows where we are coming from'. Faith was described by one member of staff at CS2 as 'core to everything…you can see it in our actions, in everything that we do'.

At CS1 the Centre was reported to focus on faith in the community more than it did on the cultural diversity aspect of its remit and all the major faiths in the area were involved with the Centre in one way or another.

However, whilst the projects were open about their faith within their local community and with their partners and clients, it was not their intention to convert people to Buddhism or Christianity, or to preach Buddhist or Christian values. Faith was exhibited through their work, their lives, their ethos and their actions:

> It's not a role to convert people either practically or theologically. Faith has to be a choice by an individual person.
>
> (CS4: Director)

> We're not here to bible bash young people but actually we are here to show love, to care, and to give young people hope. It's through building those relationships they see that faith is important to us, it adds value to what we do, they respect it… We are not here to make small Christian groups and they see that, if it was the other way around I think there would be challenges.
>
> (CS5: Staff)

The Demos Inquiry also found FBOs are not in the business of proselytising and concluded '…there should be nothing wrong with service providers openly discussing their faith', (Birdwell, 2013: 13).

At three of the case study projects (CS2, 4 and 5) delivery took place 'incarnate'. Here the majority of staff and volunteers lived and worked in the community they served. In all three cases the founders had moved to the area to set up the project in the local community. In this way their faith was constantly visible to everyone in the community; not just during working hours but their faith was reflected in how they lived their lives. Integrity was not just seen as 'what you do in the context of the job, [rather] it's how you live life outside of the context of the job. It's really important that we have people who are role models. Perpetually' (CS4: Director). The Director of CS4 and his wife were actively engaged in their community. His wife was a teacher at the local primary school which his children attended. He was governor at the school and they were involved in many other local activities and forums. Living in, and being a part of, the community in which he worked, reportedly gave the Director and other members of staff a greater understanding of the issues the community faced and how they could work with them consensually and constructively, to achieve the project's goal of community transformation. His commitment to the community earned him respect and trust and was particularly appreciated by one partner who commented:

> I love the fact that when they came to work here they actually brought houses here and committed to living [here]… with their families… So they have committed long term to this. They don't come from somewhere else, do their days work and then go home somewhere else; they don't leave, they live [on the estate].
>
> (CS4: Partner)

The situation was similar at CS5 where all paid staff and students on placement lived in the community they served. This incarnate model of service delivery was seen as vital for project success and sustainability; it was about leading by example. According to one member of staff, 'incarnational ministry is the key. I want to live here, to try and show my faith (CS5: Staff). Another interviewee felt it gave the community and the young people they worked with a sense that the project does not just finish when the activities do at the end of the day, 'you still see them around, whether it's just to say hi at Tesco's or something like that, it's a good feeling', (CS5: Student).

Staff and volunteers: the requirement to have faith

Whilst projects were founded on faith, it was not obligatory for either staff or volunteers to be 'a person of faith'. All of the projects worked within the law applying the Equalities Act (2010) to their recruitment processes which would make stipulating such conditions of employment illegal. Case study 1 also paid particular attention to Inter-faith guidelines on staffing. However, several of the projects had consulted with legal representatives and others on this issue. For example, CS3 had taken advice from Tearfund on their position and on any suggested wording when advertising posts. Therefore, whilst having faith was not a requirement for paid staff, individuals were asked to subscribe to an organisation's underlying values and ethos when appointed.

Although not obligatory in theory - 'if an excellent candidate came along it would not stop them from being employed' (CS3: Staff) – in practice, being a person of faith was often seen as strongly desirable in some candidates, depending on the post being filled. Similarly, at CS1 whilst it was not a condition of employment and not referred to during the interview process, one member of staff felt that to do the job it was important to be 'very well educated around faith and faiths…having a sensitivity about faith and faiths is vital. You need to have an understanding and a background in faith' (CS1: Staff). At the same time this member of staff felt that those in post needed to maintain a neutral faith position when carrying out their duties.

In some cases, notably CS3, 4 and 5, it was felt that it would be very difficult for a person of no faith to carry out the duties required of posts. For example, although the application information for CS3 does not stipulate an applicant must be a Christian, it does make it clear that each day begins with staff prayers. Therefore, a person of no faith would find it difficult to fulfil the requirements of the post; 'only a Christian would do it' (CS3: Director). Similarly at CS4, where 20 per cent of staff time was dedicated to prayer, only those who believed in prayer were thought likely to be interested in working for the project:

> Because we believe that a significant level of the impact we have is because of the place and priority on prayer, it would be very difficult for people to connect with prayer if they didn't own a value to prayer. So it's like an occupational requirement is a commitment to prayer. So you probably wouldn't want to apply for a job that has prayer as a dynamic unless you saw a vision and a value behind prayer. (CS4: Director)

To date this had not been raised as an issue because CS4 have not yet formerly

advertised positions; rather staff had been recruited after a time of volunteering at the project, which meant they were fully aware of the faith and prayer element required by the organisation. However, the Director did comment that if and when they do go down the route of advertising posts, prayer will be part of the job description because faith is needed to do daily business. 'I suppose it would be like asking someone who is a vegetarian to work in an abattoir, it would be quite a difficult thing to do' (CS4: Director). Effectively the emphasis within some projects on faith as an active part of the job leads to applicants who do not in some way share the same ethos as the organisation, or who do not have a personal faith, self-selecting not to apply.

Whilst CS2 and 5 appeared to place less emphasis on staff praying openly or regularly, and the concept of faith was not regularly discussed by those working at CS2, staff at both were still expected to sign up to the Christian ethos of the respective projects. The application information sent out to prospective employees at CS2 clearly states that the organisation has a Christian philosophy. Therefore, prospective applicants are expected to subscribe to the core values and principles of the organisation; principles which were said to be common amongst most, if not all, religions. In the past CS2 has employed both Muslims and Hindus. Although it was reported that applicants often feel they need to state their position on church and faith during the interview process, the organisation does stress to candidates that the organisation is open to recruiting individuals of no-faith and of all faiths.

At CS5, the underpinning Christian principles under which they operate are seen as good practice in the area of youth work and something which those who are not Christians should be happy to comply with:

> "I think it's important that they understand and respect what the foundations of the youth centre are and the [organisation's] ethos which is key to the youth centre and staff don't have to be Christians, but there is an element that you have to sign up to the ethos. This is part of what we are doing and we are not going to get rid of it whether you believe or not believe. And I think the way that we present it is actually it's as a good framework for youth work... If you're not trying to do those things as a youth worker then there is something fundamentally wrong. Actually it's a nice firm foundation for wanting to include people, wanting to treat them equally. Staff that aren't Christians have actually seen the importance that it plays in our job. There's one member of staff who has been here for ten years and he's seen a lot of people in my role who are Christians and he has seen how that has shaped the work and offers so much more than someone coming in and saying, "I'm running this, it's a job, and then I'm going home." He sees the importance of faith."
>
> (CS5: Staff)

Therefore, as a result of the implicit nature of the projects, rather than the actual roles staff might undertake within them, the majority of paid staff were by default and through a process of self-selection, people of faith and predominantly Christian.

In terms of the Directors, they were all, with the exception of CS5, the original founder of the organisation. This means that job descriptions as such do not currently exist for these posts. However, if the Directors were to step down for any reason, it was commonly agreed that

being a person of faith would be written into the job description since for example, the Director of CS3 would be required to participate in daily prayers.

The faith or religious affiliation of others working at the projects, such as volunteers, students on placements and apprentices, was less of an issue. These groups were more mixed in terms of faith than paid members of staff. However, whilst most of the volunteers at CS4 were in fact Christians, this was reportedly not because they were required to be but rather because:

> ...they have been the ones who have wanted to volunteer. Some just like being involved, they feel appreciated and valued and like that they have a role to play. Everybody has a little look at our values sheet, looks at our beliefs and our principles and our faith and has to say I'd be happy to work within this either as a volunteer or as a staff member. And that's kind of the limit of what we ask for really.
>
> (CS4: Staff)

One member of staff at CS3 felt strongly it would be wrong not to open up their volunteering to non-Christians commenting:

> I don't see how it's our place to say to those that want to serve the needy you can't do it because you're not a Christian, I think it's massively hypocritical for us to almost shun people who don't have a faith because they want to come and help...If you have a heart to serve the marginalised, it's not my place to question why. (CS3: Staff)

The Director of CS4 had a similar view point commenting that some volunteers simply like to be part of the community.

Faith and the Trustees

Faith amongst individuals on the Board of Trustees varied, as did faith's significance and role. All Boards had individuals that were of faith and of no faith. The important aspect was that the trustees brought into the same ethos as the Directors and the project. Some Boards (CS2 and 4) prayed before meetings:

> We pray at the Trustee meetings. We consider everything from a faith-based aspect. What we are being asked to do... does it actually fit in with the central tenants of why [the organisation] was set up. We do have initial values which we can refer. That for me is central to decisions we make and the services we provide. (CS2: Trustee)

> [We are] quite unusual in that we provide a spiritual component as well. So we are praying and also thinking about the project. We can feed in from a broader perspective that way, what do we sense God is doing with the project, where we feel the emphasis needs to be…Our role is anything from finance to prayer support to making sure we comply with legislation. (CS4: Trustee)

However, not all Boards prayed which was the situation at CS5, 'It's not on our agenda, it's an EIYCT forum and EIYCT led, and we are comfortable with that,' (CS5: Trustee).

Visibility of faith to partners

Faith appeared to be highly visible to partners and supporters alike. All those interviewed were aware that they were working with a FBO from the outset and none were put off by the faith element of the organisation. Indeed, many partners, some of which were also of faith but most of which were not, welcomed their ethos, their way of working, and their openness. Rather, it was the quality of the service they provided that was important, 'most take us on how we work' (CS3: Staff), and the emphasis they placed on meeting client need. The fact that services were being delivered by a FBO seemed to be a secondary consideration, 'when we are working together we don't concentrate on faith,' (CS3: Partner).

Partners used words such as 'compassionate', 'caring', 'understanding' and 'sympathetic' when describing the projects and how they delivered their services. Partners at CS2 were said to 'like the way we interact with people' (CS2: Director), providing something the statutory services could not due to a lack of time, resources and even training. One CS2 partner was impressed by their professionalism, their flexibility and the quality of the service they provided commenting:

> The amount of actual professionals that are working within this service, the amount of different disciplines they have within one area; they are not just a bunch of volunteers, which are peoples potential perceptions of what they are…Seeing what the actual different arms of the organisation actually does, where they get their funding from and the struggles they have with funding…And seeing how an origination like this which has a very traditional base of faith plus the befriending part…to jump onto something which is pretty much for a lot of the services out there high-end technology, to make that leap but to do it so effortlessly and to do it with such ease which then reflects across their work out there with people in the community. It's been amazing to see. Just to feel a part of it from our point of view.
>
> (CS2: Partner)

Partners did not see faith, use of prayer or the bible, as threatening or detrimental to service delivery; even those who may have been naturally sceptical. Rather, most partners viewed the underlying values and ethos the projects brought as positive, as enhancing their service delivery and in some instances providing a role model or template for others, especially young people. One of the statutory partners at CS4 commented:

> It would have been easy to think, oh my God have we got a bunch of Bible bashers here and I don't mean that in a disrespectful way…I suppose if you weren't aware you'd have the perception that they go around with a bible in their hand but it's not like that at all. I've never actually seen them heavily pushing religion or anything like that. However, I think in many respects it's a good thing because of their values and links to religion it probably strengthens things in many ways when they are engaging with young people and trying to help young people and move them in the right direction. It's not about getting them all to become a Christian or whatever, but it might be about instilling in them decent values about themselves, about people around them, having respect for themselves and respect for other people and that for me is a benefit. One

> would hope that you have a group of young people that work for this organisation that you would consider to be good peer role models. I can only see it as a plus. I'm sure if they were out there 'bible bashing'… it might turn young people away.
>
> (CS4: Partner)

Another CS4 partner agreed:

> I know they're Christian based but they don't push that onto people. It doesn't matter what faith you are or if you are of no faith. So the immediate question is 'what faith are you?' but they don't do that. That's the extent of it really. I know that they do prayer mornings and they walk around the estate praying, I know that.
>
> (CS4: Partner)

Only two of the projects, CS3 and 4, reported any negativity from potential partners. In both cases it generally occurred at the start of the partnership. At CS4 partnership difficulties were specifically connected to a few individuals at the LA, 'some key people in the LA didn't trust us because we were Christians' (CS4: Staff). However, once they began working with the projects any reservations they had were reportedly soon dispelled.

Visibility of faith to clients

Clients, on the whole, seemed aware that the projects were faith-based. Many clients viewed this with indifference or as incidental, as one CS2 client commented; 'kindness is kindness' (CS2: Client). Another stated that the faith '…is not important, it is how you treat people, with respect. It doesn't matter if you are a Christian or a Muslim' (CS3: Client). This client went on to say that she had not considered the organisation's actions in terms of faith; she only knew that 'the organisation is run by good people. They are good people who are willing with a good heart' (CS3: Client). Most clients were simply grateful for the service the project offered and the compassionate way in which it was delivered.

The openness of projects about their faith was said to have provided a space for conversations about faith and religion to naturally occur with clients. However, faith was never pushed, 'we don't shoe-horn faith into every conversation' (CS4: Staff). Indeed, it was a rule at CS2 that staff and volunteers do not try to canvas or convert clients in matters of faith and only mention faith if the clients do so first. Similarly, the Demos Inquiry found many organisations in their study had strict rules about non-proselytising to clients.

At CS1 faith was evident to anyone who used the Centre in the imagery around the premises and the resources freely available. However, according to the Director:

> There is no intention to make [faith] visible, we are sitting in this room surrounded by some artefacts and resources from all the major world faiths and one could come into the room and say this is all about religion isn't it? And it is yes at one level, but it's also about how you live your life and whether you're atheistic or humanist, I would hope this has something to offer too.
>
> (CS1: Director)

Likewise, CS3 staff were discouraged from actively broaching the subject of faith with clients because there was a concern that clients may say they have to have a faith to get housed. An additional sensitivity was required at CS3 since the very nature of the need being addressed meant their clients came from a range of different faiths and that they were at a very vulnerable point in their lives.

Providing opportunities for people of different faiths to discuss issues of faith was one of the main functions of CS1. One of the faith school speakers for the Centre, a Muslim, said he could sometimes see the direct impact of speaking to young people on the issue of faith. For example, after one school session a young man of about 16 came up to him, shook his hand and said, he had never had the opportunity to talk directly to people like myself, he said people all around him had told him untrue stories and that he'd learnt a lot today and he would not be judgmental anymore' (CS1: Staff). This speaker felt that most people do not get a chance to ever talk directly to someone of a different faith or culture like himself.

There was some evidence that through their involvement with the projects some clients had come to develop an interest in faith. For example, a young male volunteer at CS4 who originally became involved with the organisation as a client was not a person of faith. He was made aware that the project was a FBO by the youth workers not long after he began volunteering, 'they prayed at the start and they said to me and the rest of the group, "we're Christians, we like to pray to God because we think that's right…if you don't want to pray you don't have to"' (CS4: Volunteer). He said that he had felt fine about this from the start believing that religion is up to what people want to believe in and he was comfortable with the practice of praying. Over the three years this young person had been volunteering at the project he said he had come to believe in God.

A parent volunteer at CS4, who was a single mother with three daughters, was not a person of faith before her youngest two daughters started to attend activities offered by the project. At first she was unsure about this aspect of the organisation but after a few weeks she said she started to enjoy it even more than her daughters. As a result of her involvement with the project she recently had both her younger daughters christened and had invited one of the project youth workers to be a Godparent.

Coming from a faith perspective was said to allow projects to do more than simply deliver a service. They were able to bring their whole self to the work they did and provide a holistic, often compassionate, service to help meet the multiple needs of their clients. In this way the underlying faith ethos of the project was exhibited in their daily actions and behaviour. The Director of CS2 felt that many working in the care sector today are governed by 'non-Christian professional ideology that means you don't bring the whole person to the job'; something she passionately felt they as a FBO could do. She commented that:

> "Nurses now are not even allowed to wear a cross. The only people that can be overtly spiritual are the Chaplains and even they, under the new rules, are not allowed to just go around the ward and talk to people…A Chaplain can only be brought onto the ward if someone requests one."
>
> (CS2: Director)

She believed that in this way the spiritual side of the hospital structure had been removed and there was no longer any training for nurses that helps them to fill the emotional and spiritual gap within the care service.

There were few reports of clients objecting to services being delivered by a FBO. One prospective CS2 client had reportedly been a little wary of taking help from them when he realised they were faith-based until his visitor explained that 'it doesn't make any difference, it's not going to interfere with anything. I've come to help you now that you are out of hospital…and then he was fine. He was the only one' (CS2: Staff). Another member of staff once had a client phone after the initial visit but before the second one asking, 'are you a Christian? I said I try to be. Well, that's ok then she said; I wouldn't be wanting you to come anymore because my brother is a Christian and he will look after me now' (CS2: Staff). There had also been a few reported occasions when Muslim men had turned down the offer of the night shelter at CS3 because they did not want to go into a church building. However, such reactions were said to be rare. Similarly, the Director at CS5 had anecdotal evidence that one or two Muslim families in the area had not engaged with family events and other activities because they were run by a Christian organisation. Another family who did not directly identify themselves with any specific faith were initially reluctant to attend a family event should they be obliged to join the church. However, after being reassured there was no such obligation they did attend events and subsequently became more involved in the local church community. The Director commented: 'they chose to develop that engagement for themselves, but it is not an expectation from us…Because we don't have a Christian message in the clubs, I don't think it's a barrier but the leaders have not hidden their own faith' (CS5: Director). All projects aimed to meet the needs of clients first and to be inclusive at all levels; faith was shown through actions, not by constantly reminding everyone that they were a FBO.

Distinctiveness of FBOs

Few partners could define what was distinctive about working with a FBO compared to other organisations providing similar services:

> "It's difficult because [the project] is quite special. I don't know if another FBO came in to do the same work as them they would work the same…Whether they would be doing the same kind of good work if they were not faith-based I can't say, they may well be, because I think it's the ethos and the vision as well as the faith."
>
> (CS4: Partner)

But one CS4 partner, who was also a practicing Christian, felt that from her perspective, whilst they do have other organisations come and work with their children; they are not always as understanding as they might be commenting:

> "I don't think other people are always as patient and caring of our children as we are who come to them with a faith background. I think you have that more empathetic approach to them. Some people are very quick to

> make a judgement, particularly with the more challenging children. They are not always as patient and caring as they might be.
>
> (CS4: Partner)

A CS2 partner felt that their uniqueness came from knowing exactly why they were there, through clarity of vision and that they were able to clearly communicate this to others. A non-faith CS3 partner commented that they had an 'added dimension of faith we don't have which means we do reach more people. In supporting us I'm sure that they have a big impact on who knows about us...and hopefully vice versa' (CS3: Partner). This partner went on to say that, 'I don't know if the difference is because it's a faith organisation or an excellent organisation. It's hard to say'. Whatever the reason this partner trusted CS3 and was happy to refer vulnerable clients to them in the confidence that they would receive the help they needed in a compassionate and appropriate manner. She felt a large part of this was because CS3 was not only free from government funding and pressure to meet targets, but because 'it is relatively small [and] this makes it very, very effective' (CS3: Partner).

Similarly, clients were unable to express the difference between the service they received from the projects as a faith-based provider and that of a non-faith provider. Clients often had limited experience of other services with which to compare.

Section summary

Faith played a pivotal role in each of the projects. It was a key motivator when they were established. Projects were open and upfront about their faith, particularly CS3, 4 and 5. Here, prayer was integral to service delivery and paid roles within the organisation. Case study 4 allotted a large percentage of staff time to prayer. However, it was not obligatory for any member of staff, at any of the projects, to be a person of faith.

All of the projects were very clear that they are not in the business of converting people to their faith; they were primarily concerned with meeting need in a professional manner. They were open to everyone, staff, volunteers, partners and clients, regardless of age, gender, race or faith. They all believed that their faith was exhibited through their actions.

In the main, partners welcomed the faith element of the projects; few felt threatened or uncomfortable working with partners who proclaimed to work in faith. In many cases partners felt the faith aspect was beneficial to both the partnership and their clients. Clients were largely ambivalent about the fact that the projects were faith-based. Like partners, clients, often in vulnerable positions, judged them by the service they provided, not whether or not they were faith-based.

The funders of this study, FtE, were particularly interested in examining whether or not FBOs, such as those in this study, have a proven resilience against the

backdrop of the demise of the regional tier of governance and the ever changing political landscape in which they operate. This study has shown that there is a proven resilience and that it comes primarily from a position of faith. The role of faith within each project, along with the commitment, drive and leadership of its Director, has ensured each has had the necessary strength and resources to continue with their work. Indeed, the Directors would, by and large, advocate that they are only able to do what they do because of their faith.

Key messages:

- Faith sustained the projects and drove them forward regardless of the economic or political climate in which they were operating.
- Whilst it was not obligatory for either staff or volunteers to be 'of faith' individuals were expected to sign up to the organisations underlying faith ethos and values.
- Faith-based projects can be honest and open about their faith. Both partners and clients respected and even embraced the faith element of the projects.
- None of the projects aimed to convert others, especially clients, to their faith.
- Addressing client need is the main aim of projects, not promoting faith.
- Projects delivered an inclusive service regardless of a client's faith, age, gender, race, or any other criteria.
- The resilience of FBOs comes primarily from their faith. The message was "have faith".
- This resilience through faith, rather than financial motivation, made FBOs less risk adverse and more likely to be innovative in their approach to addressing client need.
- Some statutory partners viewed faith as enhancing the quality of the service they delivered.
- Any initial negativity from partners to the faith ethos was generally the result of misconceptions about how FBOs operate, and this was quickly dispelled once partnerships were up and running.
- It is important for FBOs to demonstrate a long-term commitment to the communities they serve. One way to do this is for project staff to live in the communities they serve; to deliver services incarnate.
- All Boards of Trustees included members who were both of faith and of no faith; the key factor was members should support the underlying ethos of the organisation.

7. Sustaining Delivery

This final findings section looks at how the projects continue to ensure the delivery of their services meet the relevant and changing needs of their clients as well as exploring on-going delivery challenges.

Regular review and reflection

As a matter of good practice the projects regularly reviewed their services. This included reviewing their organisational structures such as staffing and premises and perhaps most importantly their service to clients. As noted in the Staffing and Volunteering section of this report, CS3 was in the process of reviewing their work with volunteers but not for the first time. The overall staffing structure has been reviewed regularly over the years to enable them to continually meet the need of their clients in the best way possible.

All projects were keen to be client-led. They valued their views and opinions and actively sought client feedback on the service they provided to ensure delivery was both appropriate and of high-quality. A member of staff at CS4 said:

> You have to listen to the needs of the people you want to serve if you're going to be effective…Some organisations are like we are going to start work in this area and we are going to do this and then try and get people to come. Our approach was more, 'let's go and make some friends in the area and see what they want and then respond to their needs'. You're much more likely to engage with people that way if you hear what they want rather than assume you know what everyone wants.
>
> (CS4: Staff)

As a matter of course CS2 collects feedback forms from every client at the end of their six-week visits. These forms are then analysed and used to improve the service and to track client satisfaction. All three of the clients interviewed at CS2 said they would recommend the service to others, as would all clients interviewed across the case study projects. However, none of the clients were able to make suggestions for improvements; all clients interviewed at CS2 thought it was just a 'wonderful' service with one client commenting:

> Somebody bothered about me; they helped me with my stocking. And it's the company as well. They are all so nice and friendly…. everything was lovely. I'm really grateful. I'll remember it. I've told everybody.
>
> (CS2: Client)

Similarly, at CS3 clients were regularly consulted about what it was the project could do to better meet their needs. Recently they conducted a full client survey to establish exactly what type of services clients would like. The outcomes of the survey were still being considered at the time of the study.

Projects valued time to reflect on their delivery and regularly provided opportunities for staff and volunteers to suggest new ways of delivering services. Reflecting on past mistakes, or rather what had worked and what had not worked so well, was seen as healthy and had shaped the service currently offered. As the Directors of CS1 and 5 explained:

> What we've done has led us to this point. In many ways I reckon that's not a bad

> place to be where we are now. Would I have done anything differently? Sometimes the mistakes…and we've had some classic mistakes and conflicts but actually that's also brought us to where we are too. Often those are the ones you learn most from. A lot of education now is trying to iron out all the risks and potential hazards and rightly so…but the danger, however, is that you also iron out all the learning.
>
> (CS1: Director)

> There is another model where you only get started once volunteers are willing to participate and you base it on that… people who want to be there rather than people who are required and I do wonder if I would pursue that if I was to start again, but having said that, I probably wouldn't. I probably would do things the way that we have because we have created something people want to join. And then they have seen the value of how they can participate and how they can contribute. Broadly speaking I am pleased…everything we've done has been really good fun and it's all been part of our story to where we are now.
>
> (CS5: Director)

All learning was therefore seen as healthy and productive.

Transition and expansion

At the time of the research all of the projects, and in particularly CS1, were going through a period of transition. Many were looking to change or expand their services and/or move premises. For example, CS4 were considering extending their delivery to other nearby estates and CS2 were looking into the possibility of delivering some of their services in another six regions. However, this was proving to be quite a daunting task when taking in account the fact that one region alone comprises eight areas each of which equates approximately to the size of the City they currently deliver in. For the Director of CS2 it was very much about 'how you expand and keep your integrity'. There was a feeling amongst those interviewed that they 'did not want to grow for the sake of it' (CS4: Staff). There was little desire amongst the Directors or their staff to go national, and a strong feeling amongst both the projects and their partners that big is not necessarily better. Further, services were not thought to be directly transferable from one location to another; regardless of geographical proximity or the cultural/social context or the similarity of client profiles. As the Director of CS4 commented:

> We don't have any desire to develop into a national organisation. We want to do what we do really well on the ground, we are committed to the community we are in… also we have a vision for the City… But that probably isn't to transplant what we do but maybe to support, nurture and resource other people who are committed to their communities using similar stuff using the things we have learnt; both positively and negatively, to help support and streamline what others are trying to do or have a vision to do.
>
> (CS4: Director)

Therefore, taking someone else's vision and transplanting it elsewhere was not recommended, no matter how successful the project; 'it was my vision for [the area]; others need to have their own vision' (CS1: Director).

The projects were also looking for new, innovative but appropriate ways to deliver their services.

New models of delivery

As a result of regular reviews and refection, and in light of the constantly shifting economic and political climate, each project was looking at how their services might be improved to meet the changing needs of their clients. In some cases, for example CS1, new models of delivery were under consideration. Some, notably CS3, 4 and 5, were looking at what might be termed a 're-investment model' as discussed in the 'Staffing and Volunteers' section of this report. In this model clients have an opportunity to contribute to the service they have benefited from by moving from the role of client to volunteer and potentially/ eventually staff. For example, young people attending clubs may help to run activities with the younger children or they may become role models for other young people (CS4) or parents may help run after school clubs (CS5) or the project (CS3) may utilise clients' language skills to help with translation issues where clients have little or no English. Clients at CS3 were keen to give something back to the Trust once they are granted permission to stay in the country. One of the female clients interviewed said, 'hopefully once we get our papers we will help... Maybe we will be volunteering to help other people' (CS3: Clients). The idea is that clients are not just consuming the service but that they have the opportunity to 'give back'. The Director of CS5 described this model of service delivery as 'very exciting', especially the idea of resourcing parents. He felt such a model would help to strengthen the service, provide additional resources for the project and give clients a sense of ownership and responsibility within their particular community of need.

However, it may not always be possible to work in this way, for example, at CS2 where clients are generally elderly and infirm and even on recuperation, the majority are unlikely to be active enough to take on the role of visitor. Nevertheless, one member of staff was always on the lookout for new recruits and she had recruited ex-clients.

Away from the reinvestment model, the recent reduction in the size of the premises at CS1, coupled with on-going budget cuts to the statutory sector – traditionally one of their main sources of income and support - and disappearing networks meant they were in the process of reconsidering their whole model of delivery. Traditionally they had been Centre-focused, with clients coming into the Centre and smaller faiths groups using the premises as a base, and in some instances, as a place for them to grow. Their move to smaller premises meant it was no longer possible to use the Centre in this way since they no longer have a meeting hall or access to a kitchen. Therefore, according to the Director of CS1, they are no longer in a position to grow other organisations as they have done in the past. As an alternative they are looking at a model whereby they go out into the community to deliver their services. Time of such transition and change brings with it a myriad of future challenges for each of the projects.

Challenges and the future

Each of the five projects faced numerous challenges; some were challenges for the immediate future whilst others were more mid-long term concerns. Some were common across several projects whilst others were more project-specific.

The most obvious challenge facing all of the projects was their need to secure future funding. Another common challenge, and one that is linked to that of finances, is how to expand responsibly in terms of maintaining their vision, integrity, ethos and high service quality, whilst simultaneously meeting increasing staffing obligations, particularly wages and legislative compliance. This was a particular issue for CS2, 3 and 4 where staffing levels had grown over recent years. Whilst this had been necessary to meet the needs of the client, it brought with it its own challenges of how to be a responsible employer.

It would also seem that when an organisation reaches a certain size, with an approximate annual turnover of £300,000, it is inevitable that there will be changes to staffing structures. Not only do they become more formalised but roles within the organisation will need to be redefined. In particular, the study found that there is likely to be a shift in the role the Director plays within the organisation; moving from operational to strategic which in itself is likely to present projects with future challenges. This was evidenced in CS3 and 4. Recently the Director's role at CS3 had changed from being hands-on and dealing with clients on a daily basis to one of focusing his attention and energies externally to matters of networking and raising awareness of the Trust, 'to get their name known in the City' (CS3: Staff). The Director of CS4 had recently found himself in a similar position, commenting:

> We are actually at the point now where we need to take somebody on around the priorities of the more operational and development side because things are starting to grow and my capacity is severely starting to groan.
>
> (CS4: Director)

His Chair of Trustee (CS4) concurred, stating that they needed more operational capacity to relive the pressure on the Director:

> Looking to how we add to backroom capacity to ensure we can service our front line. That will be a transition for [the Director] in terms of him having to release the stuff he carries in his head… So much of what is [the project] is in [the Directors] head. It's looking at how we can devolve some of that out.
>
> (CS4: Trustee)

The Chair felt strongly that one of the responsibilities of the Trustees was to ensure the health and well-being of the Director, that he was not overstretched or in danger of prematurely 'burning out':

> With a FBO the risk is always that you will over stretch, you will always do more. It will eat into your home and family life, it will become all consuming. So what are the safety guards?... Recognising that you may feel guilty about having a day off but you've got to set yourself up for the long haul. So physical health, spiritual health, emotional health. Are you keeping an eye on all those different gauges?
>
> (CS4: Trustee)

A further challenge was meeting increasing and changing client need. This was viewed as an immense task and there was awareness amongst those interviewed that they would never be able to meet all need. It was suggested that as an organisation it was necessary to look at what was realistic in terms of what you want to do, the vision, and to realise that there is always going to be more need than you can address, 'it's never going to

be enough in a way, be very realistic about what you can actually do' (CS3: Staff). This task was seen as increasingly difficult, not least because of the ever widening gap between the services that the statutory organisations are able to provide following deep and sustained cuts to their budgets and resources; and what the voluntary sector can deliver under current economic conditions. There is, for example, a waiting list for young people and children to attend clubs and activities at CS5, and CS3 currently has around 70 asylum seekers on their waiting list.

Several of the projects, namely CS1, 2 and 3, would like to be in a position to stop reacting to policy changes and be able to deliver in a more planned way. They would also like to build 'more residence in the system' (CS3: Staff). For example, CS3 would like to have the capacity for longer-term placements, a permanent all-year-round night shelter facility and the ability to help more men in a state of destitution.

Maintaining the vision and the energy of the Directors to drive projects forward is another challenge facing some of the longer running projects. This was especially true at CS1 where the Director is nearing retirement age. Several CS1 interviewees expressed concern over what will happen to the project and the vision, when the Director does eventually retire.

A further challenge is achieving sustainability, consistency and the quality of the service being delivered. This is particularly difficult as the number of partners involved in delivering services multiply as client need becomes increasingly complex.

The external visibility and profiling of services, to ensure full take-up and maximum coverage, appeared to be another area of concern for some projects; even those that have been running for some time. Despite being established for nearly 20 years, several of those interviewed at CS1 and 2, (Staff, Partners and Clients), felt the services they offer could be better advertised and projects promoted a wider audience. However, changes to the way projects operate may help address this issue in the future. As we have already seen, one of the new focuses for the CS3 Director is to improve awareness of the Trust both locally and nationally.

As mentioned earlier, finding premises that are both affordable and fit for purpose was a further challenge that applied to several of the projects. Most were housed in old buildings in need of repair and all, except for CS5, were in the process of reviewing their office accommodation.

Each project faced a number of specific challenges. For CS1 it was the on-going issue of their premises which meant they needed to completely rethink their delivery model and the possibility that the Director and founder would retire in the near future. For CS2 one of the main challenges was identifying new areas of potential need emerging out of policies such as meeting the spiritual needs of those dying at home under new government proposals. The growing success in the number of asylum seeker applications at CS3 means more people have been granted leave to stay. Whilst this is good news, it does mean there is an increasing need for longer-term accommodation for those who remain. These clients also need assistance to find employment and to this end CS3 is looking at setting up social enterprises for refugees to help generate an income for these clients. They are also looking at the possibility of providing training for jobs before they are given leave to remain in the UK. A rise in the use of social networking sites by young people at CS4 means less young people are visibly on

the street and there is the potential for greater levels of isolation. 'Everyone just seems to have drawn back into their homes, just sitting on their X-box all day. That in itself is as much of a challenge because how can we still maintain that connection with them if we never see them' (CS4: Youth worker). Finally, at CS5 there was a particular challenge in how their activities can be inclusive to all, whilst protecting young people from gang violence and gang members.

Section summary

Projects actively and regularly reviewed their services. They were conscious of the need to be 'client led' at all times but also of the economic and policy constraints under which they operated. The biggest challenge is therefore how to meet their client's needs, both current and future, with seemingly ever diminishing resources and support, particularly, but not solely, in the area of funding. Disappearing networks and traditional avenues of support, along with an expectation from government that they will fill the gap left by an ever shrinking public sector are all further challenges facing the projects. To this end all projects were exploring potential areas for diversification, new income streams and innovative models of service delivery, notably the re-investment model.

Key messages:

- It is important to take time to regularly review and reflect the services being delivered, organisational structures and the focus of need.

- Everyone is struggling to secure sustainable, long-term funding.

- There is a danger of losing your Director, often the original visionary, and of being defined by your vision, rather than the service you provide.

- Succession planning is key to ensuring projects remain true to their vision and have a leader that is able to secure the project's future sustainability; there needs to be someone to take the vision forward.

- The increasing and changing needs of clients mean additional pressure on services. Projects need to ensure they adhere to their vision, that they do not over-extend themselves and guard project Directors, staff and volunteers from the danger or "burning out".

- Due to the increasing demand for services, particularly in light of reduced resources, FBOs are looking to explore new models of delivery that will be sustainable and cost effective.

- Several of the projects are grappling with the challenge of how to grow responsibly whilst retaining their organisational vision and ethos.

- Projects are unlikely to be directly transferable from one location or community to another; whilst lessons may be learnt from others, those wishing to meet similar need in their locality should seek their own vision and version of the project for the local context.

- Visibility and promotion of services needs to be an on-going part of a FBOs work to ensure they reach potential clients and maximise partnership opportunities. It should not be assumed that just because a FBO has been operating for some time that everyone in the locality is aware that they exist.

8. Key messages and policy recommendations

This final section presents the key messages that have emerged from this research study, highlights the main challenges facing the participating projects in the near future and offers recommendations for policy.

Key messages

A number of key messages came out of the study:

- Leadership: A key component to establishing a successful faith-based project is having a leader with a clear and inspiring vision based on evidenced need. It is essential that the leader has the ability to transform the vision into a workable and sustainable service and the motivation, through faith, to drive the vision forward.

- Volunteers: Volunteers are one of faith-based organisations' most valuable assets and need to be valued and supported. However, for effective service delivery the skills and experiences each volunteer brings with them needs to be carefully matched to organisational requirements. This will also help increase volunteer retention which can be costly for an organisation with limited resources. Faith-based organisations should not be afraid to refuse or refer people as volunteers if their skill sets are not an organisational fit.

- Partnerships: The most successful cross-sector partnerships are those which offer mutual benefits and where there are shared values and common goals. However, successful partnerships take time to develop. Effective partnership working allows both faith-based organisations and their partners to maximise scarce resources, avoids duplication of services and provides shared clients with a set of services that are better able to meet their often complex and multiple needs. Effective partnerships can result in greater impact and value for money.

- Policy: Influencing policy was not a priority for the faith-based organisations in this study; their primary concern was meeting the needs of their clients by providing a high-quality, trusted service. However, there is evidence that faith-based organisations indirectly influence local policy implementation and decisions, often through their partnerships.

- Faith: Faith motivated, inspired, shaped, gave meaning and increased the resilience of service delivery. Projects delivered an inclusive service, purely based on meeting need, regardless of a client's faith, age, race, gender, or any other factor. Whilst not exclusive, faith clearly provided a framework for resilience in the face of an ever changing political and economic climate.

- Faith: There is no reason for faith-based organisations not to be open about their faith. They can be honest and upfront about their faith motivation which informs their value base and the moral structure in which they operate. Partners, clients and volunteers valued and accepted the fact that projects came from a position of faith; often finding it enhanced rather than hindered the delivery of community services. The aim of the faith-based organisations in this study was to serve people in need compassionately; not to proselytise or to make profit.

Challenges

The main challenges facing faith-based projects in this study centred on issues of sustainability and succession planning:

- Funding: Everyone is struggling to secure sustainable, long-term funding.

- Grow responsibly: How to grow responsibly whilst retaining the organisations' vision, ethos and quality of service and simultaneously meet increasing staffing obligations, particularly around wages and legislative compliance.

- Fulfilling expectations: Meeting the increasing and changing needs of clients and fulfilling the expectations of others that they will plug the ever growing gap left by a shrinking public sector whilst resources and support diminish. Therefore, all projects were looking at new models of delivering services that will be both sustainable and cost-effective.

- Project visibility: Ensuring projects and their services are promoted locally so that all potential clients can be reached and partnership opportunities maximised.

Recommendations for policy

Based on the research findings, this report makes four recommendations:

1. Faith entrepreneurs: The government should consider investing in, and supporting, visionary leaders through seed funding. Because such entrepreneurs have the potential to develop and deliver innovative community projects to meet local need and the autonomy to take risks which other organisations would be unwilling to take.

This idea is not a new one. Over 70 years ago in 1937, Sir Hubert Llewellyn Smith, a prominent civil servant and a social investigator of his time, called for the readjustment of the relationship between public and voluntary enterprise. Describing the partnership as 'one weak in initiative but financially strong and the other strong in initiative but financially weak', Smith looked forward to a time when the distraction and burden of the voluntary sector to raise funds would be lifted and they could concentrate their energies on 'their proper work while safeguarding their invaluable freedom of experiment and elasticity of method' (Smith, 1937: 11-12). It would seem that the voluntary sector as a whole still awaits such a time. Whilst it is clear that funding was not initially a priority for the visionary leaders in this study, such practical support from the outset would have assisted them in meeting their chosen area of client need sooner and more effectively.

2. Building active partnerships: Non faith-based organisations, including those from the statutory sector, should be encouraged to work in partnership with faith-based organisations to enhance services to clients and maximise resources.

3. Promoting added value: Faith-based organisations are for people not for profit. Statutory organisations should consider the additional benefits and the social added value of commissioning faith-based organisations, rather than awarding contracts to the cheapest or biggest contender. This is in line with the recommendations of the Public Services, Social Enterprise and Social Value Bill which recently came into force in February 2013. The Bill goes further than simply encouraging commissioning bodies to consider factors other than cost; it places a duty on them to take into account the added value they bring, for example, the important contributions charities and voluntary organisations make to local communities. Faithworks therefore welcomes the Social Value Act of 2013. In addition, the Measuring Social Value report from Demos, (Wood and Leighton, 2010) also called for the exploration of SORI (social return on investment) and a consideration of value for money as a priority.

One way to achieve the recognition of additional social benefits would be to implement a more localised commissioning framework for both the full contracting and the sub-contracting of community services. This would enable commissioning bodies to tap into the expertise of local providers already working on the ground to meet identified need. Local faith-based providers in this study proved they could deliver inclusive, consistently high quality services. They also have a proven resilience to political and economic change as well as the flexibility to meet changing social need because they are delivering services on the ground daily and constantly reviewing the needs of their clients.

There are examples of how a local commissioning framework has already been applied, for example, localised commissioning is commonly practiced by the Children's Trust in Essex.

(www.commissioningsupport.org.uk/idocb5a3.pdf?docid=8f436e74-b650-4971-a544-97cdc7520ce7&version=-1)

4. New approaches to facilitate policy engagement with local community organisations: Policy-makers need to proactively engage with, and listen to, faith-based organisations delivering services in the local community to establish how they can support them to meet identified need. The onus should not be on the faith-based organisations to engage with policymakers since their resources are limited and their priority is to meet client need.

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www.boaztrust.org.uk

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www.commissioningsupport.org.uk/idocb5a3.pdf?docid=8f436e74-b650-4971-a544-97cdc7520ce7&version=-1

Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund (HSCVF) Local Grants and Capacity Building Scheme
www.volunteeringfund.com/news/local-grant-and-capacity-building-scheme-2012-now-live

Hull Churches Home from Hospital (HCHfH)
hchfh.wordpress.com

Oasis Children and Family project / Enfield Island Youth and Community Trust (EIYCT)
www.rsaic.org/index.php/51/5218-youth-club

The Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity (PCFCD)
www.pcfcd.co.uk

Urban Devotion Birmingham (UDB)
www.urbandevotion.org

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