

Unite

FOR PEOPLE, NOT FOR PROFIT

The Not for Profit Sector has been seen as the panacea for delivering all services, and yet serious issues impacting the workforce have been completely overlooked. As a result, the quality of delivery of services, often to the most needy in our society, is worsening under the severe pressures that the sector is experiencing. The workforce bridge the gap to ensure that service users get the best possible support, when the proper resources to provide this are no longer available.

Small niche organisations, formerly dependent on grant funding, are losing out on funding altogether. Losing such specialisms is hugely detrimental to local communities.

These pressures for adequate funding are driven by open competition for funding, with contracts most frequently being awarded to low-cost bids, rather than quality service proposals. The employers are therefore proposing cuts to services, terms and conditions and it isn't unknown that they will bid on a loss-making basis in order to win the contract.

As a result of inadequate money coming into organisations, terms and conditions of employment are being cut, pay is being frozen or cut, pensions are being downgraded, and the workforce is working excessive hours (often unpaid) to deliver the best service they can, resulting in severe levels of stress with personal health and with adverse consequences for family life. The sector was at one stage renowned for its training of staff, but now many no longer receive training above the statutory minimum.

The dedicated workforce is also very concerned at the length of contracts being issued. Whilst the government has set itself a target for contracts to be three years in length, they are frequently shorter than this. These short contracts mean that people's jobs are insecure, making personal financial and life planning difficult. It is hard to invest in a occupational pension, to get a mortgage or loan on such insecure employment practices. TUPE transfers from one organisation to the next is common and creates insecurity in itself.

Above all, staff are very concerned about the impact that this constant change and insecurity is having on service users, often the most vulnerable in our society, whose very need is stability. It also prevents organisations from being their most strategic in the development of services when they know that the clock is ticking on the contract. This detracts from the creativity and innovation which the sector is so valued for.

Politically, there is much talk of public services transferring to from its solid and dependable basis to the insecurities of the 'Third Sector'. The reality is that dependable services will move into an environment where there is no security guaranteed, and where staff are not as well developed and pay and conditions are far inferior.

The reality of opening up public services to the market is that the private sector can equally bid for public contracts. We have so many examples where the 'Third Sector' has been the Trojan Horse to privatisation of services

We want your support and to:

- Sign the Early Day Motion on Funding in the Not for Profit Sector
- Put pressure on government and your local authorities to ensure that contracts are of a suitable length (our members believe five - to - ten years in length), guarantee proper value for the costs of services and will not jeopardise employee terms and conditions
- Put pressure on government to review the impact of contracting on the Not for Profit Sector's workforce
- Support Unite's campaign on the impact of Funding on the Not for Profit Sector
- Meet with the workforce of Not for Profit organisations in your constituency to learn of the impact of funding on them, and your constituents.