

# PIE Partnership Impact Evaluation



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## **Acknowledgments**

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## Introduction

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A CVS - Council for Voluntary Service / Community & Voluntary Support - supports, promotes and develops local voluntary and community action. Central to the work of a CVS is the work carried out by the development workers or development team. This work can cover all aspects of support for voluntary and community groups or be assigned to a particular project with a target client group. High Peak CVS and Derbyshire Dales CVS both combine the two. High Peak has a Small Groups Project which works with marginalised or disadvantaged groups that are in need of more intense support due to their role, size or level of experience. The majority of the research sample for the High Peak has been taken from the work of the Small Group Project. Derbyshire Dales CVS has two generic development workers who offer the same support to a wide range of groups, though there are subtle differences in their roles: one development worker has a particular focus on health and disability and the other is responsible for CVS information work.

Overall Derbyshire Dales CVS and High Peak CVS offer a very similar service to the voluntary and community groups in their geographical area, namely offering advice on setting up a new group; where to get funding; help with funding applications; writing a constitution; setting up a committee of people to run a group; support with committee roles; writing policies for the group; working through group decisions; networking and communicating with larger organisations; any group-related issue that may arise will be actively supported or signposted to another organisation.

Both CVS started around the same time, Derbyshire Dales in 2001 and High Peak in 2002, with a small team of 3 or 4, growing to a maximum 11 and 17 respectively and currently operate with 6 staff (5 full time equivalent, DDCVS) and 7 staff (4.2 full time equivalent, HPCVS). The organisations are funded from a variety of sources including local authorities, primary care trusts, (National Health Service), Big Lottery and a variety of grant funders.

Derbyshire Dales CVS delivers development work to the voluntary sector in the Derbyshire Dales. This is the largest district in Derbyshire and the most rural in nature, covering 800 square kilometres (about a third of Derbyshire) with a population of around 69,700 people. There are four market towns which serve large rural catchments: Ashbourne, Bakewell, Matlock and Wirksworth and over 100 villages. In common with the High Peak, the Derbyshire Dales is often perceived as an affluent and idyllic area. This is the case for much of the Dales, secondary schools are good to excellent and house prices are well above the national average at £242,290 in August 2011. According to local crime statistics the crime rate is the lowest in the county and few districts in the country have a lower crime rate than the Derbyshire Dales. However there are numerous pockets of deprivation, and many people in the area experience difficulties for a variety of reasons. People living in small isolated communities

frequently have difficulty accessing basic services that people in urban areas would take for granted. Many villages have no post office, bank, GP surgery and sometimes even no shop. Public transport links are often poor (or non-existent) and people rely heavily on private vehicles to get around. Consequently people living in rural isolated areas such as the Dales and the High Peak are affected by soaring energy prices and costs relating to motoring and public transport.

High Peak CVS offers development support to the voluntary sector groups of the High Peak. With a population of 92,000, this area forms the North West tip of Derbyshire County. Within are the larger market towns of Buxton and Glossop and the smaller New Mills, Chapel en le Frith and Whaley Bridge, many small villages and then the large areas of sparsely populated rural moorland. Two thirds of this borough lies within the Peak District National Park, an area of outstanding natural beauty. This could be perceived as affluence and indeed there are some unbeatable views and expensive places to live. However there are areas of significant deprivation such as Fairfield, Whitfield and parts of New Mills. Gamesley, a large housing estate on the edge of Glossop ranks nationally as one of the most deprived areas in Britain. With deprivation come associated health issues, unemployment, financial exclusion and a lack of, or perceived lack of opportunity. It costs more to live in a rural area and yet wages overall are lower – see Appendices 4.

The standard indicators of deprivation can often mask significant rural deprivation. Rural isolation experienced across both the High Peak and Dales is compounded by a lack of regular and affordable public transport as well as a lack of or poorly funded local services that will be felt more intensely by the older or more vulnerable in the population. (For social care services for those over 65, on average a rural authority will receive £698 per resident, while an urban authority receives £952).

The role of the voluntary sector in overcoming social exclusion is essential in areas where services are sparse, under-funded or at risk. Residents associations in deprived areas, older people's lunch and social clubs, self help groups for health issues, carers groups, campaigning groups, young women's / men's groups, groups meeting around shared interests or skills, such as history, sport, art, music, craft, the environment and conservation are just a few examples of the vibrant voluntary sector in both the Derbyshire Dales and the High Peak. These organisations create a wealth of connection, experience, creativity and progress. They fill in the many gaps left by statutory services and are often experienced as a life line for the people of the High Peak and Derbyshire Dales.

## **Rationale - why we wanted an evaluation**

Primarily we hoped to be able to improve our work. Conducting the research would allow us to assess quality and seek detailed experiential feedback. This work ensures we are further accountable to clients and funders and open and transparent to all of our stakeholders.

We wanted to know how effective the development work is. We wanted some experiential feedback on our work and to see if we meet the support needs of our clients. Are we leaving groups and individuals with a sense that contact with us had been useful to their community aims and aspirations? Are we confident that they would come back to us if they needed further support or let others know of the support available to their community groups?

A further motivation has been collaborative working to learn from each others practice and working style. In a rural area CVS workers cover a wide geography of small towns and villages. Teams are small and workers may be regularly out of the office. Part-time hours may mean crossover is minimal and as such peer support is not always available. Working with another development worker on an evaluation of this kind has been a useful support mechanism, sharing the work practice of both successful and more difficult experiences.

Both CVS openly invite feedback and comment throughout the course of their work and on all publications, newsletters, training evaluations and so on. But intrinsically we work with busy groups whose focus is naturally on the community work they are engaged in, not on commenting on their local CVS. Most of our usual evaluation is quantitative: we collect and monitor the numbers of people attending our training and open day events, the numbers of members and new members joining the CVS and the numbers of groups we have worked with over a set period of time. We look at the numbers of successful funding applications by groups we have worked with or the numbers of new groups starting up.

Quantitative analysis tells us whether our marketing is working, how people heard of us and what the most common need is from groups, (which unsurprisingly is funding). But it doesn't tell us what people thought of us once they had used the service, or how we could be doing better. By choosing to evaluate our service qualitatively we have begun an effective way to gauge the quality of our work and to access in-depth feedback not usually asked for, or offered, by the people we work with. We might assume we are working effectively most of the time; this evaluation is one way to see if we are.

As far as we are aware, this is the first qualitative evaluation project involving two neighbouring CVS. We contacted the National Association of Voluntary Community Action in August 2011 and posted a summary of this work on navcaboodle in September (navcaboodle is a social network for the third sector). We asked if any members had undertaken or heard

of any similar projects. The response so far has been that another CVS is interested in our work and is considering doing something similar. As part of our dissemination process we will make this report widely available to NAVCA and other CVS and relevant partners. We may then find if there are in fact any similar projects, but also hope the report will prompt comment and feedback on this work.

## **Method**

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### **Questionnaire design – (appendix 1)**

We have used a series of ten mainly open questions to encourage a structured conversation between the interviewer and the respondent. We had a couple of closed questions and one rating scale was used. The High Peak respondents were interviewed by Derbyshire Dales CVS development worker and the Derbyshire Dales respondents by the High Peak CVS development worker. We were keen to keep the interaction short enough not to be too intrusive to busy people, but with space and skilled prompting to enable them to give genuine feedback.

### **Data collection –**

A random sample of 14 groups for each CVS was selected from the work monitoring of each development team over 12 months, (October 2009 – October 2010). This complete list was gathered from each CVS database and included all groups worked with, from short enquiries to long term and established relationships. The sample 14 were selected by our partner CVS and a development worker from Rural Action Derbyshire. The development worker responsible for the work and known to the groups was absent during this process, this ensured impartiality to the selection process.

A letter was then sent to selected groups with an option to opt out of the evaluation; a copy of the questionnaire was also included in with this invitation (see appendix 2).

Liz Fletcher (HPCVS) and Sarah Paisley (DDCVS) carried out 10 interviews with selected groups who had used the CVS services of the partner organisation. The interviewed groups did not know and had not worked with the interviewer and were assured of confidentiality and encouraged to give candid feedback. This ensured less chance of positive bias and a freedom to give negative feedback, if appropriate, to an independent party.

The questionnaire formed the structure of a telephone conversation; most took about 10 – 15 minutes. Conducting an interview over the telephone increased participation as most interviewees could spare the 10 or 15 minutes to talk to us as opposed to being available for a visit or travelling to attend a meeting or focus group. The interviewer used prompting to encourage the group member to chat and be as honest as possible about the quality and impact of the development work in the last 12 months.

Having the interviews conducted by another development worker ensured the prompting was informed and appropriate to development work standard practice.

## **Participant groups in this evaluation – profile.**

High Peak CVS participant groups included one arts group; one village residents group focussed on developing a local green space; a junior football club in a deprived area; one mental health support group; a self help group supporting themselves and others with a long term health condition; one older persons support and social group; a self help and social group for vulnerable young adults; a disabled writers group; a residents action group in a deprived area and individuals involved in the start of an LGBT - lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender - group.

Derbyshire Dales CVS participant groups included a Tai Chi group for older people; a trust offering agricultural and horticultural activities and learning for young people not in education, employment or training; a small village pre-school; a new organisation to support women after cancer diagnosis; a friends group of a small residential home promoting the well-being of residents and older people in the local community; two small luncheon / out and about clubs; a social enterprise setting up to offer care in the home; a sight support group and a group to support young adults with learning disabilities.

## **Analysis**

Once the interviewing stage was complete, we shared the interview transcripts and came together to discuss the findings and what these may mean in terms of a qualitative picture of our development service. The analysis was to be thematic and involved studying repeats and patterns in the findings and any answers that did not fit into initial patterns. We did several write ups and then checked again before a final record was made and commented upon.

## Findings

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### COMBINED RESPONSES DDCVS

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#### 1 Who made the contact, somebody in your group or CVS?

*Can't really remember*

*I did.*

*Jonathan / CVS did.*

*Don't know, the group probably.*

*We did as I've worked in the voluntary sector and already knew about the CVS.*

*I made contact with Jonathan.*

*We did.*

*We approached CVS.*

*I contacted CVS*

*The person in post before Jonathan, Marion somebody.*

#### 2 How were you made aware of CVS services?

*CVS newsletter I think*

*I used to work for Crossroads and they received CVS newsletter.*

*CVS told us about the service.*

*CVS publicity, newsletter I think.*

*I knew all this through my previous jobs*

*I already knew all about CVS, we have a long relationship. I recently received an award from them for all my community work.*

*I found out about CVS via a third party, one of the grand parents from school knew about the service.*

*Can't really remember, maybe it was Business Link, but not really sure.*

*I am aware of them anyway as I was once on the board of another CVS many years ago. Somebody on my committee gave me the contact details of the Derbyshire Dales one.*

*One of our members had dealings with the CVS through another group she is a member of.*

### **3 What did .... actually assist with? Did this lead to any support? (Prompt)**

*They have helped an awful lot, we've been on their courses, they've helped with trustees and their roles, we go to their events and at the last one we did a display of Tai Chi to promote our group. They help with our annual accounts audit. Helped us to produce a website, we went on the first aid training, public speaking training. Organisational health check. They've done our flyers..... There's not much they haven't helped with, it's an ongoing relationship.*

*I have never set up a business before and they gave me space and time and their expertise and experience. They covered everything, employment law, CRB checks, policies and procedures. It was really useful.*

*Nothing really but we don't need anything, we don't have equipment or need any. I didn't need help with the committee or anything like that. He offered to look at our constitution but I didn't need him to, ours is ok as it is.*

*A funding search, helping us to find a suitable funder. Sitting with the group secretary and helping with the wording of the application. Attended group committee meeting to get to know the group.*

*We wanted to set up a centre so Sarah helped us to look for funding for set up and running.*

*Assistance with a new project, a youth facility in Ashbourne, grant applications, checking my applications, all that sort of thing.*

*Information on grants, helping with all the legislation of running a group, lots of things really..... maternity cover, promotion and marketing. (\*\*Has no memory of working with CVS in the last 12 months, but very keen to give feedback on work from 5 years ago, not sure if we can / want to include this interview, but taken anyway\*\*)*

*Assisted with advising on Charitable Trust registration and this led to a raft of very professional and extensive support through the whole beginning and setting up process.*

*We were forming a new group and I needed some basic guidance on a constitution, a pro-forma. All the setting up stuff really, but mainly the constitution.*

*He helped with grants, a health and safety policy, insurance, a course in first aid. He will come along to a meeting and make suggestions where CVS can help us.*

### **4 How did this help you group?**

*Enormously*

*It helped an awful lot and provided a really useful check list for me to work from. Both Neil and Sarah were great and helped me to get well organised, they helped with linking me up to useful resources and the advice was the most cost effective way for me to proceed. The CVS offers non – biased advice and information and it felt like they were working for me and I trust them.*

*Not any help, but not his fault he did try.*

*The funding bid was successful for our transport and running costs, this as meant we are secure in our group and able to offer our service for another 12 months. This is a big help to our group.*

*Not really helpful, we got lots of information but the work of the applications was down to the group and we don't have that much spare time to devote to it. We have applied to a few but been unsuccessful.*

*It's always a tremendous help, he helps me to focus and saves me a lot of time doubting myself. We also got £5'000 for IT equipment so the partnership works.*

*Immensely, it's all been really helpful.*

*This helped a great deal, we were introduced to the process, to the right people, we had somebody in the know guiding us through what seemed at first to be an incredibly complex set of jobs to do.*

*Sarah came out to see us and talked through the groups aims and provided us with a draft constitution, we were then able to work from this and amend to write our own.*

*A lot, an awful lot in fact.*

## **5 Without this support, what would the group have done?**

*I don't think we would have got going or stayed going without the help they've given us and now we are quite efficient.*

*I would have had to try to find this information for myself on the internet, so I would not have had the reassuring face to face advice and support. It would have taken me a lot longer with more potential for mistakes. They gave me the benefit of their experience.*

*Not relevant as we didn't go for any of the help.*

*We would have had to try to find funding ourselves, but this would have been more effort and I doubt we would have even heard about the DCF Grassroots grant. It would have taken us longer for sure.*

*Not really helpful, we got lots of information but the work of the applications was down to the group and we don't have that much spare time to devote to it. We have applied to a few but been unsuccessful.*

*It would have taken me a lot longer to get things done and I wouldn't have felt as confident. He's always so affable and willing to help.*

*We would have been floundering around and still in the midst of working it all out. We would definitely have struggled without this support.*

*We'd have been lost as we didn't know the process and registering as a Charitable Trust seemed like a minefield to us. Neil's expertise was fantastic and I don't think we'd be the charitable Trust we are today without the support of Neil. Neil set up a meeting at DDCVS for all the potential trustees and let them know what would be expected and the duties of trustees, this was enormously helpful.*

*This meant we had something to work from. I had spent a long time searching on the internet and not found anything right to work from, so Sarah's intervention saved us a lot of time.*

*We would have muddled through, but may not have got things right. It would have taken us a lot longer and we may have taken the wrong route.*

**6** Were you referred for any other support within CVS or another organisation?

*We did the quality first Picasso training 1 & 2 for small groups.*

*East Midlands business support.*

*Not sure if anything was mentioned, don't think so.*

*The volunteer centre for help with our work.*

*Only to funders.*

*Yes, Jonathan offered me help on policies for the group. Also all the procedures for employing a worker and all the issues that go along with that. He also helped me to get quotes for the building work we needed. You name it, he offered me help, a great support.*

*Yes, training through CVS and training from other agencies.*

*Introduced to Pro help based at HPCVS and Chris Mellor was a fantastic help also.*

*We also needed some help with volunteer recruitment, CRB's, references, Health and Safety procedures etc...*

*First Aid course, insurance through Age Concern. A policy for recording and sharing medical information, should it ever be necessary.*

**7** Did follow this up and was it useful? Any comments on this further support?

*Yes and it was really useful for us.*

*Not had chance yet I've been really busy setting the business up.*

*Did not follow anything up.*

*Yes we did, but we don't have any new volunteers as yet, still possible I suppose.*

*We made the applications*

*Yes very, he is a good ally for our group.*

*Yes we did, yes very useful to our organisation.*

*Established a relationship with \*\*\* from Pro Help who linked us up to the professionals that could help us to make progress, a solicitor and an architect. Neil came with us to see the solicitor and this was very supportive.*

*Yes, we did indeed. This information and support meant that I could go back to the group and let them know what exactly we needed to do. This was a conversation that started from a good plan with the help of CVS. Again it meant we had a head start in the right direction.*

*Yes and Yes, we followed everything up.*

**8** How would you rate the quality of the support you received from CVS?  
1 = poor, 5 = excellent.

*5 – excellent*

*5 – excellent*

*3 – very nice lad and patient with me but we don't need anything.*

*5 – excellent. He is very good at supporting us, very proactive support.*

*3 – the information was ok but the applications were difficult. When we came to look through all the potential funders, the criteria had changed, the deadline gone, or we didn't fit their criteria exactly enough.*

*5 – excellent*

*5 - a definite 5, it's been a really useful help to us.*

*5 – excellent, no doubts about it.*

*5- excellent. Always prompt in getting back to me and if Sarah wasn't available, there was always somebody else I could talk to about any issues.*

*5 – brilliant.*

**9** Was there anything you needed from CVS that you didn't get?

*No, can't think of anything.*

No

*No, as I say he was a nice lad.*

No

*Further support to actually do the applications, how best to write them, feedback on our efforts and further sources of funding support.*

No

*Oh I don't know, a biscuit with my cup of tea maybe. Just joking, it's been a great support.*

No

*Yes, I think we'd like to be a bit more linked in to CVS and some maintenance of the contact. Just an occasional email or newsletter or information about what else is coming up or on offer for groups. We can't chase them so much as we are all so busy, so some regular contact from their end would be really useful.*

No.

**10** would you go back to CVS if your group needed further support?

*Yes, and we do, constantly. It's an important relationship for us.*

Yes

*Well we know they are there, but I can't see what we would need really.*

*Yes we would, without question.*

*Maybe, but would want more support next time.*

*Oh yes, without a doubt. I think CVS are invaluable.*

*Yes, we would.*

*Yes of course.*

*Oh yes, they are obviously an important resource.*

*Oh yes, we keep in regular contact anyway. We email about different things so I know he's there for us.*

## COMBINED RESPONSES HPCVS

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### 1 Who made the contact, somebody in your group or CVS?

*Initial contact through \*\*\* at Peak Press*

*\*\*\* interviewed Liz, then joined small groups project.*

*\*\*\* made contact originally*

*We contacted Nigel*

*First instance took over as treasurer don't know*

*\*\*\* followed up a piece in the local paper asking for interest in a Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender support group to be formed in High Peak*

*They contacted Liz*

*Going back a while...had a conversation and contacted Liz later*

*Another member of the group made contact with \*\*\* or \*\*\* about 5 years ago when the group was set up*

*Was already in contact with a creative writing group*

### 2 How were you made aware of CVS services?

*Possibly through a friend in the EU parliament - as a liaison officer she's into fundraising so maybe she suggested*

*All above by being on the small group project*

*Through \*\*\* initially*

*A phone call someone at the High Peak Borough Council and then Nigel was helpful*

*Previous small group project staff*

*\*\*\* was aware of the issues before contacting Liz at HPCVS but learned a lot more from then on*

*Think regular newsletters etc and have dealt with in CVS in the past*

*Knew about them through their groups community development worker at Fairfield with working with various community groups*

*Not sure how this person got to know about the CVS*

*Came into contact with HPCVS through Glossop VC*

### 3 What did .... actually assist with? Did this lead to any support? (Prompt)

*Nigel came to initial meetings he confirmed that some help might be available if were to go ahead with the scheme*

*Liz has been marvellous, connected to 2 groups, cardiac group and \*\*\* group. Liz has got funding for \*\*\* from 2 sources, also help with putting together a DVD made of how the club works with the community, poverty in rural areas.*

*Liz attended a lot of committee meetings made many helpful suggestions funding website and all sorts of developments participated very fully helping objectives*

*Sent all information, event that didn't go ahead*

*Assisted sourcing a funding stream and doing the application*

*Liz did as much as she could, exchanging ideas and being supportive.*

*Wouldn't have done the job without her as she took over as treasurer and has helped throughout the year*

*Liz had another contact already and put \*\*\* in touch with them and then supported the group as it was set up. Liz was very helpful in setting up publicity for the emerging group, and kept the group well informed.*

*Obviously access relevant funding that we needed she is a mine of information and helped with skills you maybe didn't have*

*Yes she came along to group meetings to discuss how the young people could gain autonomy of group, set up their own constitution, take up roles on the committee. She brought copies of the roles and spent several weeks with the young people and helped them build up their self confidence*

*Liz helped with how to organise a group and how to get a steering committee together and the group went from there. Initially didn't go down track with funding - had no funding for first 2 years, Then in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year went to Tameside and got £2000 from them and then this time applied to Grassroots and got £910 for running our group*

*Helped with a new constitution needed for a funding bid, helped with an appeal for new members in the CVS magazine. Kept in contact via email, sent lots of information. Offered relevant training, was very well informed. Sat in on the group's AGM etc. overall very supportive.*

### 4 How did this help your group?

*Slow process did initial surveys of the costs the programme that we needed a new overarching charitable trust to administer the trust whereupon we shall be able to publicise and fundraise the project. Gave encouragement*

*Well she got us a grant from co-operative movement which has helped up us buy equipment. Our group is for 7 – 16 years olds.*

*For one thing we are better off so this gives opportunity to do more thinking. Liz has a broader view on things and she can suggest that to other groups*

*Helped a lot in the planning and what was feasible and with funding and liaising with the park and the police*

*Running the group working the finances, as the treasurer she helped all 3 (Chair, secretary etc ) a great deal as the 3 took over there had been no complete committee set. Liz at was at the AGM last year*

*No answer (group did not get off the ground)*

*Well we're still going! The young people are in effect leading their own programme. But the roles are rotated so learning carried and been passed and moulded into a workable compromise, they have got additional needs, this way it's not as much pressure*

*Money helped the group to run as did the support*

*Helped greatly in getting funding (from DCF)*

## **5 Without this support, what would the group have done?**

*Thought again if it would be possible*

*Struggled, wouldn't have been to run as many teams with the right equipment, fewer children would have been involved.*

*Wouldn't have been as successful and not met the need as well. Can't praise Liz too much for help. Everything would have run but not as successful and she listens and she doesn't force her view on the group.*

*Still be trying to find out answers now*

*Don't know but it had been a bit of a shambles. Everything was ok but in a mess a great encouragement*

*n/a*

*We'd still be struggling in the dark*

*Floundered! Still run, but as competently as at moment.*

*The group would have folded without the help from Liz and without the funding from the council or DCF*

*We would have sunk without these funds*

**6** Were you referred for any other support within CVS or another organisation?

*Went to other organisations ourselves such as capacity builders pro help - DCC have helped with grant-funding also to do with assessing the cost and feasibility and building capable of being restored.*

*What I've learned I have learned from the CVS, especially from my involvement with the small groups project. (SP prompted further) Yes in a way, we have been after a ground and Liz got us in touch with the Derbyshire County Football Association and with local councillors.*

*Some of members have attended the training chair treasurer, digital umbrella for website*

*Gave quite a few contacts*

*Mainly with Liz*

*Access some CVS training.*

*n/a*

*Yes absolutely and invaluable to a group like us and we will refer to CVS training courses superb.*

*Not as such but did get a phone call but about a lady did final part of a degree doing a textile programme with the group for 6 weeks and this was brilliant, young people gained so much and was free*

*Computer training within CVS and we had half day sessions on chairing meetings and taking minutes. And since then one or two have been on different little courses along the way.*

*Referred to training seminar on funding applications, CVS training.*

**7** Did follow this up and was it useful? Any comments on this further support?

*useful*

*Yes it has been useful*

*Yes on both. Serve the purpose*

*Yes and yes*

*n/a*

*n/a*

*Meant a complete turnaround for group and commitment and has been established and they are helping raise own funds.*

*Referred to DCF for Grassroots and got support there.*

*Yes, very useful - have 14 members now.*

**8** How would you rate the quality of the support you received from CVS?  
1 = poor, 5 = excellent.

*5*

*5*

*5*

*4*

*5*

*5*

*5+*

*5*

*Definitely a 5*

*5, excellent.*

**9** was there anything you needed from CVS that you didn't get?

*no*

*No everything we asked for, Liz has tried to get.*

*no*

*50 grand!*

*no*

*no*

*no*

*no, more than anticipated*

*No, can't think of anything, Liz fulfilled the role she plays.*

*Only cash!*

**10** would you go back to CVS if your group needed further support?

*Will go back when at that stage*

*Definitely and we still are.*

*Still in regular contact actually just speaking this morning and she gave support, it will just continue*

*Yes definitely*

*Yes most certainly always there at the end of the phone*

*Yes definitely, she was great*

*Yep, definitely*

*Yes, like a rocket! They are very professional and generous with their time and support*

*Yes and the group is still in contact with Liz for support on a regular basis*

*Yes*

## Discussion of findings

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### **Question 1: Who made the contact, somebody in your group or CVS? Question 2: How were you made aware of CVS services?**

Responses to these questions have been analysed together, this is due to the amount of repetition or the number of respondents answering them as one question. Findings for both organisations showed many groups contacted the CVS directly showing that groups know how to find the CVS or are already in regular contact with us. Based on these findings, our publicity and measures to ensure awareness of our services appears to be working well for both CVS.

Whilst cited in both sample responses, Derbyshire Dales clients mentioned the CVS newsletter more often:

***“CVS publicity, newsletter I think.”***

And third party or partner agencies were more often mentioned by High Peak groups:

***“I came into contact with High Peak CVS via Glossop Volunteer Centre.”***

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### **Question 3: What did ... (development worker name), actually assist with? Did this lead to any support?**

In the main, the interviewees had an easy recall of the work with the member of staff and this was true for both organisations. In one way this is to be expected as it was fairly recent work but we did include all work in the sample list, so some people would only have had one meeting or phone call with us. For most responses the contact was recalled in clear detail; they knew exactly what we had helped them with and what that meant for their group. In particular High Peak CVS groups had a good recall of attending training and events.

***“Helped with a new constitution needed for a funding bid, helped with an appeal for new members in the CVS magazine. Kept in contact via email, sent lots of information. Offered relevant training, was very well informed. Sat in on the groups AGM and so on ... Overall very supportive.”*** (HP)

***“They have helped an awful lot, we’ve been on their courses, they’ve helped with trustees and their roles, we go to their events and the last one we did a display to promote our group. They helped with our annual accounts audit. Helped us to produce a website, we went on the first aid training, public speaking training, organisational health check. They’ve done our flyers... There’s not much they haven’t helped with, it’s an ongoing relationship.”***  
(DD)

This question gave a general overview of the type of assistance available from a CVS i.e. expertise, experience, help and support. Once probed, in some cases, the conversation developed to cover attendance on training courses through the CVS, learning skills needed as a trustee, putting together their own new policies and of course funding and applications.

After initial similarities in the responses to question 3 a key difference between the two CVS started to become apparent. The High Peak service was more focussed around the development worker being supportive and dealing with very new groups. These groups tend to be inexperienced and needed support with running meetings and making confident decisions. The style of the Small Group Project is to build empowering relationships with the less experienced groups.

***“Yes she came along to group meetings to discuss how the young people could gain autonomy of their group, set up their own constitution, take up roles on the committee. She brought copies of the roles and spent several weeks with the young people and helped them build up their self confidence.”***  
(HP)

For Derbyshire Dales a much wider mix of support was evidenced on a broader range of issues.

***“Information on grants, helping with all the legislation of running a group, lots of things really... maternity cover, promotion and marketing. Assisted with advising on Charitable Trust registration and this led to a raft of very professional and extensive support through the whole beginning and setting up process.”*** (DD)

#### **Question 4: How did this help your group?**

Clearly funding success has a bearing on how people rate us and this became apparent in the responses to this question.

***“The funding bid was successful for our transport and running costs, this has meant we are secure in our group and able to offer our service for another 12 months. This is a big help to our group.”*** (DD)

***“For one thing we are better off with grants and so on, this gives us the opportunity to do more thinking and carry on.”*** (HP)

If the group was awarded a grant they saw it as our expertise leading to their gain. Grant funding is a very tangible outcome from contact with the CVS but development workers would argue that it does not accurately indicate the quality of support. Many factors come into play. Are funders looking to invest in their focus area? Are there lots of similar groups competing for the same money? Is the project well thought out? Have the group got lots of reserves? When these are just some of the variables affecting funding success, the role of the CVS is to help a group to think about these issues and make informed applications and project decisions.

There were a couple of wild cards in the responses to this question - one High Peak group was really more concerned with planning and it was a larger project that would involve a lot of partners. The response from one of the Derbyshire Dales groups was that actually completing the applications was the hardest part and the part they felt they lacked support.

***“Not really helpful, we got lots of information but the work of the applications was down to the group and we don’t have that much spare time to devote to it. We have applied to a few but been unsuccessful.”*** (DD)

This was a talking point for the workers and it was taken as a good lesson to be very clear about what we do and what we can offer. We would not normally complete an application for somebody, we may well work with a group on an application or in the case of some disability groups, (for example a visually impaired group) or where literacy may be an issue. We may read the questions and type the words being spoken to us; we may also make suggestions or give emphasis to what the funder may be looking for. Basically hands on assistance and the benefit of our experience. Ultimately though, the aim is to empower even the most inexperienced groups to be taking the lead in funding applications.

#### **Question 5: Without this support, what would the group have done?**

A common theme to both sample groups was the time saving that assistance from a development worker can provide:

***“Still be trying to find out the answers now”*** (HP)

***“... I had spent a long time searching on the internet and not found anything right to work from, the intervention saved us a lot of time.”*** (DD)

A secondary but regularly repeated theme was the confidence boost from having an experienced worker to assist, offering reassurances, guidance and the safety net of being encouraged to have a go at something unfamiliar knowing you can call or meet up to check decisions or progress. Many of the most successful voluntary groups begin life with a fantastic idea and the will and enthusiasm to bring this idea into reality. If it were only people with group structures and policies experience who could go forward, the voluntary sector would be a much poorer place.

***“We’d have been lost as we didn’t know the process... seemed like a minefield to us. The expertise was fantastic and I don’t think we’d be the Charitable Trust we are today without the support.”*** (DD)

High Peak CVS responses indicated more need for support, with some interviewees even suggesting that the groups would have folded without the development worker input.

***“The group would have folded without the help from them and without funding.”*** (HP)

***“Wouldn’t have been as successful and not met the need in our area as well... Everything would have run but not so well. She listens and does not force her view on the group.”*** (HP)

This suggested the Small Group Project (majority of the High Peak sample) supports greater needs due to the target groups being less experienced, marginalised and disadvantaged in some way. People and groups who are undertaking voluntary action from a less empowered place to begin with may feel the value of our support more intensely.

In response to this question we see a lot of praise for the development worker themselves. The actual relationship with the worker across both organisations is evidently of great importance to the groups. Somebody the group can trust and rely on and who has spent time getting to know the group. A worker who can offer positive encouragement, and be empathic to group aims and process and to the challenges faced by some volunteers, in particular the self help groups with a health focus, as many active volunteers are also managing serious health concerns of their own.

***“... He’s always so affable and willing to help.”*** (DD)

***“... Can’t praise her too much for all the help.”*** (HP)

Rural CVS, which are usually relatively small, tend to be more generalist in their approach than larger better resourced CVS. Although some staff will have specialisms, most tend to have a generic role encompassing many different aspects of CVS work. Staff can end up doing a bit of everything and in a sense this is the only way it works. If you say ‘I don’t do that’ then there are too many gaps. It would seem that CVS based in urban areas tend to have more specialist staff. This is probably due to the better funding opportunities that are open to both voluntary and statutory organisations based in urban areas.

Urban areas figure highly in indices of deprivation and consequently a lot of grant funding is directed to these areas compared with rural districts. It is also the case that funding from central government for local authorities is generally much higher per capita for urban councils than it is for rural ones. (A study published by the Rural Services Network showed that rural authorities receive significantly less than urban authorities, an average of £324 per capita compared with £487 per capita in urban areas. See Appendix 5) This is bound to have an impact on the levels of resourcing for organisations like CVS, which tend to be dependent on support from Local Authorities.

Urban CVS also tend to deliver their services across small geographic areas with good transport links compared with the large rural districts covered by Rural CVS. Delivering services in a compact urban area is bound to be cheaper than servicing a widely dispersed rural population. Consequently Rural CVS have to contend with the ‘rural premium’ as well as limited funding opportunities.

**Question 6: Were you referred for any other support within CVS or another organisation? & Question 7: Did you follow this up and was it useful? Any comments on this further support?**

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Analysis for both of these questions would have been repeated or very similar as these questions are closely related and respondents either answered them together or repeated their answers to question 6 in question 7, we therefore chose to write them up together.

***“Computer training within CVS and we had half day sessions on chairing meetings and taking minutes. And since then one or two from the group have been on different little courses along the way.”*** (HP)

***“First Aid course, insurance through Age Concern. A policy for recording and sharing medical information, should it ever be necessary.”*** (DD)

In line with the chosen quotes the responses to these questions were positive across both organisations. Respondents mentioned training courses, other colleagues for expertise in a certain area, larger or government agencies.

Based on the 20 responses we received to these questions we can conclude that our signposting and networking services are working effectively in both the Derbyshire Dales and the High Peak.

**Question 8: How would you rate the quality of the support you received from CVS? 1 = poor, 5 = excellent.**

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Derbyshire Dales scored the highest rating of 5 from eight of their groups. The other two interviewees rated the service quality as a more average 3.

High Peak scored the highest rating of 5 from nine of their groups and the remaining group scored the service as a slightly lower 4. High Peak CVS also scored an unprompted 5+

Whilst this is quantitative feedback and not the focus of this evaluation work, it does serve to confirm all of the positive feedback evidenced so far in the report. Interviewees who chose to comment on this rating generally reiterated their commendations for the CVS,

***“5 – excellent. Always prompt in getting back to me.” “5 - excellent ... very proactive support.” “5 + a definite 5”*** (HP & DD)

The two more average scores for Derbyshire Dales CVS were from one group who felt they didn't really need the service and another who felt the CVS ought to be helping more with funding applications, see analysis of question 4. We take the lower scores just as seriously as the highest,

perhaps more so as we are keen to learn and improve our practice from this work. The lower score due to lack of assistance with funding will inform how we clearly communicate our service to groups. The lower score due to not needing the CVS in one way is to be celebrated as this group is clearly managing well without any input. In this instance we would like a group to remain aware of us, should they ever need us or if they wish to refer a less able group to the CVS.

### **Question 9: Was there anything you needed from CVS that you didn't get?**

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Here we left ourselves open to some humour from our interviewees and some entertaining responses included,

***“Oh, a biscuit with my cup of tea maybe?”***

***“50 grand please!”***

***“... only more cash”***

(HP&DD)

Again the overall responses were very positive for both organisations and groups took the opportunity to say how we were a valued service. Any further support required mentioned funding again and we wondered if this is a desire for CVS to be even more closely linked with sources of community funding, to have an influence on application successes and outcomes or to manage a community grant themselves. We did not ask these questions as part of this study, but the findings suggest this may be evaluation work that would be useful and informative.

Both CVS have been involved with Derbyshire Community Foundation's funding streams such as Grassroots. Staff from both organisations are still involved with Derbyshire Community Foundation either by participating in the quarterly decision making panels for the Foundation's grants or by commenting on applications via email.

High Peak CVS has managed a funding pot for High Peak Borough Council some years ago. Derbyshire Dales CVS continues administer a grants programme on behalf of both Derbyshire County Primary Care Trust and the Derbyshire Dales and High Peak Local Strategic Partnership's Choosing Health fund. This fund is used to make grants to voluntary and community groups in the Derbyshire Dales for health and well-being activities related activities.

Perhaps the participants are indicating that a closer link between a CVS and funders would be a positive progression in supporting groups and needs to be considered.

## **Question 10: Would you go back to CVS if your group needed further support?**

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The findings for both organisations were again very similar, with the majority of groups answering an emphatic yes to this question.

***“Yes, like a rocket. They are very professional and generous with their time and support.”*** (HP)

***“Oh yes, they are obviously an important resource.”*** (DD)

Some of the groups referred to an ongoing relationship with the CVS, either because they are still finding their feet with regard to running their group, they need some input with their AGM or funding searches / applications or regularly make use of our other services such as printing or training courses.

***“Yes, and we do, constantly. It’s an important relationship for us.”*** (DD)

***“Still in regular contact actually just speaking this morning and she gave support, it will just continue.”*** (HP)

Other responses could have come from groups who are able to actively put back into their CVS, either on an advisory group, participating at events or attending and voting at the AGM.

The two Derbyshire Dales groups who scored their CVS service a 3 on the rating scale responded:

***“Maybe, but we would need more support next time.”*** (DD)

***“Well we know they are there...”*** (DD)

These responses suggest that whilst perhaps less than satisfied with CVS input into their group work, the door to working with them is not closed. There remains the potential for more positive work with these groups in the future.

## Conclusion

This evaluation has been conducted by two development workers responsible for much of the work selected. Whilst we ensured the sample of work taken was as impartial as possible (selected by the worker from the other CVS and from RAD - see method) we are both keen to be doing effective work and share an empathy for some of the challenges of this work, we therefore cannot claim total objectivity. However an awareness of this has informed how we have conducted the analysis of the findings, for example we have noted and recorded that in both of the samples taken, successful funding applications tend towards a more positive view of the input by CVS.

Overall feedback was very positive and showed local appreciation and commendation for CVS. Groups particularly appreciated their relationship with the development worker, the time we saved them and of course any funding success. Groups liked the reassurance of having the CVS there to call on for support. In brief the findings showed the undoubted value of a CVS to the local community, the volunteers and community activists. Participants on the whole seemed keen to have the opportunity to offer praise and express appreciation for their CVS.

CVS development work is free at the point of service, this means that whilst we are funded by public money (i.e. we all pay for it, there is no direct charge to the individual group we work with). We are seen to be helping, supporting and enabling community groups to progress and we do not present them with a bill at the end, this ensures a strong bias to positive perception of our service.

There were also lessons to be learned, particularly around needing to be clear about what we offer and what we cannot do for groups. We need to be clear about the likelihood of success in terms of funding applications, time investment and commitment of community action.

Due to project size and design, we did not talk to groups who receive their infrastructure support primarily elsewhere, for example with Business Link (as it was), the Volunteer Centres, Rural Action Derbyshire or personal networks. This would have been a useful comparison and perhaps more informative as both High Peak and Derbyshire Dales CVS work in such a similar way.

We also asked ourselves could the research be bigger - should we ask more groups and how often we should do this? We will be informed by responses to this report – are other CVS interested in doing something like this jointly, are other groups keen to give their feedback and did we ask the right questions or are there other areas of feedback we could learn from?

We wonder what will this piece of work mean to our funders and we plan to share it with funders where we can. Does it show the value of the small CVS better than the blanket survey question – “how often have you used the CVS in the last year?” Infrastructure Organisations (i.e. organisations

that support other organisations) such as CVS and Volunteer Centres always face an additional challenge of demonstrating the value of their work compared with organisations that deliver direct services. We hope that this evaluation shows both the value that is placed on these services by the many small groups that are supported by CVS, and the impact on the sustainability and quality of these groups.

As with all research projects we needed to ask how effective was the method used? We were clearly successful in gaining some valuable feedback from groups willing to spare the time to talk to us, feedback not sought or available through other evaluation or survey methods used by either CVS. Our invitation was reassuring enough as only one group selected decided to take the "opt out" option detailed in the invitation. The questionnaire clearly facilitated this feedback, but a couple of the questions were heard as repeated requests for the same information and so seemed clumsy when used. Language used was a barrier in one interview where the group did not understand what we meant by "signposting", answered "No" to this question and then later described all of the other organisations brought in by CVS to support the group. Here we needed to be clearer and to define our terms as we went.

There were questions we did not ask and in particular we did not explore the funding issue. The feedback clearly shows the groups wanted to talk about funding. A good question in hindsight would have been, *"How do you rate the CVS when applications for funding are unsuccessful?"*

Whilst we hoped to learn from each other and improve our practice in this study we have to conclude that Derbyshire Dales and High Peak work in similar ways, more so than any real sense of contrasting work styles. This is not to say that no shared learning has taken place but it has been more around practice sharing, peer support and working effectively together to create a worthwhile and professional evaluation of our service.

All in all we learned that the standards of development work for both CVS are comparably high on quality and the development teams are effective and skilled in their work. Our recommendations following on from our research and report include: -

To implement the questionnaire and research again at a later date but to re-work some of the questions.

To begin research on community and voluntary groups that use infrastructure support mainly elsewhere and not with the CVS.

To give full feedback to our respective development teams and develop guidelines to delivering development work in a CVS.

To share the report with other CVS via navcaboodle.

To give some thought as to how we might collate a list of groups that have been unsuccessful in their funding applications and carry out some qualitative analysis with those groups.

## **Glossary**

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**CVS** – Council for Voluntary Service or Community and Voluntary Support

**FTE** – full time equivalent

**Infrastructure organisation** – an organisation that supports other organisations

**LGBT** – lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender

**NAVCA** – National Association of Voluntary and Community Action

**RAD** – Rural Action Derbyshire

**Rural Premium** – The extra cost of the delivery of services to people living in a rural area, as opposed to those who live in an urban area.

**Stakeholder** – person or organisation whose aims and objectives are likely to be enhanced by another's work. For example, Derbyshire Dales CVS is a stakeholder in Derbyshire Dales District Council and vice versa.

## Appendices

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**1a and 1b: Job Descriptions**

**2: Letter to groups**

**3: Questionnaire**

**4: Article - Country Life: tougher to make ends meet**

**5. Hyperlink -**

## Appendix 1a

### Development Worker HPCVS Small Group Project Coordinator Job Description

#### 1. Purpose of the post:

To develop and support voluntary and community sector groups in the High Peak / Derbyshire Dales and in particular those which are disadvantaged, marginalised or rurally isolated.

#### 2. Duties:

- a) To target marginalised, disadvantaged and rurally isolated voluntary and community groups.
- b) To visit above-mentioned voluntary and community groups and assess needs
- c) To respond to and support new voluntary and community groups
- d) To advise on the organisation of small voluntary and community groups, for example, with respect to planning and financial skills, charity law and registration, constitutions, equal opportunities, running meetings, committee and group work skills and other relevant issues.
- e) To help small voluntary and community groups identify sources of funding and provide help in completing funding applications.
- f) To identify ways to meet specific training and development needs and organise appropriate training events and opportunities for development for voluntary and community groups.
- g) To create, support and develop small voluntary and community networks as appropriate and to provide information about existing networks.
- h) To encourage partnerships, consortia and joint initiatives within the voluntary and community sector and elsewhere.
- i) To encourage marginalised and disadvantaged groups' voices to be heard and to influence local and regional policy and to encourage statutory bodies and other agencies to engage meaningfully with those groups.)
- j) To maintain appropriate recording and monitoring systems.
- k) To provide regular written and verbal reports as required by the management, evaluation and monitoring processes of the Project.

- l) To develop, maintain and report to the Small Group Project Advisory Group and facilitate regular meetings in order to enable their guidance and support in the development and organisation of the Project.
- m) To work in line with the High Peak CVS Equalities & Diversity Policy and to further its implementation.
- n) To manage specified staff within the Small Group Project Team through providing clear direction for their work, support and appraisal in line with CVS policy
- o) To produce a regular Small Groups Project newsletter (currently 3 per year)
- p) Contribute to the preparation and production of the CVS newsletter/mailings/web site and any other information material useful to the voluntary and community sector
- q) To work in a complementary way with other local community development workers
- r) To undertake other reasonable tasks appropriate to the job as may be required from time to time

# DERBYSHIRE DALES COUNCIL for VOLUNTARY SERVICE

## Development Worker

### Job Description

#### Job Purpose

- To contribute to the Derbyshire Dales CVS core functions through the identification of gaps in local voluntary and community sector provision and working with others to develop solutions.
- To enhance the effectiveness of new and developing organisations and groups by providing relevant advice, information, training and support.
- To represent Derbyshire Dales CVS at relevant network meetings, forums and working groups.
- To have a particular focus on development work relating to health and social care issues.

#### Main Responsibilities

##### 1. Organizational Support and Development.

- To assist voluntary and community groups to review their organisation's operations, prioritise areas for development support and devise realistic action plans for implementation.
- To assist individuals and emerging groups to develop their ideas for voluntary action and to provide relevant support services to help them achieve this.
- To provide funding information and advice, and support in making funding applications to local groups and organisations.
- To support the development of networks and forums to bring local voluntary and community groups together to share good practice.

##### 2. Information, Training and Support

- To contribute to the Derbyshire Dales CVS advice services through dealing with enquiries via the telephone and one-to-one support.
- To contribute to the design, organisation and, where appropriate, assist in the delivery of accessible training to local groups.

### **3. Administration**

- To complete relevant administrative tasks including record keeping and monitoring of activities.
- To write reports as required.
- To contribute to Derbyshire Dales CVS policy development.
- To provide relevant management information as required.

### **4. General**

- To undertake other tasks as may be required from time to time.
- To carry out work in line with the Derbyshire Dales CVS policies.
- To attend team meetings and other meetings as required.

### **Decision Making**

The Development Officer will be responsible for :

- Decisions relating to development and support activities.
- Decisions relating to specific forums and working groups.

### **Special Circumstances**

- This post is self servicing in terms of administration.
- Considerable flexibility is required as attendance at evening and weekend meetings may be necessary.
- Travel throughout the area covered by Derbyshire Dales CVS is required.

## Appendix 2: Letter to selected group explaining research

Dear .....

Your voluntary group has been short listed to take part in an evaluation of the quality of service you receive from High Peak / Derbyshire Dales CVS.

In the last 12 months your group has received support from the development worker.

A worker from a partner organisation, (name) would like to call you and spend about 10 - 15 minutes asking for your views on the quality of this support. They will make a call within the next two weeks.

For information I have attached a list of the questions they will ask you.

Please feel free to be as honest as possible as this will help us to make an accurate evaluation. When we make a report on this work, your group will not be identified in any way and our findings used to improve services and increase our accountability to voluntary groups.

Should you wish to decline this invitation to take part please call or email me.

Many thanks,

Development Worker  
DDCVS / HPCVS

## Appendix 3

Partnership Impact Evaluation – PIE

High Peak CVS, Derbyshire Dales CVS

### Questionnaire

This is an independent evaluation conducted by a Voluntary Sector Organisation covering another area. All responses are confidential and will be reported in such a way as to evaluate the quality of service provided and for learning purposes and will not specifically identify any group or person.

1. Who made the contact, somebody in your group or CVS?
2. How were you made aware of CVS services?
3. What did the development worker actually assist with? Did this lead to any support?
4. How did this help your group?
5. Without this support, what would the group have done?
6. Were you referred for any other support within CVS or to another organisation?
7. Did you follow this up and was it useful? Any comments on this further support?
8. How would you rate the quality of the support you received from the development workers? (rate from 1 – 5 ,1= poor, 5 = excellent)
9. Was there anything you needed from the development worker that you didn't get?
10. Would you go back to CVS if your group needed further support?

Many thanks for your time. This is part of a pilot study to assess client satisfaction with the service and to improve and learn from your experience. Your feedback will not be reported so that you or your group will be identifiable in any way.

## Appendix 4

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110303145243/http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/minimum-income-rural-households>

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# Country life: tougher to make ends meet

23 November 2010

New research released today shows people living in rural areas typically need to spend 10-20 per cent more than people in urban areas to reach a minimum acceptable living standard. These higher costs mean a single person living in a village needs to earn at least 50% above the minimum wage (£5.93 per hour) to make ends meet. With low pay more common in rural areas, many rural workers fall well short of being able to afford their essential needs.

The research was carried out for the Commission for Rural Communities by the same team at Loughborough University that calculates the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Minimum Income Standard for the United Kingdom. This standard is based on what items ordinary people think households need to afford a minimum acceptable standard of living. The researchers talked to groups of people in rural England about what things are essential in rural towns, villages and hamlets.

The findings illustrate that the more remote the area, the greater the extra expense. To afford a minimum standard of living, a single person needs to earn at least:

- £15,600 a year in a rural town
- £17,900 a year in a village
- £18,600 in a hamlet or the remote countryside.
- In comparison, urban dwellers need £14,400, to meet the specified minimum.

The report also found:

- A car is a significant additional cost for rural households because residents say public transport is insufficient to meet essential travel needs.
- Many rural dwellers face higher energy bills. (The lack of mains gas supply can mean having to use more expensive fuels, and older homes in rural areas can be less energy efficient.)
- The location of rural services also has an impact on the cost of living, and this could be exacerbated if local services are cut.
- For most other areas of household spending, including food and clothing, minimum needs are broadly the same in urban and in rural areas.

## **Appendix 5**

Re: the cost of providing services in Rural Areas.

<http://www.rsnonline.org.uk/6-publications>

Contact us:

Please feel free to contact us with any questions, comment or feedback on this work.

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