

Why is it important to prove the need for your work?

Key Terms:

- **Demand:** Whether the people supposed to benefit from your work really want the activity or service you intend to provide (the project).
- **Need:** Why this work should take priority over the other claims on the funder's money – why is it important? And why can't these people fund it themselves?
- **Duplication:** Developing the same or similar services as are already available to your service users. Appears wasteful to Funders.

What Groups tell us:

- “We want to be sure we've got the right priorities – will our service be well-used, or are we wasting our time?”
- “We need our members to ‘own’ the project and the community to back what we do.”

What Funders tell us:

- “Is this a good use of our money? Will many people use the service / minibus / building, or will it be empty most of the time?”
- “We want our money to be well-used, go to where it's needed most, and help to meet our own targets. We don't have the funds to support every good project.”

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→ Are you ready for Funding?

- Always consult your service users about what they want (this could be through surveys, open day consultations, exit interviews or informal discussions)
- Back this up with other evidence of demand. For example, is your service so in demand that you have to turn people away?
- Are there any similar services already in the same area? If so, how is your project different from them? If it's the same, why is yours needed as well?
- Then show funders why they should invest in the project.
 - What is the problem it is designed to solve?
 - Is it crime, unemployment, lack of facilities, activities, etc.
 - Who does the problem affect and how?
 - Which groups of people does the problem hit the worst?
 - What are the results of this?
 - Is there existing research or a pilot scheme showing that this is an effective way to meet the needs?
 - Does the project fit in with Government strategies?
- You can find statistics and other research through your Local Authority or Primary Care Trust, or by looking at www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk.