

# South West Forum

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[www.southwestforum.org.uk](http://www.southwestforum.org.uk)

# South West Forum

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- **Set up in 1999**
- ***“The regional voice of the voluntary and community sector”***
- ***a regional champion for voluntary and community groups***
- ***an advocate of social change***
- ***A network for sharing information, promoting good practice and encouraging partnership***



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- **Membership organisation**
- **Three categories of membership**
- **Network members – over 80 of these – examples – generic infrastructure such as CVSs & RCCs – specialist infrastructure such as Citizens Advice SW, Black South West Network**
- **Individual members – front line VCOs**
- **Associate members – public and private sector (non voting)**



# South West Forum

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- 10 paid staff
- Funding

Office of the Third sector

SW Regional Development Agency

BIG Lottery Fund

Capacitybuilders

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# Is there a funding crisis?

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- In March 2007 Funding South West told of “an explosion in demand for grants”
- In response South West Forum agrees to survey its members and others
- Survey conducted without preconceptions – we had no idea what we would find



# Survey questions:

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- **Are you aware of any significant increases or decreases in funding for VCOs in 2007/8?**
- **If so please give details. Which VCOs, which funders?**
- **Are you aware of any underlying causes for these increases or decreases**
- **What implications have these changes in funding for the VCOs concerned and their service users?**



# Survey responses: increases or decreases in funding

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- Local Authority funding cut or ended
- Central Government funding cut, interrupted or ended
- European funding cut, interrupted or ended
- Previously successful organisations unable to obtain funding from any source
- Health Service funding cut
- All of above exacerbated by inconsistencies in application, contracting and procurement procedures



# Survey responses: which VCOs which funders?

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- Responses from all parts of the Region
- Many seeking to be anonymous others quite willing to be quoted



# Suggested underlying causes:

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- **Ending old and delay in starting new (and smaller) European funding streams**
- **Transfer of administration of funds such as Rural Development Programme from GOSW to SWRDA**
- **Pre-emptive cuts by local authorities in run up to Comprehensive Spending Review**
- **Oversubscription of non statutory funders – worse in SW than elsewhere**
- **Funding crisis in the NHS**
- **Public bodies largely incapable of partnership working with VCOs**



# Implications for organisations and their service users

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- Staff redundancies
  - Organisations closing
  - Loss of services
  - Increased deprivation and inequality
  - Weakening of social fabric
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# Implications for Government and other funders and investors:

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- **ChangeUp programme being undermined by cuts in other funding streams**
- **Present uncoordinated funding failing to provide good value**
- **Government aspiration for greater role for VCS in providing public services being thwarted**



# How should we respond?

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- **This is a wholly avoidable crisis**
- **Lobby core regional public bodies: GOSW, SWRDA, SWRA and SW Strategic Health Authority to act in a coordinated way**
- **Ask Office of the Third Sector to intervene**
- **Seek support from SW MPs**
- **Try to get media to cover and highlight the problem**



## Possible future events likely to adversely impact on funding:

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- Local Government reorganisation
- Further “raids” on lottery and other funding to pay for Olympic Games
- New EU member states to the east diverting funding away
- Factors relating to environmental and demographic change



# Investing for Inclusion – moving on beyond the Compact

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**Funding and investment “Manifesto” for SW VCOs agreed after lengthy consultation**

**Covers:**

- **Size of sector 50,000 - 70,000 VCOs in SW**
- **VCS values and mission**
- **Links to SW Integrated Regional Strategy Key Aims**
- **Action points for funders – the “redlined” issues left out of the SW Compact**
- **Resources for implementation FCR, Compact etc**



# South West Forum Contacts

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