

## The Social Value Act

The Public Services (Social Value) Act or Social Value Act became law on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2012, and came into force on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013. The Act makes sure that public bodies must take social value into account when procuring services. This means that commissioners of public services must consider whether the services they are considering procuring can have an economic, social and environmental impact, rather than just considering the benefit of the services themselves, and take this into consideration during the process. The expectation was that this would open up the procurement process to voluntary sector organisations who offer a lot of impact in these areas but have often found it difficult to compete in the process.

This has proved difficult as commissioners have been unclear on how to interpret the act, and there has been a struggle to identify the tools necessary to measure social value outcomes, both for groups to demonstrate how they can affect these areas during bidding, and for public bodies to measure how effective the adding of social value has been. A review by Lord Young published in February 2015 has called for the Cabinet Office to lead an education campaign to inform commissioners in how to use the act, and the development of an effective measurement tool. Several groups, including NCVO<sup>1</sup> have called for this action to go further, for the government to issue statutory guidance which would give it a legal basis and would make sure that commissioners must follow it.

The correct use of the Social Value Act is still something that is unclear and is going to see further debate.

FaithAction's Faith Manifesto highlights the importance of the Social Value Act and calls for its implementation with the help of faith groups:

**"Social value is something faith groups understand. We can help commissioners to design better services that work with existing resources."**

See our suggestions for what this would look like and how it can happen, plus the six other proposals - <http://yoursay.faithaction.net/>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2015/02/13/the-social-value-act-review-welcome-steps-and-missed-opportunities/>