

Role Specification / Brief

New initiatives – short term role

Medway Voluntary Action is an organisation that has historically provided voluntary sector infrastructure to the myriad of local charities in Medway, alongside a training offer, and has provided a seedbed for a number of small charities over the years before launching those charities to independence.

The context in which MVA, (company name CVS (Medway)) has operated for some years, is changing rapidly. The funding climate is shifting dramatically from one of grant funding, to contract funding, with an emphasis on gaining more for less, meaning contract levels are increasingly inadequate for the delivery of the services to a high standard of quality, and restrictive in terms of developing new services.

MVA are seeking to widen their current remit, deliver services and engage in commercial activity. MVA intend to appoint a consultant to report to the Board of Trustees by the end of March (with an interim report by the end of February) to:

- Effectively scope, develop and create new models of work which drive unrestricted income into the charity assisting its sustainability and ability to innovate in response to changing needs and gaps in the sector
- Inform a 3-5 year strategic plan for developing new services

We envisage that this will be 20 days' work.

The successful applicant will:

- Have a strong knowledge of the voluntary and community sector, as well as a clear understanding of local authority funding environments
- Be well informed of Government priorities/initiatives on for example, social isolation, loneliness, homelessness and mental health, and the key links within statutory sector and voluntary sectors, in order to exploit and highlight opportunities for new business initiatives
- Develop new business model(s) which can be operated either as MVA solely funded initiatives, or as a joint venture with selected like minded partners. The imperative is to ensure full cost recovery, leading to a surplus for both the charity and/or its partners

- Have strong entrepreneurial vision, and the ability to realise ideas through effective planning and financial modelling
- Have strong people skills, and the demonstrable ability to engage a range of partners and stakeholders to create, develop and bring forward operational models of work which fill gaps in the sector and provide needed commercial activity/services to beneficiaries from a range of backgrounds
- Strong presentation skills, in order to clearly present new initiatives to the MVA Board of Trustees and other audiences as valuable options for future work directions

The Brief

For MVA to remain sustainable, some capital funding has been made available to seed-fund new initiatives. The funding is within a restricted reserve, and is intended to provide the launch capital, match funding, marketing funding and whatever is needed for a range of services and the development of commercial activity over the coming 12 months.

The New Initiatives role is crucial to ensure that the local sector and stakeholders within it are effectively engaged to help identify service gaps, and create new services and inform the development of commercial activity to fill those gaps, without recourse to the local authority for grants.

The local sector for charities, like the national sector, has shifted dramatically, forcing many charities out of business with the loss of many services.

There are clearly gaps which can be filled, but not by using the trusted and time served methods; a new and innovative way of working is needed and is being embraced by some local charities, but MVA, as an organisation, also needs to demonstrate its innovation, independence and ability to remain sustainable in the long term.

There are good networks across the sector, facilitated by the VCS Leaders' Network and MVA, and a general acceptance across the sector that a new approach is needed, so the successful applicant will be pushing at an open door, and should find colleagues happy to share ideas, support partnership working and collaborative initiatives.

Identifying partners for new commercial activity and the delivery of services in order to spread risk, limit financial exposure, and therefore create a stronger offer to customers/beneficiaries will also be part of this role

There are key strategies locally which will also provide a strong context for new initiatives to be developed. Some of these strategies are owned by the local authority, and the local healthcare trust, the CCG, the Health and Wellbeing Board etc. This indicates that there may be a willingness in the future to fund, in whole or in part new projects and services. However, these large statutory organisations will not commission unless services can be backed by an evidence base.

This opportunity, through MVA and its reserve fund for new projects provides the perfect opportunity to pilot new commercial activity and required services identified by the role

holder. It is anticipated that the process will also contribute to gathering the evidence of strong outcomes needed to secure any future commissioning or funding.

The Medway towns offer a challenging opportunity to boost the power of charitable services, driven from within the communities themselves, as examples of how best to meet people's needs. MVA are now also offering the working capital to see some new initiatives take shape and deliver those outcomes, but also deliver sustainability and operational surplus to enable more and better work.

Additional information

Applicants should complete no more than 3 sides of A4 to:

- Tell us how you meet the specification
- Provide examples of other similar projects/experience
- Describe how you will approach this project

The deadline for application is the **21st December**.

It is anticipated that interviews will take place during week beginning **14th January**. Applicants selected for interview will also be required to deliver a presentation.

The anticipated start date for this project is the 1st February.

Please send your application to Jane Howard, CEO of MVA, email jane@mva.org.uk.

For an informal discussion please contact Jane on 01634 812850.

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