

HIGHLAND SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT (SOA)

HIGHLAND THIRD SECTOR'S TOOLKIT FOR BEING INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS

This is an opportunity for the Third Sector to have a role in the shaping and the delivery of the SOA in Highland.

The breadth of activities within the voluntary (or Third) sector means that in some way your group is probably helping the public agencies to achieve some of the 15 national and 53 local outcomes.

HERE IS A TOOL TO HELP YOU FIND OUT HOW YOUR GROUP IS MAKING A CONTRIBUTION TO ACHIEVING HIGHLAND'S SOA.

Please read on ...

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF THE SOA

Following the Concordat agreed between COSLA and the Scottish Government at the end of 2007, a significant shift in the working relationship between national and local government has been made; with national government concentrating on **what** has to be achieved rather than **how**. By focusing on what has to be achieved against the Government's five strategic priorities for the country, 15 national outcomes have been identified. Local authorities have had to produce a Single Outcome Agreement which sets out how they will contribute to achieving these 15 national outcomes in a local context. Because the outcomes transcend organisational boundaries, the SOA is to grow to include how other public sector bodies will contribute to the national outcomes. Over time the SOA should be an improvement plan for the public sector locally. It will also be appropriate to show how **voluntary sector bodies** will contribute to the achievement of the 15 national outcomes.

VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN HIGHLAND

In Highland there is an enormous scope of activity, diversity and complexity within its voluntary sector. Voluntary sector organisations vary in size, structure, management, purpose and operation. Their activities include lobbying, fundraising, service provision, advice, support, counselling, networking and research on topics as varied as education, health, arts, sport, culture, heritage, social care, community care, leisure, recreation, housing, social inclusion, environment, children, animals, religion and regeneration (and this list is not exhaustive).

The common strands that bring them together as a sector include:

- Voluntary management committee
- Not-for-profit
- No mandatory requirement to provide the service, facility, amenity etc.
- Non-statutory/public agency
- Autonomous and independent
- The ability to take risks and be creative
- For the benefit of the community

The Highland Council's first SOA for 2008/09 (in association with several Community Planning public sector partners and the Scottish Government) had to be prepared within a short timescale. For next year's SOA there will be opportunities for consultation and participation in the process. If your group is part of the process it is an opportunity to inform and to strengthen what you do. This does not necessarily mean there will be more funding for your group. However, it is about awareness raising and relationship building with the public sector. It is about facilitating opportunities for the development of communities.

HOW TO MAKE THE LINK FROM YOUR GROUP TO THE HIGHLAND SOA

We have taken a hypothetical voluntary sector group, a Day Care Centre with a non-specific client group, as an example to demonstrate a process for identifying the links that exist between your group and the Highland SOA. This involves 3 steps:

1.) What are the KEY ACTIVITIES OF THE GROUP?

Establish at least 3

- i) A local place where clients receive services and shared activities**
- ii) Care – lunch, laundry, bathing, chiropody etc.**
- iii) Social interaction with other clients and staff**

2.) What are the OUTCOMES from these activities?

(i.e. achievements, positive change, the difference that it makes)

- i) Support to clients to enable them to continue to live at home**
- ii) Respite for Carers (if any)**
- iii) Improved mental and physical health for this vulnerable client group**
- iv) Maintaining/improving the wellbeing of the client and the wider community**
- v) According respect and actively including otherwise marginalised members of the community**
- vi) Providing a community facility/resource which is locally accessible**

3.) DO YOUR OUTCOMES FIT WITH ANY OF THE 15 NATIONAL AND LOCAL ONES IN THE SOA?

(Please see the separate sheet for the 15 national and local outcomes)

We found a match with nine as listed below:

- 6.1 Increase proportions of older people receiving appropriate care**
- 6.4 People affected by mental ill health receive appropriate care for their needs**

- 7.4 Reducing health inequalities**
- 7.5 Tackling discrimination**

- 10.3 Invest in the infra structure for rural communities**
- 10.4 Limit the impact of distance from services in rural and remote communities**

- 11.3 Improved quality of life through community led action**

- 15.1 Best value and continuous improvement are demonstrated**
- 15.2 Improved access to public services with customers' views taken into account**

This information can then be used by your group when participating in local partnerships and networks; or at meetings with public sector agencies; or you could choose to pass on this information to the Highland Voluntary Sector Forum (*give appropriate contact details*) who would inform you of opportunities to participate in SOA consultation meetings.