

News and information for Wales from:

Wales Council for Voluntary Action
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Charities have two years to make claims for Gift Aid transitional relief

HMRC have confirmed that charities have up to two years, until April 2013, to claim transitional relief on Gift-Aided donations made before 5 April 2011.

Transitional relief, introduced in 2008 to ensure that charities did not lose out when the basic rate of income tax dropped from 22% to 20%, was worth about £100m a year to charities and came to an end on the 5 April.

The introduction of a Gift Aid small donations scheme which will allow charities to claim Gift Aid on up to £5,000 of small donations per year without the need for Gift Aid declarations will come into effect in 2013. However charities will have to have been claiming Gift Aid for three years before they can claim on small donations.

To help fund the introduction of Gift Aid online filing by 2013, the Government will withdraw Self Assessment (SA) Donate for tax returns from April 2012.

HM Revenue & Customs will also stop making repayments of Gift Aid by payable order and instead make all payments electronically using the BACS system.

For any queries relating to these changes or any other aspect of tax effective giving - or if you are an umbrella body and would like to organise a Gift Aid Registration Surgery for your organisations - please contact Eileen Kinsman, Giving Wales Officer, WCVA, 0800 2888 329 or e-mail givingwales@wcva.org.uk.

Shape the debate at WCVA's conference

Now, more than ever, organisations are keen to improve efficiency and innovation. But just thinking about it is one thing - taking action is another. This is where WCVA's Third sector public service delivery conference comes in.

Entitled *Breaking the mould*, the conference takes place on Tuesday 28 June at Cardiff City Stadium and offers attendees a unique opportunity to shape the debate about new ways of designing and delivering public services. It offers practical guidance on service delivery, highlights innovations going on across the sector and explores how the public and third sectors can work together to best improve services for individuals and communities.

Speakers include:

- Rob Pickford, Director of Social Services Wales, on the challenge and context of co-production
- Shaun Jamieson, partner at Hugh James, on the Localism Bill
- Andrew Goodall, Chief Executive of the Aneurin Bevan Health Board, on promoting 'new models of service delivery'
- Marcus Longley, Professor of Applied Health Policy at the University of Glamorgan, on the future of public service delivery in Wales.

To book a place at the conference, please visit www.wcva.org.uk, contact the Helpdesk on 0800 2888 329 or email eventsadmin@wcva.org.uk. The conference is supported by Hugh James.

Proposed Legal Aid reforms could have adverse effect on social justice groups

Earlier this year, WCVA submitted its response to the Ministry of Justice's Proposals for the Reform of Legal Aid in England and Wales.

The response supported a number of points made in the Wales Committee for the Community Legal Service (CLS) response, including the disappointment at the absence of a specific section on Wales in the Green Paper. WCVA strongly supported the CLS Committee's view that the proposal to move the Legal Services Commission (LSC) towards an executive agency for delivering Legal Aid should include a commitment by the Ministry of Justice to maintain a distinctive joint working arrangement in Wales.

WCVA disagreed with a number of the withdrawals to entitlements to Legal Aid, as this will have an adverse effect on social justice for a considerable proportion of Welsh citizens and in particular, already vulnerable groups. It will also impact disproportionately on the services in the third sector in Wales which are vital to providing legal support to large numbers of vulnerable or disadvantaged citizens and communities.

A number of the concerns included:

False economy

The proposed Green paper would cut the best value-for-money legal advice, ie, preventative and early advice is being cut in many areas.

Gap in services currently supported through the third sector

Pro bono help could not fill the gap left by legal aid cuts. It needs to be recognised that free legal advice needs underpinning funding. Free, independent advice is not free to provide, as

even volunteer-run services need funding for management, training and basics like computers and office space.

Changes disproportionately affect vulnerable and disadvantaged in society

The proposed legal aid changes will disproportionately affect the most vulnerable.

Gaps in advice across Wales

Budget cuts will make the distance people have to travel to get the right type of advice even longer, and this may make travel impossible for those who are most desperate.

Human Rights and Equality Duties

There are concerns that many of the suggested changes will breach the Human Rights Act 1998 and also the equality duties. The consultation's own Equality Impact Assessment demonstrated the comparative disadvantage that would be created by the proposed provisions. It clearly shows that in the majority of categories of existing civil law provision, women, ethnic minority people and those with disabilities are over represented compared to the national population.

'For the full WCVA response please go to <http://tinyurl.com/3p9tefj>.

The Ministry of Justice's proposed changes were met with big concerns from across the third sector in England and Wales with a number of high profile campaigns against the proposed changes. For further information on these and updates on progress please see Equality and Diversity Forum <http://tinyurl.com/6ar3qmk>.



Data Protection Act 1998 Contact details of all recipients of the National Supplement are held and processed by WCVA on computer. The information is used by WCVA for the monitoring and promotion of the voluntary sector in Wales. Contact details are disclosed to third parties for the purposes of assisting this promotion.

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