



Establishing a

Funding Advice National Network

.....final report of the partnership on FH18

Date: 14th February 2008



Finance Hub
Charities Aid Foundation
St Andrew's House
18-20 St Andrew Street
London EC4A 3AY
Tel: 020 7832 3016
Email: financehub@cafonline.org
Web: www.financehub.org.uk

Delivery agent details

Funding Advice National Partnership
c/o fit4funding
93 Lawefield Lane
Wakefield
West Yorkshire
WF2 8SU

Tel 01924 239063
web: www.fit4funding.org.uk
e mail: info@fit4funding.org.uk

Content list

Executive Summary	5
Introduction	5
<i>The outcomes – now and in the future:</i>	5
i. The FANN.....	5
ii. Continuing professionalisation of the Funding Advice sub-sector.....	6
iii. Funding and National Support Services.....	6
iv. Partnership development and viability.....	6
v. Local area agreements	7
1. Feasibility study.....	8
1.1 Summary	8
1.2 Introduction	8
1.2.1 Section 1.....	8
1.2.2 Section 2.....	9
1.3 Recommendations	10
2. Business plan.....	11
2.1 Summary	11
2.2 Local, regional and national context for funding advice - evidence of need 11	
2.2.1 Local Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements.....	12
2.2.2 Economic Strategy and VCS contribution to the local economy	12
2.2.3 Regional Economic Strategies	12
2.2.4 The need for funding advice.....	12
2.3 Guiding principles	13
2.4 The proposal	13
2.4.1 Vision for the FANN	13
2.4.2 Aims.....	13
2.4.3 Objectives.....	13
2.4.4 FANN Structure, Membership, Governance and Management.....	14
2.4.5 Services.....	15
2.5 Workplan	17
2.6 Benefits.....	17
2.7 Sustainability strategy.....	18
2.8 Proposed Budget	19
3 Funding adviser's resources and directory of networks	20
3.1 Fundraising Strategy:	20
3.2 Fundraising Practice - general principles and legal requirements:.....	20
3.4 Other ways to generate Income.....	21
3.6 Jargon Buster - understanding key words and phrases.....	21
4 Level 4 training.....	22
4.1 The task.....	22
4.2 Need and demand.....	22
4.3 Consultation methodology.....	23
4.4 Accreditation issues	23
4.5 Course Content.....	24
4.5.1 Course content: the modules	24
4.5.2 Course content: learning outcomes.....	26
4.5.3 Course content: sample module outline	27
4.6 Supporting Groups with Contracting.....	29
4.7 Trends in Funding and Funding Advice	30
4.8 Feedback on Level 4 course for Funding Advisors	31

4.8.1	Funding Advisers' Competency Framework	31
4.8.2	List of possible optional modules	31
5	Funding Adviser's Competency Framework	33
5.1	<i>Diagnosing groups' needs and capacity</i>	33
5.2	<i>Supporting groups with project proposals</i>	34
5.3	<i>Providing information on how to develop a sustainable funding strategy..</i>	34
5.4	<i>Keeping funding advice up-to-date.....</i>	35
5.5	<i>Supporting VCS groups with funding applications /tender bids</i>	36
6.1	<i>Outcome 1: The VCS has increased knowledge of a wide range of funding opportunities.....</i>	37
6.2	<i>Outcome 2: The VCS has increased knowledge and understanding of appropriate and effective funding proposals and strategies.</i>	37
6.3	<i>Outcome 3: Increased quality in funding advice provided to VCS.....</i>	38
6.4	<i>Outcome 4: Increased capacity of VCS to submit effective, quality applications/bids</i>	38
6.5	<i>Outcome 5: Increased understanding of the needs of the VCS by funders</i>	38
6.6	<i>Suggested examples of evidence</i>	39
7	Local Area Agreements.....	40
8	Independent Evaluation.....	43
8.1	<i>Structure</i>	43
8.1.1	<i>Aims and objectives</i>	43
8.1.2	<i>Methodology.....</i>	43
8.1.3	<i>Constraints.....</i>	43
8.2	<i>Project Management</i>	43
8.2.1	<i>Partnership Structure</i>	44
8.2.2	<i>Contract monitoring and evaluation.....</i>	44
8.2.3	<i>Communication.....</i>	44
8.2.4	<i>Added value of partnership working</i>	45
8.3	<i>Consultation</i>	45
8.3.1	<i>Consultation Summary.....</i>	47
8.3.2	<i>Feasibility Study for a Funding Advisors National Network (FANN).....</i>	48
8.3.3	<i>Business Plan to develop a FANN</i>	48
8.3.4	<i>Competency Framework for Funding Advisors.....</i>	49
8.3.5	<i>Quality Award in Funding Advice</i>	49
8.3.6	<i>Level 4 training programme.....</i>	49
8.3.7	<i>Information Resources for Funding Advice Workers.....</i>	50
8.4	<i>Learning.....</i>	50
8.5	<i>What next.....</i>	51
8.5.1	<i>Funding and National Support Services</i>	51
8.5.2	<i>Partnership development and viability</i>	51
9.	Appendices	53
9.1	<i>The National Funding Advice Partnership</i>	53

Executive Summary

Introduction

Over the last ten years, government has been reviewing the capacity of the voluntary sector with a series of infrastructure reviews looking at the sector's support needs. This culminated in 2004 with the introduction of the ChangeUp programme of funding for infrastructure organizations, which encouraged the idea of setting up 'hubs' to offer specialist expertise on particular topics, including funding and finance and led to the development of the Finance Hub.

The Finance Hub was tasked with improving the access of frontline groups to good quality funding and finance advice services.

The need for funding advice services had been demonstrated in many local community and economic strategies, local area agreements and similar regional strategies and plans, as well as in sector specific research. Part of the need at a national level is that of improving the quality and availability of funding advice by developing a national network for funding advisers (FANN), which would bring advisers together to learn, share and to develop their skills. National research showed that advisers would welcome such a network.

The report

This report deals with the activities of FH18 – a programme of activities commissioned by the Finance Hub to examine in greater detail the feasibility of developing a Funding Advisers National Network (FANN), and related activities to explore further the professional development needs of funding advisers. This included higher level training (a Level 4 module), a competency framework, a quality award, and resources to support funding advisers, as well as developing a directory of funding advice networks throughout the country to enhance national communication amongst funding advisers. The work progressed on work commissioned in the previous year by the Finance Hub, relating to a training programme for funding advisers.

The outcomes – now and in the future:

i. The FANN

- A Funding Advice National Network should be established.
- The model to be used should be a project within an existing 3rd sector infrastructure organization.
- The business plan which develops this model further should ensure that the national network builds upon and works closely with the existing funding advice agencies already operating at regional and local level throughout England, and
- ensure that it works collaboratively with these existing services, does not compete with them.
- Where the FANN finds that it must generate income, it must demonstrate clear added value.
- The model must be one which maximises longer-term sustainability.

- The model must have demonstrable involvement, though in working with what already exists may have to find creative ways of achieving this.
- That the Business Plan develops a three-year strategy for moving towards this model, with an interim steering group.

ii. Continuing professionalisation of the Funding Advice sub-sector.

Plans for essential elements, training, information resources and quality standards for individuals and organizations are in place and will need resourcing to be rolled out within the sector. The business plan identifies future work plans

iii. Funding and National Support Services

The nine new National Support Services from April 2008 have areas of responsibility which may relate to the proposed work plan for the FANN, and ensure that the initiative is carried forward. ACEVO has the contract for the income generation workstream, the nearest equivalent to the Finance Hub. However several other works streams are relevant, in particular Collaboration (bassac) Performance Management (CES) and Campaigning and Advocacy (NCVO). It is recommended that NFAP establish a dialogue with all the new contractors, as soon as possible.

Other issues relating to an ongoing relationship with Capacity Builders include:

- Copyright and ownership of materials
- Future of the web site and long term location of information resources
- Maintenance and updating of information resources

iv. Partnership development and viability

Whether through the development of a FANN or other partnership arrangements, the coordination of the professional development of the “funding advice sub-sector” at a national level, under the direction of, guided by and working with practitioners at a local level will ensure that the expertise and activities built up collectively by the partnership (NFAP) are not lost to the Third Sector. The partnership has varying degrees of control over the future direction of the different elements within the overall programme. Ideally the future direction of the different elements within the programme should go ahead as an integrated whole but the various components can be developed separately, for example.

- Level 4 Training - OCN approval of learning outcomes for two Level 4 units has been obtained in the NE. Those partners who deliver training for funding advice workers can continue to work together to develop this nationally.
- National Training Programme. Revisit the learning points highlighted in the evaluation of FH2 to develop a national learning and support programme, through short courses, accredited training, e-learning, peer review and mentoring.
- Quality Standards – Continue to work with NAVCA to integrate the Funding Advice standards with their Quality Award and the SKiLD project work on a competency framework for development workers, progression, accreditation and qualifications
- Start to incorporate the Competency Framework into their own training and network support activities to promote its use by FAW as a mechanism to review their own practice and learning needs.

v. Local area agreements

Government offices are all currently negotiating the priorities and indicators for the next round of LAAs which are due to be signed off in June of this year and the National Partnership (NFAP) should be asking the Office of the Third Sector which LAAs have chosen the 'creating an environment for a thriving third sector' indicator at that stage.

It is recommended that action by the national partnership on LAA's should include:

- Work at a national level with Office of the Third Sector and Communities and Local Government on emerging policies and priorities for the third sector. The national funding advice network, along with the expertise of the partnership and local funding advice workers can demonstrate how funding advice can contribute to a thriving and sustainable third sector.
- At a district level the National Partnership should offer the expertise and services of the partnership for those local areas that choose the national indicator 'creating an environment for a thriving third sector'. It would be sensible to draw upon and work in partnership with the local third sector organizations that are involved in the development and delivery of the LAA.

vi. Viability

The National Funding Advice Partnership has been driven by existing national and regional partners, who have recognised the needs nationally, but who also recognise the inherent dilemmas in promoting a national service which could, in certain circumstances work against rather than with existing provision. The key message emerging from the feasibility study, emphasised above all other points, is that emerging national structures must work with, and enhance the viability of existing provision.

1. Feasibility study

1.1 Summary

The first and largest task in the work of establishing a national network was to consult with funding advisers from around the country. The conclusion was that a Funding Advice National Network (FANN) should be established, as a project of an existing 3rd sector infrastructure organization.

The business plan outlining the development of the FANN (which is summarised later in this report) should have as high priority working closely with existing funding advice agencies operating at regional and district level, and ensure it complements their services rather than competing with them. It should also be established to deliver long-term sustainability for the FANN.

Respondents to the study wish to see a sustainable, inclusive national organization, which demonstrates added value in the services it provides. It is likely to be funded through membership fees, income generation through service provision, and grants.

Membership of the FANN will need to reflect local and regional networks, individual agencies, and organizations providing funding advice. Priority for membership will be those who have “funding advice” as a key part of their role, and consideration will need to be given to all publicly funded sectors.

This Feasibility Study is part of a larger development funded through the Finance Hub, as part of their delivery of services on behalf of CapacityBuilders. The next stage of development has been preparation of a business plan, and funding applications, as well as seeking a cooperative agreement amongst existing funding advice agencies operating at a national level to the launch of a FANN in 2008.

A full copy of the Feasibility Study may be seen at

http://fit4funding.org.uk/assets/uploads/files/feasibility_study_for_a_proposed_funding_advisors_national_network_08.pdf

1.2 Introduction

The survey was divided into two sections – the first asked about organizations, and a broad look at the issues, whilst the second section unpicked the issues in greater depth.

1.2.1 Section 1

This Feasibility Study sought funding adviser views on the details of a proposed Funding Advice National Network (FANN). A national survey was conducted between the end of August and end of October 2007, which had broad and detailed responses from individuals and networks across England.

There is widespread support for the establishment of a FANN, and a very small percentage (5.3%) of respondents who would prefer that a FANN was not established. This study was designed to “get behind” the broad issues at some depth, and in doing so has identified a range of key areas requiring careful consideration. It has also identified that there is strong agreement on some key issues, which cuts across those who are both in favour of, or against, the establishment of a FANN, even if their final conclusions are different.

The study has identified the preferred model for a FANN (a project within an existing 3rd sector organization was the favoured option, though a new organization providing FANN services was a strong second). Half of respondents (49.1%) preferred a combination of network, organizational and individual membership, whilst membership from most sectors (except private consultants) was preferred by the majority. 70% of respondents would become a member, and become involved.

Amongst the functions of a FANN which stood out were: Sharing/networking/mutual support; information on what others are doing; provision of specialist training and standards and funding intelligence; provision of national funding intelligence and regional information bulletins, representing the views of funding advisers. It is also recognized that some functions are best carried out at regional/local level.

Section 1. is summed up by the identification of a range of factors, which it is thought will determine the success of the proposed FANN. These include:

- **The question of time and priorities**
- **Added value**
- **Inclusive and diverse**
- **Avoid duplication and build on the regions**
- **Sustainability**
- **Sharing/networking**
- **Funding includes income generation**
- **Campaigning/advocacy**
- **Charges/fees**

1.2.2 Section 2

A representative structure is preferred by the vast majority of respondents, though this was qualified by some people commenting that getting on with the job was more important than structures.

Detailed examination of the three “models” and types of membership on offer identified several key issues, which were reflected in comments elsewhere in the study. However the one which stood out was

- Long term sustainability issues

Whilst other matters backing this up included:

- The need for development of new services
- Potential for sharing of functions/skills
- Problems associated with being part of a larger agency
- Problems associated with buying in FANN services
- The value of individual membership
- Problems associated with time available for a FANN
- The need for representation from all regions

The means of governance of a FANN was examined, and respondents were in favour of

- Quarterly meetings
- At a central location (but which could be rotated)

And there was very strong support for involvement of staff in the 3rd Sector whose main function is funding advice

The method of funding a FANN was not so clearly agreed, with income generation and grants being neck and neck. Though membership fees were less well favoured.

Income generation was seen to provide for greatest long-term sustainability and just over half the respondents thought they might pay towards specific services offered by a FANN.

The majority were broadly in favour of the definition of a “Funding Advice Network” but there were many useful qualifications which will help define it further.

Finally there was very strong approval of all five “principles” which could support the development of a FANN (see Qu. 37) with greatest approval being given to

“The model should work with the support of existing services, not compete with them”

1.3 Recommendations

- A Funding Advice National Network should be established.
- The model to be used should be a project within an existing 3rd sector infrastructure organization.
- The business plan which develops this model further should ensure that the national network builds upon and works closely with the existing funding advice agencies already operating at regional and local level throughout England, and
- ensure that it works collaboratively with these existing services, does not compete with them.
- Where the FANN finds that it must generate income, it must demonstrate clear added value.
- The model must be one which maximises longer-term sustainability.
- The model must have demonstrable involvement, though in working with what already exists may have to find creative ways of achieving this.
- That the Business Plan develops a three-year strategy for moving towards this model, with an interim steering group.

2. Business plan

A full copy of the Business Plan may be found at:

http://fit4funding.org.uk/assets/uploads/files/business_plan_for_the_establishment_and_development_of_the_funding_advice_national_network.pdf

2.1 Summary

As part of a Finance Hub contract, the National Funding Advice Partnership (NFAP) was asked to develop this business plan as the latest step in developing a FANN. In pulling this plan together, the NFAP has built on the commissioned research work carried out by Sheffield Hallam University in early 2007 (SH) and the subsequent feasibility consultation/study carried out by NFAP in summer 2007 (FS 2007). The NFAP has taken great care to address the concerns and reservations expressed in that work and the main body of the Plan includes references to both those pieces of work within the text.

The overall vision for the FANN is to develop a sustainable, inclusive yet diverse national network, for people who give advice to others on funding issues. Its ultimate aim is to develop, through the services of the FANN and its members, a sustainable third sector. It will achieve this by providing a range of services for funding advisers, either directly or through its membership, which will encompass mutual support, the development of new funding adviser networks (FANs), a national programme of specialist training, a competency framework & a quality standard, campaigning and advocacy on behalf of funding advice, development of funding advice provision where there are gaps, co-ordinating the provision of national funding intelligence and regional information bulletins and representing the views of funding advisers in appropriate arenas. An inclusive, democratic structure, membership and governance will be developed.

The FANN will be resourced by various methods of financing. For the first three years, funding will be predominantly sought from traditional grant aid sources whilst a viable income generating strategy is developed.

The outcome of the work will be a professional association for funding advisers from all sectors. Funders, including local authorities, and ultimately frontline groups will receive the benefit of better coordinated, informed and trained funding advisers. The FANN will aid the longer term sustainability of existing funding advice services through improved co-ordination and more sharing of resources, and ultimately will help sustain the longer term sustainability of front-line organizations.

2.2 Local, regional and national context for funding advice - evidence of need

Access to funding is vital if voluntary and community organizations are to sustain their activities and services and it is no surprise that it features as one of the top priorities for groups throughout the country.

2.2.1 Local Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements

At local level, strategic partnerships are aiming for a better quality of life for everyone by:

- building and supporting good communities that will last
- improving the environment and using resources as efficiently as possible
- increasing economic prosperity, and
- planning and delivering services to meet priority needs, particularly for those people who are most disadvantaged, excluded or vulnerable.

Community strategies feed in to Local Area Agreement priorities at district level and will inform the ways in which voluntary and community organizations within districts can access local funds.

2.2.2 Economic Strategy and VCS contribution to the local economy

At the same time, the local economic strategies acknowledge that district have strong (but varying) community and social enterprise sectors, which deliver local services, recycling and reinvesting money in the local economy. Economic strategies link to solutions in local area agreements to promote enterprise by working with third sector organizations to increase their capacity to operate as social enterprises and to take advantage of the changing nature of public service delivery.

2.2.3 Regional Economic Strategies

Regional Economic Strategies (RES) recognise the role of a sustainable communities approach to the economy and acknowledge district and third sector roles as seedbeds for enterprise and opportunity.

2.2.4 The need for funding advice

Good quality funding information, advice and support will be crucial in helping voluntary and community organizations to deal with changes in local funding methods and priorities and to develop their fundraising planning and marketing skills in order to successfully meet local needs and sustain their activities.

Whilst district based quality funding advice services have been developing, there has been a growing regional and national interest in this area of work.

In 2006 the Finance Hub commissioned research from Sheffield Hallam University to look at the provision of funding advice networks nationally (SH references in this text). In 2007 they followed this up with commissioning of a feasibility study (FS 2007 references in this text) for the development of a national funding advice workers network (FANN). The key elements of a funding advice service have been agreed (nationally) as being information, skills, support and quality/competency systems.

Both the Sheffield Hallam report and the FANN feasibility study concluded that a FANN should be established to coordinate existing regional and local networks, to provide the missing professional support for funding advisers and to help close gaps in funding advice provision. Earlier reports, including those mentioned in the Background section above, and other regional and local reports all demonstrated the need for funding advice itself and for improvement in the coverage and quality of that advice.

2.3 Guiding principles

This plan, and the FANN, will take great care to address the concerns and reservations expressed in both the Sheffield Hallam report and the subsequent Feasibility Study (SH p49) and in so doing will follow the principles set out below (FS 2007 Q37 p55):

- Existing FANS will be involved in the process of establishing a FANN at the earliest possible stage.
- Members will have a clear voice in the affairs of the FANN.
- The model developed will have the maximum potential for sustainability.
- The model will be inclusive of all advisers providing support to the third sector.
- The model should work with the support of existing services, not compete with them.
- Decisions made on the short term plans will focus on where best to channel energy and resources available but it will also be established to deliver long term sustainability.
- The FANN will adopt a strategic approach, avoiding duplication and providing added value, by having as a high priority, close working with existing funding advice agencies that are operating at all geographic levels. It will ensure that it complements and collaborates with those services rather than competing with them and will avoid doing what FANS are better placed and able to do at local and regional levels.
- Service delivery will be spread fairly and nationally ie not mainly London

2.4 The proposal

2.4.1 Vision for the FANN

To develop a sustainable, inclusive yet diverse national network, for people who give advice to others on funding issues, that:

- provides an excellent service through advocacy, training, mentoring and networking (FS2007 p53)
- values and shares the expertise of its members (FS2007 p54)
- links cohesively and cooperatively with its regional and local members and
- demonstrates added value in the services it provides. (FS 2007 p1 &4))

2.4.2 Aims

To develop, through the services of the FANN and its members, a sustainable third sector in which voluntary and community groups have:

- better knowledge of a wide range of funding opportunities
- an improved knowledge and understanding of how to develop appropriate and effective funding proposals and strategies
- access to a better quality of funding advice
- an increased capacity to submit effective, quality application/bids
- their needs better understood by funders

2.4.3 Objectives

- To offer mutual support by sharing information, expertise, experience and good practice through networking (SH p50 & FS 2007 p3 & 18)
- To support the development of FANs where none exist
- To develop a national programme of specialist training
- To implement a competency framework & a quality standard for funding advisers and funding advice services (SH p51 & FS 2007 p3)
- To campaign and advocate on behalf of funding advice
- To support the development of funding advice provision where there are gaps (SH p51 & FS 2007 p4)
- To co-ordinate the provision of national funding intelligence and regional information bulletins (FS 2007 p3)
- To represent the views of funding advisers (FS 2007 p3)

FS 2007 (p3) also recognized that some functions are best carried out at regional/local level.

2.4.4 FANN Structure, Membership, Governance and Management

(i) *Structure:* It is proposed that the FANN should be established as a project within an existing 3rd sector organization (FS 2007 p1) and that it should have a representative governing body. (FS 2007 p4). This proposal supports the preference of the majority of people responding to the Feasibility Study.

(ii) *Membership:* Membership of the FANN will be open to all sectors ie voluntary, statutory and private sectors and membership of the Steering Group will be proportionate to the types of members. A ratio of 70% VCS, 15% statutory 5% private, 10% others would reflect the proportional split of those responding to the feasibility study. (FS 2007 p7)

Membership will reflect local and regional networks, and individual agencies and organizations providing funding advice. Individuals will also be eligible for membership. (FS 2007 p10) The priority for membership will be those who have “funding advice” as a key part of their role, and consideration will need to be given to all publicly funded sectors (FS 2007 p1 & 11). Membership will be diverse and inclusive (FS 2007 p16) and representation from appropriate networks or organizations covering various diversity issues will be sought.

(iii) *Governance:* A FANN Steering Group will be democratically and representatively set up within the first three years. In this way, the FANN can be developed carefully as FANN members wish, ensuring that equality, diversity and rural issues are addressed very early on. The Steering Group will include representatives from across the regions and specialist advice areas and the FANN Co-ordinator (see Management below) will also sit on the Steering Group. The group will feed into an Executive Committee, which will initially be formed from the National Funding Advice Partnership, and which will be responsible for overseeing the day-to-day work of the FANN. The Steering Group will provide a two way flow of information between the general membership and the Executive Committee and will feed in the needs and issues of funding advisers for the Executive Committee to look at developments to address those needs.

Membership of the Steering Group will reflect the membership ratios, with a majority of governing body members from the third sector, whose personal or organization’s main function is funding advice (FS 2007 p4). The Steering Group will have 10-15 members (FS 2007 p39), with a place for each regional FAN (or a sub-regional FAN

on behalf of a region without a regional FAN until such time as that region has its own network). In addition, there will be capacity for up to 2 other voluntary sector representatives, 2 statutory sector representatives, 1 private sector representative and 1 'other' representative, again reflecting the proportions of the respondents to the Feasibility Study. Apart from the regional FAN representatives, consideration will be given to electing the other members by ballot.

The Steering Group will meet quarterly at a mutually agreed central location, which may be rotated (FS 2007 p4)

- (iv) *Management:* The FANN will be hosted by one of the NFAP partners, providing project management and line management to the postholder(s). The Executive Committee will have overall responsibility for seeing that the management of the project by the host organization is carried out effectively.

Finite elements of the work will be undertaken by different Executive Committee partners according to their strengths, preferences or capacity. Additional partners will be invited to join the NFAP as needs arise. Appointment of additional partners will be done via a fair and open process. Day-to-day management of the project will be by a FANN Co-ordinator, with administration support, as demanded by the needs of the post, being provided by the host organization and charged to the project.

2.4.5 Services

- (i) *Sharing good practice and peer support:* The directory of FANs developed in 2007-08 will be augmented and promoted. (SH p9/61). Links between FANs will be encouraged and developed via the FANN (SH p7 & p9/62). Information on what other funding advisers are doing will be disseminated via bulletins, networks and a website,
- (ii) *Development of new networks:* New FANs will be encouraged and developed in areas where they don't exist (both regionally or locally) by working in partnership with, or with support from, existing networks. (SH p9/62) The FANN will be very keen to use existing expertise and knowledge and not to duplicate what others have done before; to build on the excellent work already done in the regions and some sub-regions (FS 2007 p4). The FANN will recognise that there is a cost to this work, in terms of time and finance. To this end, it will seek funding to resource the development of new FANs and will encourage a bartering system for existing networks, who give of their expertise and materials in return for free/reduced membership or other materials. In the future the fund may be carried on to provide continuing support for emerging networks to establish themselves or for existing networks to maintain themselves (FS 2007 p16)
- (iii) *Professional development:* Continuing personal development for funding advisers will be encouraged through the launching of a competency framework, a quality award and a coordinated national training programme, which will use existing training providers. A web-accessible resource bank of quality policies, procedures and documents will be developed which will improve the quality and efficiency of funding advice (FS p15). Work will also be carried out to enable and support others at grassroots level to become funding advisers (FS p15).
- (iv) *Development of funding information resources:* Regional and local funding information bulletins will be coordinated to form a national information service to which people can subscribe (FS 2007 p3)

- (v) *Identification of gaps in provision:* As well as gaps in network coverage, gaps in resources, training and other services will be identified and work undertaken to fill them (FS p14).
- (vi) *Virtual network:* In FS 2007, (FS p22/23) , respondents suggested that the FANN could be a virtual network. Many of the services and resources proposed in the plan will be publicised/available via electronic means
- (vii) *Campaign and advocacy:* The FANN will work to raise the profile of funding advice work with funders and policy makers and will represent the views of funding advisers on funding and other policies at all appropriate opportunities
- (viii) *Development of funding advice work:* The FANN will provide set-up support for new funding advice services and mentoring support for existing services, using the expertise of existing networks when possible.

Before implementing a new FANN service, the FANN will establish what regional and local expertise already exists, and will engage with existing regional or local networks to take account of their views and to utilise their knowledge and expertise in setting up or providing the service. (FS p15 Q9)

2.5 Workplan

The objectives to be achieved in the draft workplan are set out below. They include priorities from FS 2007 (p4) and will be refined with input from FANs as the FANN develops (SH p9/62)

What (Objective)
Develop initial steering group and FANN membership
Expand content and access to FANs directory
Encourage links between FANs
Disseminate information on what other funding advisers are doing
Promote new FANs in partnership/ with support from other existing networks
Promote and refine competency framework
Promote and refine quality award
Promote and develop further national training programme using existing training providers
Development of web-accessible resource bank of quality policies, procedures and documents
Enabling and supporting others at grassroots level to become funding advisers
Coordinate funding information bulletins to form a national information service to which people could subscribe
Identify gaps in provision and circulate market research
Campaign and advocate on behalf of funding advice work
Represent the views of funding advisers
Development of funding advice work
Market FANN & its services
Monitoring and reviewing
Develop funding for next three years

2.6 Benefits

The beneficiaries of the FANN will be funding advisers from all sectors, funders including local authorities and ultimately frontline groups, who will receive the benefit of better coordinated, informed and trained funding advisers. It will aid the longer term sustainability of existing funding advice services through improved co-ordination and more sharing of resources, and will ultimately help the longer term sustainability of front-line organizations.

FS 2007 (FS 2007 p4) emphasised the need for the FANN to provide added value to what already exists. The FANN will ensure that it develops all its proposed activities against this requirement and will work closely with regional and local networks to make sure this happens. All services proposed in this business plan reflect that principle.

Funding advisers and funders will receive services that are either not available or practical at local or regional level. The FANN will play a coordinating and promotional role for services which are better delivered at local or regional level, even if they are developed at national level.

This business plan is working towards a similar outcome to that identified by Capacitybuilders as being the key outcome of the national support programme, that in 2011 sector support services are more skilled and effective in delivering support relevant to the current and future needs of and demands on diverse frontline third sector organizations

In the context of the specific roles that Capacitybuilders sees for the National Support Services, the work of the FANN will encourage the sharing and developing best practice, including resource development; will provide specialist delivery to specific subsectors; will build collaboration and alliances across tiers of services through its cascading structure.

The FANN's work will be relevant to many of the National Support Services being developed by Capacitybuilders. These include Campaigning and Advocacy (through funding adviser networks talking to funders) Collaboration (the FANN will encourage sharing of expertise and resources) Equalities & Diversity (by Income Generation, eg by encouraging advisers to develop expertise and skills in non-traditional methods of funding), Performance Management (through its training of funding advisers and development of the mentoring, quality award and competencies framework).

2.7 Sustainability strategy

The FANN will be resourced by various methods of financing. For the first three years, funding will be sought from traditional grant aid sources whilst a viable income generating strategy is developed. The FANN will investigate further the reality of being able to generate membership fees of any substance, considering a scale of charges relative to sector (FS 2007 p12) and possibly to size of organization. (A large number of respondents to the Feasibility Study were not in favour of large membership fees). Income from services, perhaps with discounted rates for members, will also be investigated. This income might include fees levied for accreditation to the competency framework and the quality award. Other options to explore include having available two levels of service for members for different fees. Consideration might also be given to discounted fees for advisers who have become accredited to the competency framework..

2.8 Proposed Budget

EXPENDITURE	<u>4 qtrs</u>	<u>4 qtrs</u>	<u>4 qtrs</u>	<u>Total</u>
**Done on principle of needs of project	<u>Apr 08 -</u>	<u>Apr 09 -</u>	<u>Apr 10 -</u>	<u>cost</u>
*Done on principle of total host org cost divided by total host org staff hours multiplied by no of hours for project	<u>Mar 09</u>	<u>Mar 10</u>	<u>Mar 11</u>	<u>over</u>
				<u>three</u>
				<u>years</u>
Salary post holder **	29781	31568	33462	94811
Salary admin **	8746	9271	9827	27844
Salary host project manager**	11316	11995	12715	36026
Salary accounts*	4886	5180	5490	15557
Salary info officer*	3112	3299	3497	9908
Salary Regional Support Officers	48261	51157	54226	153644
Total salaries costs	<u>124211</u>	<u>131663</u>	<u>139563</u>	<u>395437</u>
Recruitment**	3000	3090	3183	9273
Staff Travel**	3000	3090	3183	9273
Staff Training and Conferences**	500	515	530	1545
Office Equipment**	450	464	477	1391
Computer Equipment**	1500	1545	1591	4636
Training to others**	3000	3090	3183	9273
Meeting expenses**	3000	3090	3183	9273
Insurance*	912	939	967	2818
Rent*	3516	3621	3730	10866
Office Expenses (tel, postage, stationery)*	2353	2424	2496	7273
Subscriptions and Publications*	113	116	120	349
Computer Services*	627	646	666	1939
Volunteer Expenses*	63	65	67	194
AGM and Annual Report*	157	162	166	485
Payroll Services*	140	144	149	433
PR*	63	65	67	194
Newsletter and publication production*	722	743	766	2230
Miscellaneous*	31	32	33	97
TOTAL	<u>154655</u>	<u>163021</u>	<u>171861</u>	<u>489537</u>
INCOME				
Grants	150000	150000	150000	450,000
Fees for services	3,250	11,250	20,000	34,500
Interest received	505	871	861	2237
TOTAL	<u>154655</u>	<u>163021</u>	<u>171861</u>	<u>489537</u>
BALANCE	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

3 Funding adviser's resources and directory of networks

Good quality funding information, advice and support have been identified as crucial in helping voluntary and community organizations to deal with changes in local funding methods and priorities and to develop their fundraising planning and marketing skills, in order to successfully meet local need and sustain their activities on an ongoing basis.

The Funding Adviser's resources and directory of networks have been developed as an online resource to support funding advisers in the work that they do to supporting voluntary and community organizations.

The decision to develop an online resource, was taken when it was widely acknowledged in the course of consultation, that one of the significant challenges funding advisers have in supporting voluntary and community organizations was keeping up with changes and advising correctly. Key to this, was regularly updated information and guidance. Consultation also determined the areas which this resource was to focus on.

The resource and directory is broken down into the following headline areas which are also supported by significant secondary information. They are as follows:

3.1 Fundraising Strategy:

- What to do before you start fundraising?
- How do you prepare an organization to fundraise?
- How to help an organization develop a fundraising strategy.
- How to help an organization prepare a case for support.
- How to help an organisation calculate fundraising cost effectiveness.
- How to support an organization build fundraising capacity.

3.2 Fundraising Practice - general principles and legal requirements:

- What sort of voluntary and community organizations fundraise?
- Keeping Fundraising Legal
- Accountability and Transparency in Fundraising
- Self-Regulation and Fundraising
- Data Protection

3.3 Sources of Funding

- Fundraising from Individuals
- Charitable Trusts and Foundations
- National Lottery Funders
- Community Fundraising
- Giving by Businesses/Corporates

- Government and Statutory Funding
- Earned and Other Income Sources
- Fundraising Techniques
- Tax Effective Giving

3.4 *Other ways to generate Income*

- Trading
- Consultancy
- Loans
- Social Enterprise
- Venture Philanthropy

3.5 *Useful organizations and Resources*

- The National Funding Advice Partnership Organizations
- Regulation and Self Regulation Bodies
- Sector Support Organizations
- Trusts and Foundations
- Income Generation
- Government and EU Bodies
- Corporate
- Funding Advice Networks
- Essential Reading
- General Reading

3.6 *Jargon Buster - understanding key words and phrases*

Within this structure, the resource also contains a number of "Top Tips" which support funding advisers with bite size check lists that they can use with voluntary and community organizations in the course of supporting them.

4 Level 4 training

4.1 The task

Under FH18 the partnership aimed to:-

- Map existing provision (to identify any possible duplication, and also further progression routes)
- Identify possible accrediting bodies and their requirements for level 4
- Draft a list of possible modules (these would all be optional, as the core competencies in the competency framework are all addressed by the level 3 courses currently run by FINE and fit4funding)
- Map these against the draft competency framework (a separate piece of work also under FH18)
- Draft a course outline for one of the modules (*Supporting Groups with Contracting*) including options for delivery face-to-face or online
- Consult experienced level 4 providers/accrediting bodies to ensure the level is pitched appropriately
- Consult focus groups of experienced advisers on how well the drafts would meet their needs

Staff from FINE, fit4funding and CIB South and West formed a task group to work on this in more detail, reporting regularly to the partnership as a whole.

4.2 Need and demand

Both FINE and fit4funding have anecdotal evidence of demand for accredited progression opportunities from funding advisers who have completed their level 3 courses. Advisers consistently request not only more complex subject areas (covered in fit4funding's existing level 3 stage 2 course and FINE's non-accredited continuing professional development seminars), but also more challenging learning opportunities and accreditation at a higher level. This may reflect not only their individual development needs but also concerns about the comparative lack of both recognition and regulation of funding advice as a profession ('At the moment, anyone can set themselves up as a funding adviser'; 'These courses would give funding advice a more professional outlook, raise the profile of the job and raise it to the level of Fundraiser or other specialist service worker' – level 4 focus group members). A study being undertaken by Skild into progression pathways for development workers is currently researching gaps in relevant qualifications for them; development workers' needs overlap with those of funding advisers, but for funding advisers there can be additional problems in accessing the necessary specialist knowledge and skills.

The feedback received by FINE and fit4funding is reinforced by evidence from more formal studies of development workers' needs. For instance, in their 2006 study of community work training and qualifications in London, commissioned by ChangeUp, the Standards Board for Community Work Training and Qualifications in England found a lack of continuing professional development opportunities for experienced workers, '...especially those that can be taken as short in-depth modules' (p. 8). This

is true of the rest of the country to an equal, if not greater, extent. It applies to local authority and other statutory sector advisers as well as to those in the voluntary sector, but (with notable exceptions) the VCS is particularly vulnerable to criticisms of its ad hoc approach to training and development and low investment in them. In a report into the needs of BME community workers for the Workforce Development Hub, the Federation for Community Development Learning concluded that 'there is a need for a profession and worker based strategy'.

At the same time, demanding workloads reduce the time available for advisers to commit to training. While researching the provision currently available, members of the National Funding Advice Partnership found that courses fell into three categories:-

- Courses aimed at fundraisers or community activists, which do not cover the funding adviser's role or professional ethics
- Shorter (eg 4 – 12 day) courses focused more on development workers, but only accredited to level 3
- Degree and post-graduate courses in, eg, community development or regeneration, where even the foundation degrees take 2 years full-time, or the City and Guilds Level 4 Higher Professional Diploma in Community Development (a notional 1200 learning hours)

Our peer reviewer (see below) commented:-

'As a community development practitioner of many years it is pleasing to see that the profession is finally being accredited as distinct from youth work and that practical knowledge and areas of competence like funding and resourcing of community groups are included as essential in the key roles of workers.'

Our vision is of level 3 training to enable advisers to meet the requirements of the competency framework, complemented by optional level 4 modules to encourage exploration of new subject areas and new ways of working. These would be relatively short (up to 4 days face-to-face) and delivered in a variety of formats, including online, to give maximum flexibility.

4.3 Consultation methodology

The draft list of modules, units and course outline were all sent for peer review to an experienced trainer of funding advisers who also has a background in university community development teaching. They were also discussed with two groups of funding advisers (some generic, some specialising in the subject area of supporting groups with contracting), one in Yorkshire and the Humber and one in the North East. The units were sent out by e-mail with a questionnaire to funding advisers in the South West, and some advisers in the North east and Yorkshire and the Humber also sent in questionnaires or comments. The draft units were sent for comments to the Open College Network North East Region.

4.4 Accreditation issues

Opting for short, vocationally-focused courses narrows the range of appropriate accrediting bodies. The partnership considered the National Vocational Qualification route, but rejected it, for two principal reasons. Firstly, the strong emphasis in NVQs on the learner's current job role could undermine the theoretical element and areas of

new learning in the course¹ (we felt there might be more scope for linking NVQs into the competency framework at a later stage). More practically, the need for onsite assessors could pose difficulties, since many funding advisers work in isolation, with line managers who may lack the necessary specialist knowledge (and may not have the required NVQ assessor qualifications either).

An alternative would be to register the courses with the Open College Network, which at this point was in the process of opening up level 4 accreditation delivery to a wider range of organizations. (Until recently, only higher education institutions have been recognised as eligible to register and run level 4 courses.) All three partnership organizations represented on the task group have previous experience of working with the Open College Network and are recognised OCN assessment centres. Open College courses can be as short as ten hours, with up to ten units in one modular course, and delivered in a variety of formats. They can be directly related to learners' work roles and experiences, but at level 4 these should be integrated into a theoretical framework. For these reasons, the task group decided to proceed on the basis of registering the course with the Open College Network, and to ask for OCN staff's feedback on draft units. However, the process of actually registering the course would extend beyond the scope of the FH18 contract; it can take between six and nine months from first meeting with an OCN development worker. As we wished to consult with members of the target group and make the necessary changes before taking a proposal to the OCN, that development work on the draft units could only begin at or near the end of the contract.

4.5 Course Content

4.5.1 Course content: the modules

It was agreed that a modular approach with a number of self-contained units would best meet the differing needs of funding advisers. Some might choose to take just one, in an area of specialism or interest; others might do them all, but spread over an extended period. A modular approach would allow them to gain qualifications at each stage. This was endorsed by the peer reviewer:

'I agree that a modular approach is most appropriate for a level 4 course, aiding both professional development and specialisation.'

The task group identified a list of topics which would provide progression from the existing level 3 courses, drawing on feedback from funding advisers in the FINE/NAVCA report *Findings of the support and Development Needs of Local Funding Advice Workers Research, 2005*, the 2006 report, *A model to meet the funding advice needs of front-line organizations in England* and the final report on FH2 from 2007. In each case the course content was related to an area of academic study, and mapped against the five sections of the draft competency framework.

Module	Theory	Competency
<i>Supporting Groups with Contracting</i>	Social Policy	C, D, E
<i>Advanced Project Planning</i>	Organizational Development Theory	B

¹ This was reinforced by a comment from a focus group member: 'With NVQs you're demonstrating competency, whereas with a subject like contracting you need tutor input'.

<i>Trends in Funding & Funding Advice</i>	Social Policy; Community Development Theory	D
<i>Making Funding Advice More Accessible</i>	Educational Theory; Community Development Theory	A, E
<i>Supporting Sustainability</i>	Business Development Theory	A, B, C
<i>Managing Risk</i>	Total Quality Management; Implementation Theory	A, B, C

This list is not exhaustive, and a modular approach would allow for new modules to be added later to meet emerging needs.

In addition there would be online resources on study skills and academic referencing, for students who have not experienced level 4 courses before.

Although all the competency sections are covered by at least one of the above modules, it is envisaged that the existing level 3 courses should enable learners to meet the competency standards, while the level 4 courses would be for continuing professional development for experienced advisers.

Asked whether the modules were appropriate and of interest to them as advisers, the focus groups confirmed that they were. The peer reviewer commented, 'The suggested options cover key areas that Funding Advisors need to be familiar with in order to perfect their practice and their services'. Asked whether there were additional areas which they would like to see covered, the Yorkshire and Humber focus group identified finance for funding advisers, and the North East group confirmed that this would be useful, especially for advisers with financial experience but no financial qualifications (and particularly in areas with no community accountancy services). It might be appropriate to involve community accountancy specialists in writing and delivering such a module; fit4funding already has a partnership with one such agency which could be approached.

One questionnaire respondent suggested adding social enterprise and trading, but the intention is that this topic would be covered (from different angles) in both of the draft units. Another commented:-

'I think it would be useful to have a unit about coaching/training of new FAs. I feel this would link nicely to the Level 2 units and ensure that people who attend have at least a rough idea of what they should be thinking about'.

This sounds like an introductory module, which is worth considering but would not be appropriate for level 4.

Responding by questionnaire, some advisers were wary of committing themselves to actually taking the courses:-

'I can only say 'maybe'...But we certainly support the creation of the courses and will happily publicise it for you once you have finalised them.'

'Please keep me updated on this course including the costings – I do not have a training budget so would be interested in finding any bursaries etc'

– and one said she would choose a less specialist course:-

‘Funding Advice does not offer a natural career progression so it is hard to see what kind of career development gaining this qualification this would offer. If I was to commit time it would be to a wider based degree level qualification that would show I could do more than just give funding advice’

but most said they would take the courses if they were available.

4.5.2 Course content: learning outcomes

The task group drafted learning outcomes and assessment criteria for two of the proposed units: *Supporting Groups with Contracting* and *Trends in Funding and Funding Advice*. In each case these would constitute the requirements for the qualification to be achieved, although the teaching could cover additional topics. These are attached, with comments from the Open College Network North East Region. Feedback from the Open College was that both units are appropriately written for level 4 and, subject to the changes suggested, could be taken forward. The focus groups and peer reviewer commented favourably, eg:-

‘Interesting and could be crucial with the changing nature of funding advice’ [both units]

‘Perhaps the policy context [contracting unit] could also cover economic as well as social policy....’

I’m not sure about learning how to minimise negative impact of trends on disadvantaged groups – I think a funding advisor should be able to recognise and understand how to address potentially negative impact of trends on all types of groups they work with/or in their area [trends unit]...

I would be very interested in taking both of these courses.’

‘I think this looks a good combination of learning. I would be interested to also extend the learning from theory to practice which from my experience is very different.’ (This is the intention.)

All these points are well-made and need to be integrated with the OCN’s comments. Two people queried the exact meaning of *Critically examine the funding context for funding advice*; this was intended to cover policies and funding regimes relevant to the provision of funding advice, but if it is ambiguous it would be worth seeking advice from an Open College development worker on ways to reword it.

One respondent found the working of the ‘Trends’ learning outcomes dauntingly theoretical; however, some theoretical content is mandatory at level 4, and for learners who lack confidence in this aspect of the work, the theoretical aspect could be introduced gradually. Another queried the theoretical context suggested for funding advice:-

‘What is community development theory? Is this a development worker’s role?’

This suggests the need for a national debate through the FANN on what funding advice is and what it is trying to achieve.

4.5.3 Course content: sample module outline

The task group decided to focus on one module and draft an outline for delivery, to give a more detailed basis for the consultation with those advisers who would form the target group. The module selected was *Supporting Groups with Contracting*, as it is an area where funding advisers are looking to enhance their knowledge and skills quickly to adapt to the changing funding environment.

This would be a 3-credit unit (notionally 30 hours' learning, including home study). One focus group participant noted that, for her, time was as important as cost in deciding when to invest in training, but that she also gives priority to courses where she will learn alongside other funding advisers, who may ask good questions she hadn't thought of. Another queried whether 30 hours would be enough: 'I feel that for a Level 4 course and looking at the proposed content, 3-4 days feels very tight to cover the subject matter / theories.' However, the difficulty of sparing time affects so many advisers, it would probably be better to reduce the content than extend the course.

The outline considers options for delivering the course face-to-face, online or as a blend of both. In the focus groups there was a strong preference for face-to-face courses over online – 'you learn so much from each other' – but the blended approach was seen by many as giving the best of both methods – 'I think the blended learning option is a really good idea, not least because there will be a lot of individual in-depth research involved and this model would offer support with that in addition to face-to-face teaching/tutorials.'

The content attracted interest from both focus groups, both commenting that 'it seems very comprehensive'. One participant forecast good take-up, despite (or because of?) speculating that contracting issues currently equate to only a small proportion of most funding advisers' caseloads. Another said 'I want to go off and write assignment 1 now!'

One focus group member commented on the importance of advisers addressing the needs of medium-sized voluntary organizations, which may miss out due to specific targeting of small groups. In such a context, those organizations are excluded from the support they need, and advisers may feel under-confident. Courses like this one need to cover the more complex issues faced by such groups.

The peer reviewer made the following points:-

'The example Contracting course looks very interesting, with plenty of scope for fruitful discussions around pro's and con's of contracting. The PEST analysis discussion and the social policy lecture in particular, will give students the opportunity to critically reflect on implications for VCO's and what drives this agenda.

The section on *Improving contracting conditions for VCS groups* and the discussion around what advisers can and should do to try and improve conditions, I presume is designed in part to help students reflect on how they can assist groups to negotiate with commissioning bodies for better terms and conditions?'

On the proposal for distinct theoretical and practical assignments, she commented:-

'I agree that it is essential that each option must be backed up by a theoretical and a practical assignment. I would suggest however that the assignments are not split i.e.

one theoretical and another practical, as the opportunity for students to apply the theory to their own practice may then be lost or weakened.

A second assignment could instead be around relating the particular content of the module to a more general Community Development context, inviting students to link Community Development Theory, Social Policy and Adult Educational Theory. In this way all students would have to familiarise themselves with the basic values and principals of Community Development intervention and its history. (Leading authors in the field who cover all these aspects: Keith Popple, Margaret Ledwith and Marjory Mayo). And although these values and principals are imbedded in all the options, my concern is that they need to be made more explicit. Advisors need to be encouraged to reflect on why they are doing the job in the first place i.e. what are they trying to achieve?

It is my experience that many of the individuals involved in funding advice don't come from a Community Development background, for example: Health workers/ Housing Participation Officers, Local Authority workers who increasingly find themselves charged with setting up and supporting groups in disadvantaged communities. I therefore feel that it is essential that all advisors be encouraged to develop a deeper understanding of the complex issues involved in CD work.'

The assignments need to be revisited to incorporate these suggestions, and in general, as one focus group member noted, the course 'will need more consultation and fine-tuning'.

4.6 *Supporting Groups with Contracting*

Level: four

Number of credits: 3

This unit has 3 learning outcomes.

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Understand how contracting fits within the policy framework.	1.1. Analyse ways in which contracting with the VCS fits with government policy 1.2. Examine how this relates to current social and economic theory 1.3. Define key terms
2. Understand contracting opportunities and threats for VCS groups.	2.1. Critically examine at least 3 contracting opportunities for VCS groups 2.2. Analyse possible risks 2.3. Critically examine ways to minimise risks 2.4. Critically examine the funding adviser's role in improving tendering conditions for groups
3. Understand how to support groups in successful and sustainable contracting.	3.1. Critically assess at least 2 groups' readiness for contracting 3.2. Critically evaluate at least 2 tender-readiness tools or similar resources 3.3. Produce guidelines for writing successful tenders

4.7 Trends in Funding and Funding Advice

Level: four

Number of credits: 3

This unit has 4 learning outcomes.

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1 Understand trends in funding for the VCS.	1.1 Analyse at least 3 major trends in funding for the VCS 1.2 Analyse ways in which trends in statutory funding fit with government policy 1.3 Examine how this relates to current social and economic theory
2 Understand how to minimise negative impacts of trends on disadvantaged groups.	2.1 Analyse the potential impact of at least 3 trends on disadvantaged groups 2.2 Critically examine the funding adviser's role in influencing funders
3 Understand trends in funding advice.	3.1 Critically evaluate 2 contrasting models of funding advice 3.2 Examine how this relates to community development theory 3.3 Critically examine the funding context for funding advice
4 Understand how to promote good practice in funding advice.	4.3 Critically evaluate 2 quality standards in relation to funding advice, with reference to the appropriate National Occupational Standards 4.4 Critically examine innovative approaches to giving funding advice

4.8 Feedback on Level 4 course for Funding Advisors

4.8.1 Funding Advisors' Competency Framework

I agree that the 5 areas of competencies mapped against the Skild community development competencies are covered in fit4funding's level 3 course for Funding Advisors in some detail. Should individual Advisors require further input on topics such as drawing up detailed funding strategies or budgets for example, they will find this covered in full on the Fund Raising courses Stage 1 and 2 offered by fit4funding and should be sign-posted to attend those to enhance basic fund-raising expertise.

4.8.2 List of possible optional modules

The suggested options cover key areas that Funding Advisors need to be familiar with in order to perfect their practice and their services. I agree that it is essential that each option must be backed up by a theoretical and a practical assignment. I would suggest however that the assignments are not split i.e. one theoretical and another practical, as the opportunity for students to apply the theory to their own practice may then be lost or weakened.

A second assignment could instead be around relating the particular content of the module to a more general Community Development context, inviting students to link Community Development Theory, Social Policy and Adult Educational Theory. In this way all students would have to familiarise themselves with the basic values and principals of Community Development intervention and its history. (Leading authors in the field who cover all these aspects: Keith Popple, Margaret Ledwith and Marjory Mayo). And although these values and principals are imbedded in all the options, my concern is that they need to be made more explicit. Advisors need to be encouraged to reflect on why they are doing the job in the first place i.e. what are they trying to achieve?

It is my experience that many of the individuals involved in funding advice don't come from a Community Development background, for example: Health workers/ Housing Participation Officers, Local Authority workers who increasingly find themselves charged with setting up and supporting groups in disadvantaged communities. I therefore feel that it is essential that all advisors be encouraged to develop a deeper understanding of the complex issues involved in CD work.

The example Contracting course looks very interesting, with plenty of scope for fruitful discussions around pro's and con's of contracting. The PEST analysis discussion and the social policy lecture in particular, will give students the opportunity to critically reflect on implications for VCO's and what drives this agenda.

The section on *Improving contracting conditions for VCS groups* and the discussion around what advisers can and should do to try and improve conditions, I presume is designed in part to help students reflect on how they can assist groups to negotiate with commissioning bodies for better terms and conditions?

I agree that a modular approach is most appropriate for a level 4 course, aiding both professional development and specialisation.

Future mapping against Community Development Workers' National Occupational Standards

On the whole, the options offered in this new Level 4 course for Funding Advisors correspond well with many of the competences outlined in the Community Development Workers National Occupational Standards, relating specifically to Level 4 Core Unit E 1, 2 and 3, all of which cover funding and resourcing.

As a community development practitioner of many years it is pleasing to see that the profession is finally being accredited as distinct from youth work and that practical knowledge and areas of competence like funding and resourcing of community groups are included as essential in the key roles of workers.

The proposed course will fit in well with the CD National Occupational Standards and be of great benefit to advisors so long as the link is maintain between developing learners funding advise skills and community development practice as a distinct approach.

The CD standards remind us that this approach is essentially about social justice and inclusion and that the key role of workers is about:

“Helping bring groups of diverse people together to reach consensus about how to improve their communities and take collective action to make it happen”

(QUOTE: from key role C in CD Occupational Standards)

Vibeke Christensen 04/01/08

5 Funding Adviser's Competency Framework

As part of the identified need to improve the quality of funding advice, so that it is equitable across the Country and develop the skills of individual funding advisers, a competency framework has been developed. The framework needed to be robust and reflect the wide ranging job descriptions within funding advice - i.e. dedicated funding advisers, specialist advisers, through to development workers who have a responsibility for giving funding advice within a wider remit. As a base the SKILD Competency Framework for Development Workers was used to measure values and core skills, together with the content of FINE's and fit4funding's level 3 accredited funding advice courses. Combined it was felt that these covered the key areas of knowledge required by all funding advisers, irrespective of their job description.

Once drafted, the framework was put out for consultation via NAVCA's FAWNnet and the North East and West Yorkshire funding advisers networks. The results showed that there was a general consensus around the identified competencies and they covered the key areas of knowledge. Further sampling and discussion is required however to resolve the issue as to whether the competencies are appropriate to all funding advisers. A scale incorporated in to each competency, which would allow the measurement of competency and progress could both identify further training and highlight the areas where a worker requires a working knowledge, to fulfil their job description, but not necessarily in depth. However the aim of the competency framework is for it to be portable allowing an individual to transfer their skills and expertise between jobs. It is a framework to further funding advice as a specialist career.

The work carried out by the Partnership members and the consultation have produced a good competency framework model. For further development of the competency framework, consultation to progress the scales of competency measurement, assessment process and work towards a possible recognition award such as a kite mark or certification would be appropriate.

This competency framework is to be used in conjunction with the values and core competencies outlined in SKILD's Competency Framework for Development Workers.

5.1 Diagnosing groups' needs and capacity

	Competency	Example measures
A	<i>Diagnosing and responding to groups' needs and capacity: funding advisers should have the ability to:</i>	
1	Assess the needs and expertise of community groups and voluntary organizations and give appropriate and culturally-sensitive advice, information and / or support	Case notes
2	Recognise when governing documents are appropriate to an organization's funding plans	Case notes; examples
3	Provide information on different legal structures	Information sheets; case

	and their relevance to individual organizations and different funding streams for VCS groups	notes; record, file of specialist signposting agencies.
4	Support VCS groups to consider issues of organizational structure, employment and other relevant law	Case notes; record, file of specialist signposting agencies.
5	Support VCS groups to assess their own capacity for using and managing funds (including contract readiness)	Case notes Funding strategies
6	Encourage VCS groups to be creative in gathering and using resources	Details of resources available Examples of partnerships

5.2 Supporting groups with project proposals

	Competency	Example measures
B	<i>Supporting groups with project proposals: funding advisers should have the ability to:</i>	
1	Support VCS groups in developing feasible projects	Case notes; feedback
2	Encourage VCS groups to promote inclusivity in their projects, as appropriate to geographical needs.	Case notes; feedback
3	Provide information on how to show the need for funding, including identifying needs and working collaboratively with others	Case notes; funding strategies, Knowledge of IMD, community strategies, local plans, LAAs
4	Demonstrate knowledge of reading and interpreting budgets to be able to support VCS groups to work out the true costs of projects (including full cost recovery and cashflow forecasting) and set these out in a budget	Budgets, training course notes
5	Support VCS groups in devising appropriate outcome and impact measures	Case notes; bids

5.3 Providing information on how to develop a sustainable funding strategy

	Competency	Example measures
C	<i>Providing information on how to develop a sustainable funding strategy which links to a group's business/development plan: funding advisers should have the ability to:</i>	
1	Demonstrate knowledge of the purpose of a fundraising strategy and what should be included.	Training course notes, information sheets, case notes, funding strategies
2	Demonstrate awareness of the diverse range of funding sources available to the VCS (eg government grants, contracts & procurement, National Lottery, charitable trusts, companies, sponsorship deals, loans, DIY fundraising)	Case notes; information sheets

3	Support VCS groups to decide on appropriate sources of funding, including assessing levels of risk	Funding strategies
4	Encourage VCS groups to discuss the implications of accepting outside funding, including the ethical implications of accepting certain funds and the danger of 'mission drift'	Funding policies developed by groups; case notes
5	Support groups to prepare exit strategies	Strategies
6	Demonstrate knowledge to be able to encourage VCS groups to aim for diversification of funding streams	Case notes
7	Demonstrate knowledge which will encourage VCS groups to explore ways of generating income through enterprising activities and fundraising	Case notes; funding strategies
8	Provide information on the laws relating to different kinds of fundraising (eg lotteries, bingo) to enable organizations to effectively generate their own income.	Information sheets
9	Support VCS groups to plan for being refused funding and to develop contingency plans	Case notes; contingency plans

5.4 Keeping funding advice up-to-date

	Competency	Example measures
D	<i>Keeping funding advice up-to-date: funding advisers should have the ability to:</i>	
1	Show knowledge of a range of resources available on funding opportunities	Information management systems, training course notes, professional development training evidence, email funding alert subscriptions, participation at local funding advisers network.
2	Signpost groups to information about different kinds of funding	Information sheets; newsletter articles
3	Recognise when, where and how to refer organizations (eg to specialist support services)	Job Description, funding advice session notes, record of specialist support services
4	Show awareness of national trends in the funding context	Notes from meetings, seminars, training course notes, professional development training evidence, file within information management system, email funding alert subscriptions, participation at local and national funding advisers networks
5	Show awareness of local strategies which can impact on VCS groups' ability to raise funds	File within information management system, local

		policy documents
6	Collect and collate information to enable follow-up support and monitoring and evaluation of funding advice	Policies and systems in place
7	Produce information in a concise and understandable format.	information sheets, newsletters

5.5 Supporting VCS groups with funding applications /tender bids

	Competency	Example measures
E	<i>Supporting VCS groups with funding applications /tender bids: funding advisers should have the ability to:</i>	
1	Interpret a wide range of funders' guidelines (including contract and tender specifications)	Funding advice session notes, training course notes, record of conversations with funders
2	Identify gaps or weaknesses in applications / bids	Funding advice session notes, training course notes
3	Give constructive feedback to strengthen bids	Funding advice session notes, training course notes, user evaluation of service feedback
4	Feed back to funders and policy-makers on unmet needs and any lack of inclusivity in funding processes	Attendance at local FAWN meetings, feedback from national funding advisers network

Key to acronyms used:

VCS – Voluntary and Community Sector
IMD – Indices of Multiple Deprivation
LAA – Local Area Agreement
FAWN – Funding Advice Workers Network

6 Quality Award in Funding Advice

The quality award in funding advice is aimed at organizations rather than individuals. It reflects the performance standards within funding advice a support organization needs to recognise, if the provision of quality funding advice to assist the Third Sector to become more effective, efficient and sustainable is to be met.

Areas within the competency framework in funding advice, as well as the existing accredited and non accredited training, were used as the foundation for developing the outcomes. So too was the generic NAVCA Quality Award for local infrastructure organizations, which includes an element on funding advice. Similar to the NAVCA Award, a series of evidence suggestions linked to the outcomes was put forward as the best method of working towards the quality award. After a meeting with a Council for Voluntary Service, which had successfully achieved NAVCA's award, it was agreed that an external assessment process would be the most valuable and provide appropriate recognition.

Once developed, the quality award was circulated amongst Chief Officers by NAVCA, FINE, CIB South and West and SYFAB for comments. The responses provided guidance that, in theory, there was some support for a quality award in funding advice. However the pilot showed that at present the award cannot be mandatory. The work of the Partnership members and the pilot process have provided the foundation for a quality award in funding advice. The responses, together with the number of quality awards already in existence, suggest further discussion is required to move the work forward. Central to this discussion is whether there should be a stand alone quality award covering the delivery of funding advice or a generic award for support organizations which includes a comprehensive section covering funding advice.

Note: Some core activities demonstrate evidence to more than one outcome and therefore are repeated.

6.1 Outcome 1: The VCS has increased knowledge of a wide range of funding opportunities

Demonstrated by: The organization:

- Provides a range of information on a wide range of funding sources
- Provides information about legal structures and the funding sources appropriate to each.
- Has knowledge of and signposts organizations to specialist support services about different kinds of funding.
- Produces newsletters informing the VCS of new and changing funding opportunities.

6.2 Outcome 2: The VCS has increased knowledge and understanding of appropriate and effective funding proposals and strategies.

Demonstrated by: The organization:

- Ensures funding advisers undertake training to at least level 3.
- Provides access to continuing professional development training for funding advisers.
- Recognises and uses the Funding Adviser's Competency Framework.
- Has the knowledge to support organizations by diagnosing their needs and capacity.
- Provides information and support to organizations in developing feasible funding proposals.
- Provides information and support on how to develop sustainable funding strategies

6.3 Outcome 3: Increased quality in funding advice provided to VCS

Demonstrated by: The organization:

- Provides access to an ongoing mentoring / support programme for funding advisers
- Ensures funding advisers undertake specific foundation through to level 3 training.
- Provides access to continuing professional development training.
- Recognises and uses the Funding Adviser's Competency Framework.
- Implements a monitoring and evaluation process for advice service, which includes measuring the increase in confidence / skills of organizations to understand the funding and fundraising process.

6.4 Outcome 4: Increased capacity of VCS to submit effective, quality applications/bids

Demonstrated by: The organization:

- Ensures funding advisers undertake specific foundation through to level 3 training.
- Implements a monitoring and evaluation process for advice service which provides evidence of no. of successful applications / bids and amount of funding secured.
- Recognises and uses the Funding Adviser's Competency Framework.
- Provides fundraising training to VCS or signposts to appropriate training / support
- Organises conferences or meetings which provide the VCS with opportunities to meet with funders.

6.5 Outcome 5: Increased understanding of the needs of the VCS by funders

Demonstrated by: The organization:

- Provides the opportunity for funding advisers to attend FAWN meetings.

- Provides opportunities for the VCS to meet with funders so that needs can be identified and discussed.

6.6 Suggested examples of evidence

- organization's policies and procedures, newsletters and circulation, statistical information, monitoring and evaluation forms, enquiry forms including action plans, minutes of FAWN meetings, records of funders forum meetings, resources available, fact sheets, information sheets, briefings, training notes and information, health check forms.

How to measure = Similar to NAVCA, i.e. external assessment (including interviews with staff and stakeholders). This could be a remit for the National Funding Advisers Network.

7 Local Area Agreements

The future funding of “funding advice” whilst it can be supported at a national level, will reach maximum potential where it is built into local expectations, and is part of the frameworks for local area agreements.

The Comprehensive Spending Review has identified a set of 198 National Indicators, “covering all national priority outcomes which local authorities are responsible for delivering, either on their own or in partnership with others”.

[\(The third sector: The crucial role of the new local performance framework\)](#)

Hazel Blears, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, speaking at the New Local Government Network (NLGN) Annual Conference on January 22nd 2008, was “ambitious about what local government and its partners can achieve through Local Area Agreements” and “ambitious about what Multi-Area Agreements can deliver”.

One of the national priority outcomes is “A healthy third sector” and “Third sector organizations will seek to play a key role either in helping shape services, ensuring they are more responsive, or through direct service delivery across a range of the 198 indicators. This might include children’s services, health and older people, community cohesion and safer communities to name but a few. The diversity and scope of the sector means that it will contribute across most national priority outcomes to some degree.”

[\(The third sector: The crucial role of the new local performance framework\)](#)

The main delivery agent for national indicators and the new performance framework is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), which holds the local vision for developing the **Sustainable Community Strategy** – for transforming places and for tackling hard, cross-cutting issues. Sustainable community strategies should offer opportunities for the third sector to make their unique contribution (alongside local authorities, business and other service providers, such as the primary care trust and the local police) in agreeing the targets of Local Area Agreements (LAAs), which will seek to secure better outcomes for each area and become the central delivery agreement between the Government and the local authority and its partners.

The role played by funding advisers in achieving sustainable communities can be quite direct, supporting local organizations towards their own sustainability.

Government offices are all currently negotiating the priorities and indicators for the next round of LAAs. These will be high level priorities and indicators and the LAA will not show the detail of how these will be delivered. It is not therefore likely that we would expect to see funding advice specifically mentioned in any LAA.

LAAs are due to be signed off in June of this year and the National Partnership should be asking the Office of the Third Sector which LAAs have chosen the ‘creating an environment for a thriving third sector’ indicator at that stage.

Following consultation at both regional and national level, the actions which can be taken to promote funding advice within local area agreements are thought to be:

1. Work at a national level with Office of the Third Sector and Communities and Local Government on emerging policies and priorities for the third sector. The national funding advice network, along with the expertise of the partnership and local funding advice workers can demonstrate how funding advice can contribute to a thriving and sustainable third sector.

2. At a district level the National Partnership should offer the expertise and services of the partnership for those local areas that choose the national indicator 'creating an environment for a thriving third sector'. It would be sensible to draw upon and work in partnership with the local third sector organizations that are involved in the development and delivery of the LAA.

LAA's have been in place for a couple of years now, and already the national picture is changing, following re-appraisal of Neighbourhood Renewal areas. Some activities which were funded under LAA's are now no longer being funded – they will not provide the answer to all funding problems.

New ways of working are envisaged at local level, which will involve:

- public sector organizations working together more to deliver better, more responsive services to local people;

Funding advisers at regional level can offer training programmes with the following aims:

- i. To meet the needs of third sector organizations in a changing funding environment.
- ii. To create highly skilled, confident and supported advisors, with knowledge of income generation, procurement and finance
- iii. To ensure third sector organizations have better access to high quality support, and as a result become increasingly effective, independent and financially sustainable
- iv. To bring consistency and good practice to funding advice to VCOs

And will deliver the following outputs:

- A strong, well developed, affordable training service delivered at local level to support funding advisors and local communities.
- A training service for funding advisors in all sectors (public and third sector).
- public, private and third sectors striving together for improved prosperity with plenty of ambition for the future;
 - i. High quality funding advice will contributing to the sustainability of third sector organizations meeting the significant challenges for VCOs in the coming years as the funding environment becomes more difficult.
- central and local government agreeing the priorities for an area and working together to improve outcomes;
 - i. At national level, working to establish guidance and professional tandards for local funding advice provision, enabling central and local government certainty of the quality of support available to local organizations

- ii. Improving local outcomes through funding advice work by.
 - Increased knowledge of the range of funding opportunities
 - Skills in developing appropriate, effective funding proposals
 - An increased capacity to submit effective, quality application/bids and strategies
 - Local needs better understood by distant funders
- creating opportunities for local people to influence decisions about services and how they are delivered.
- i. Funding advisers share / network / provide mutual support for organizations seeking to improve their sustainability, and show how local agencies may contribute positively within the local economy, influencing decision making through their practical contributions as well as at policy level.

8 Independent Evaluation

8.1 Structure

8.1.1 Aims and objectives

This evaluation focuses on 3 elements of the programme

- Project management
- Consultation processes
- Future development

8.1.2 Methodology

The evaluation was carried out through desk research and personal contact using the following sources of information:

- Tender proposal and business plan
- Deliverables
- Consultation documentation
- Project meeting minutes and interim reports for the Finance Hub
- Telephone interviews with staff from all the partner agencies
- Attendance at a project meeting, 10th November 2007

8.1.3 Constraints

This evaluation had to be completed at the same time as the project activity ended, 14th February 2008. Full reflection and firm conclusions about some of the final products and the coherence of the future direction of the work will require further discussion.

The main outstanding areas are:

- Business plan consultation is still ongoing.
- Directory of networks and information resources for funding advisors are not yet available on the Finance Hub website.

8.2 Project Management

The national partnership established in 2006 to deliver Finance Hub project FH2 has matured and developed. It brings together skilled individuals with complementary expertise, committed to delivering quality work. In particular, partners used their

strong base in grass roots funding advice work and contacts with local networks to inform and facilitate the consultation processes and enhance the final products.

fit4funding has provided effective project management in leading and co-ordinating the work of the partnership. The role of the project co-ordinator in achieving this was highlighted.

8.2.1 Partnership Structure

The partnership created to deliver FH 2 was extended to include the Institute of Fundraising and bring in additional expertise in the areas of fundraising and tax effective giving.

fit4funding was the lead agency and accountable body, they provided a project co-ordinator who was the main contact between partners. She set up and serviced meetings, collated budget and monitoring information for interim and final reports and liaised with the Finance Hub. The partners cited the effectiveness of the Chair and project co-ordinator in reporting to the Finance Hub and keeping the project on track. Several commented that this was an onerous task that they were willing to share.

The partners collectively planned and reviewed activities and undertook a range of individual roles. (Appendix A) Each member volunteered to lead one or more areas of work, based on their interests and skills. A major factor in the success of the project was the way in which the partners contributed to, supported and reviewed each others work, through small group meetings, email and telephone contact.

8.2.2 Contract monitoring and evaluation

The original partners had learnt a lot from their previous contract and improved recording and progress tracking systems to give better control and anticipate Finance Hub requests. The provision of evidence at the end of each milestone rather than on completion of the project worked well. There are still however strong feelings, particular amongst the newer partners that the monitoring, evidence and reporting requirements are time consuming and disproportionate for the size of project. The use of a standard reporting form was not helpful in reflecting achievements and progress and the approach to milestones and payments was unrealistic and inflexible. Too much detail was required, which may have reflected a lack of trust or understanding.

This was a complex contract with changes to the work plan at the start. The project chair commented that communication with the Finance Hub to agree expectations had been good throughout the project. However, problems occurred at the end of Milestone 2 when differences in the interpretation of the work plan and milestones resulted in some confusion.

8.2.3 Communication

Bi-monthly project meetings were held in Wakefield and Sheffield. Learning from earlier contacts, a meeting schedule for the whole year was set at the start. The dates were noted at the end of each set of minutes and attendance was improved.

The partners highlighted the quality of discussion at the meetings. The mutual trust and respect that has been developed lead to open and honest communication, with individuals stating their own positions and interests (e.g. competition for resources

between regional and national networks) and then moving onto a corporate and wider view.

There are still some issues around travel for partners based in London and the South, the amount of email traffic and the availability of staff who work part time. All the partners have considerable pressures on their time and are balancing the demands of this project with other work. Exploration of telephone or video conferencing was suggested in the evaluation of FH2 and this could be revisited if NFAP continues.

8.2.4 Added value of partnership working

Although this project can be described as six separate pieces of work they are clearly interrelated. The proposed FANN will be a key mechanism for taking forward and facilitating the implementation of quality standards for individuals and organizations. Training course curricula have informed the development of the standards. The information resources and training will help advisors to develop their skills and provide evidence of competence.

The task groups established to develop each part of the project have ensured that these interrelationships were taken into account. The development of the Competency Framework and the Quality Award were good examples of the integration of complementary skills. NAVCA brought experience of competences and assessment processes whilst the funding advice agencies provided knowledge and understanding of the funding advice environment.

Several of the partners are in direct touch with frontline groups. They give funding advice and coordinate networks and/or manage staff who do this. This means that they are embedded in networks and can carry out effective consultation and encourage participation because they already know the people, organizations and networks involved.

In addition to their direct contribution to this project the partners learnt from each other in a wider context. CIBSW indicated that the organization's profile had been raised amongst their peers in the SW. All the partners stated that the partnership had given them the opportunity to work with organizations that they had not come into close contact with before. They had been able to develop an increased knowledge and understanding of each others' specialisms and skills which would enhance their own work and help them to identify the potential for future joint working.

8.3 Consultation

The preceding chapters of this report describe how feedback from consultation was used to inform and develop specific areas of work. This section explores the processes and learning points in more detail.

An important factor to note here is the role of the NFAP itself in providing ongoing debate and consultation as the work progressed. The practical experience and contacts of all the partners in their own organizations and regions meant that the practical needs and concerns of FAW were to the fore at all stages.

Widespread or targeted consultation took place with separate exercises for each area of the work plan. The methods used and size of sample varied each time. Emailed questionnaires were the main mechanism with some small scale use of focus groups and discussion at local and regional funding advice network (FAN) meetings. This was a largely pragmatic approach, to try and make the best use of short time scales and achieve some kind of balance between ease and speed of distribution and more in depth information and discussion. The partners were effective in using their personal contacts and networking opportunities to explain the project and encourage participation. The level of response was very good in the first consultation on the feasibility study and more targeted approaches were used with later requests, to allow for possible 'consultation fatigue' amongst funding advice providers. Consultation on the Business Plan and final drafts of the Competency Framework and Quality Award is still open and the debate is ongoing.

All the consultations produced constructive and useful responses. Even where expectation of the number of responses was low; the partners felt that they had received considered, quality comments. Taken together the consultations have achieved several results. The main one has been a general endorsement of the approach and activities of the NFAP in this project. Suggestions for changes and additions have been incorporated into the final products and important concerns and tensions identified for further discussion and consideration. In particular, the Business Plan for the FANN is firmly rooted in the responses to the Feasibility Study. In addition the consultations have raised the profile of the NFAP, opened up a dialogue and started a process of engagement with the establishment and ownership of a national network and quality standards for funding advice providers.

8.3.1 Consultation Summary

	When	How	How many	Responses
FANN – Feasibility Study	Sept – Oct 2007	Widespread Email and FH web site. Questionnaire by Survey Monkey	Estimate c 2500	276
FANN – Business Plan	20/1/08 – 31/03/08	Email to 276 respondents to feasibility study FH and partner web sites		Ongoing
Competency Award	26/11/07 - 12/12/07	Email questionnaire to FAWnet (127) and NE FAN (35)	c162	16
		Discussion at NE and YH FAN and Bradford training course	3 meetings	c 30
Quality Award	21/11/07 -7/12/07	Email questionnaire to CEO in CVS, (NAVCA, NE and SW)	21	8
Training Module	Jan 2008	Questionnaire to SW contacts (100) and NE FAN (35)	135	c20
		Discussion at YH FAN and NE focus group		15

8.3.2 Feasibility Study for a Funding Advisors National Network (FANN)

This was the most extensive of the consultations and took place in September and October 2007. An email explaining the project was distributed widely through the NAVCA networks (including COIN, DWnet (200), FAWnet (127) and SKiLD (1232) the f4f newsletter and the 42 funding advice networks identified by the Sheffield Hallam report. A press release was also circulated to sector media. It is very difficult to estimate how many people in total received the information. There would be some overlap between the various mailing lists and network membership. Recipients were also asked to cascade the information further to try and extend the 'reach' to anyone who was not part of existing networks. A conservative estimate would suggest at least 2500 people were contacted directly, however these included development workers not involved in delivering funding advice or front line groups.

The emails gave a direct link to the Finance Hub web site where the consultation questionnaire could be completed via the Survey Monkey system. This was very detailed with 37 multiple choice questions and space for additional comments. Its aim was to expand the issues raised by the Sheffield Hallam Study, in particular to explore the level of commitment to a FANN and investigate concerns and tensions in more depth e.g. the implications of a FANN for regional and local FAN

To complement this widespread mailing, personal contacts were used to encourage participation. The 42 networks were divided up between the partners for initial contact and follow up by email and phone calls. There were no planned face to face discussions or focus groups but partners took the opportunity to give presentations and encourage discussion at local and regional meetings as they occurred. Eg. Bradford FAN had a presentation then held a special meeting to discuss the issues further amongst themselves. Several of the responses came from networks and this kind of activity may well have been replicated in other areas. There was no time or money in the budget for meetings.

There were 276 replies. This figure compares with 239 replies to the Sheffield Hallam survey which had a similar dissemination strategy and 156 to the NFAP training needs analysis in 2006, which was more narrowly targeted. In addition to individual replies, responses were sent in by 45 networks and 44 other organizations. This suggests that the views of considerably more than 276 people are represented in the report analysis. The majority of responses came from third sector organizations (69%) the main target, but workers in the statutory sector (15%) and a range of other individuals and organizations including private consultants also contributed. This indicates that the survey was effective in reaching a wide range of interested stakeholders. The analysis and recommendations from this consultation have already been described in section 1 of the final report.

The level of response and range of opinions put forward is very positive, particularly considering that this was a long and complex survey on an issue that is largely theoretical at present with practical impact for FAW still some way into the future.

8.3.3 Business Plan to develop a FANN

Findings from the Feasibility Study informed a draft Business Plan. Consultation on this began in mid January 2008. Copies were sent to the 276 individuals and networks who contributed to the initial survey, requesting their comments. The draft was also put on the web sites of the Finance Hub and the partners with the copies of the Feasibility Study and drafts of the Competency Framework and the Quality

Award. Individuals have a deadline of 8th February for reply, this is extended to 31st March for networks. There is no structure for replies this time. The partners are looking for broad views as they are concerned that the sector may feel over consulted. Some replies have been received at the time of writing and these have taken the general view that the FANN should go ahead on the lines suggested in the Business Plan.

8.3.4 Competency Framework for Funding Advisors

Consultation on the Competency Award was more tightly focussed. The members of the task group used their own networks and contacts to reach funding advisors. The suggested framework and a questionnaire were sent out to the 127 members of NAVCA's FAW network and the 35 members of the North East FAN. In addition FINE discussed the framework at a network meeting and the comments were fed in to the consultation. f4f asked for comments at the Yorkshire and Humber FAN meeting in January and discussed the framework with 6 people attending a funding advice course in November. Personal contacts were clearly influential in getting participation, 12 of the 16 questionnaire responses came from the NE and Yorkshire. Several regions did not send in any replies.

The level of response corresponded to the targeted approach and the quality of comment was good which reflected uncertainty about practical implementation, for example would it be compulsory?

8.3.5 Quality Award in Funding Advice

A different approach again was taken for consultation on the Quality Award. The partnership decided that as this was an organizational award, decisions about participation would be made by chief officers and/or operational managers. An outline of proposed outcomes, sources of evidence and a questionnaire were sent to 21 CVS selected by NAVCA (9) CIBSW (5) and FINE (7) Criteria for selection included participation in the NAVCA quality award and existing links with the partner agencies. Returns were made by 8 of the selected organizations. Partners agree that this consultation provided conflicting results. Although there was a majority in favour of a quality award, 2 were strongly against an Award at all and 3 said they would not sign up to this one. More work still needs to be done to get a wider range of views and explore the need for a Quality Award in more depth. This consultation was also interesting in that some respondents showed a considerable lack of awareness of the overall context of a Quality Award, in particular the relationship with the Competency Framework and the different training opportunities available for funding advisors.

8.3.6 Level 4 training programme

The three partners involved in this work, took different approaches to get the views of funding advisors in their regions.

CIBSW sent 100 questionnaires with outlines of two level 4 modules and proposals for a blended learning approach to all previous learners on their funding advisors courses, the SW FAN, colleagues, development workers and training officers. There were 14 replies. FINE sent the information to 35 NE FAN members and held a focus group attended by 5 of them. In Yorkshire, f4f gave out the information at the FAN meeting in January and discussed it with the 10 people attending. A lot of useful feedback was received by these routes and discussions are still taking place. (See section 4)

8.3.7 Information Resources for Funding Advice Workers

The consultation on the information resources took place in two stages. The partners commented on a scoping exercise in August 2008. This confirmed the general approach, suggested some changes to the sections on legalisation and requested that 'online toolkits' be included in the final product. A draft of the final web site copy was circulated to the partners in mid January. This was a substantial document that some partners circulated round their networks. At the time of writing no responses had been returned. It is intended that the resource guide will end up on the Finance Hub web site. It is vital that consultation with FAW continues to take place to ensure that this resource is accessible and easy to use.

8.4 Learning

Two questions are important when assessing the effectiveness of the consultation approaches used.

- Did enough people reply?
- How representative were they of the target audiences?

The size of the pool of FAW who would benefit from the suite of support services proposed by the NFAP is unknown. Sheffield Hallam found 42 funding advice networks, with an average membership of 30 (based on the 29 who replied to the survey). This gives a total of 1260 FAW, although there may be some overlap between membership of regional and local networks. Only 53% of the Sheffield respondents were currently members of a network so a very tentative estimate of around 2500 funding advice workers could be put forward. However some of the Sheffield survey participants were Chief Officers and others not directly involved in giving advice or for whom it is only a small part of their work and this figure should probably be adjusted downwards.

The consultation exercises achieved a lot in a very short time. Partners are satisfied that they have enough support and interest in the FANN, Competence Framework and level 4 training to give them a firm basis for ongoing development. Although there are still a lot of unanswered questions with uncertainty over funding and the future pattern of national support services, there is a strong feeling that 'the time is right' for these initiatives. A sizeable group of interested people has now been established that can continue to contribute to an ongoing dialogue. Several learning points were highlighted by partners to guide this.

Taken together the distinct pieces of work that make up this project provide a coherent and integrated approach to achieving high quality and consistent funding advice for front line groups. The project timescales and design necessitated separate consultations as each of the products became ready. This meant that the connections were not always clear and funding advice workers may not have a complete understanding of how it all fits together. Ongoing consultation on the Business Plan and quality standards with regular feedback on progress by NFAP will help to improve this.

The decision to consult by questionnaire was a pragmatic one to get as many views as possible in a short time. This approach has limitations. Questions and answers on complex issues are difficult to frame and open to differences in interpretation and understanding. Respondents will be those with both the time and inclination to fill in surveys. Several partners commented that they would have liked more face to face

discussion so that the issues could be explored in more depth. Future consultation could be enhanced by a more targeted approach, for example identifying specific individuals, networks and organizations in each region to act as focus groups for regular contact to discuss the work as it progresses. This would require more time and a dedicated budget and could be a combination of face to face and virtual communication.

8.5 What next

The work of the NFAP has identified that there is strong support for the professionalisation of the Funding Advice sector. It is a considerable strength that this sense of direction and timeliness comes from within the sector itself rather being imposed from outside. General support for a FANN has been confirmed and areas of concerns and difference clarified. Plans for essential elements, training, information resources and quality standards for individuals and organizations are in place. Expectations have been raised, this momentum must be maintained.

The NFAP is committed to moving this work on but needs continued resources to do this. Applications for funding to set up a FANN have been submitted but decisions will not be made until later in the year.

8.5.1 Funding and National Support Services

This is a time of great uncertainty for infrastructure support services. The six hubs will be replaced by nine National Support Services from April 2008. The Finance Hub which has supported the NFAP for two years will end. This raises some immediate issues which need to be resolved to ensure that the work of the NFAP is not lost.

These are:

- Copyright and ownership of materials
- Future of the web site and long term location of information resources
- Maintenance and updating of information resources

The work of the NFAP now comes under the remit of several National Support Services. ACEVO has the contract for the income generation workstream, the nearest equivalent to the Finance Hub. However several other works streams are relevant, in particular Collaboration (bassac) Performance Management (CES) and Campaigning and Advocacy (NCVO). It is vital that NFAP establish a dialogue with all the new contractors, as soon as possible.

8.5.2 Partnership development and viability

It is essential that the expertise and activities built up collectively by NFAP through FH2 and FH18 are not lost to the Third Sector. The partnership has varying degrees of control over the future direction of the different elements within the overall programme. Ideally they should go ahead as an integrated whole but the various components can be developed separately, for example.

- Level 4 Training - OCN approval of learning outcomes for two Level 4 units has been obtained in the NE. Those partners who deliver training for funding advice workers can continue to work together to develop this nationally.
- National Training Programme. Revisit the learning points highlighted in the evaluation of FH2 to develop a national learning and support programme,

through short courses, accredited training, elearning, peer review and mentoring. (Appendix 2)

- Quality Standards – Continue to work with NAVCA to integrate the Funding Advice standards with their Quality Award and the SKiLD project work on a competency framework for development workers, progression, accreditation and qualifications
- Start to incorporate the Competency Framework into their own training and network support activities to promote its use by FAW as a mechanism to review their own practice and learning needs.

Finally, the partners own ability to sustain their core activities and continue in business is a critical issue for the future viability and development of the partnership. Several face substantial funding challenges of their own. Participation in national partnership work needs to be explicitly resourced through additional income generation or external funding.

(Evaluation report by Sue Tuffin. 6th February 2008).

9. Appendices

9.1 The National Funding Advice Partnership

NFAP brings together the leading funding advice agencies from across England, operating variously at district, sub regional, regional and national levels. These organizations are:

- Charities Information Bureau – South and West (CIB S&W)
- fit4funding (Accountable body)
- Funding Information North East (FINE)
- Institute of Fundraising (IoF)
- National Association of Community and Voluntary Action (NAVCA)
- South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau (SYFAB)