



Staff Sentiment Evaluation

Briefing Document

Introduction

The Board of Trustees of Lancaster District CVS (LDCVS) would like to understand the experience of the organisation's employees. In doing so, their aim is to gather information which will help to improve the working lives of the charity's staff and in turn help them to provide better support for community organisations in the Lancaster district.

To gather and present this information, LDCVS wishes to find an independent consultant who can meet with staff on a one-to-one basis in order to discuss their experience and produce a report summarising their findings.

About Lancaster District CVS

Our organisation was established in 1972 in response to the economic and social challenges our communities faced at that time. A meeting at Lancaster Town Hall agreed to set up the Council of Community Service, an infrastructure organisation dedicated to supporting an increasing number of community groups. Since then, the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector has continuously expanded, creating positive impact in people's lives and a much wider participation by communities at every level of political, economic and social life.

Today, as Lancaster District Community & Voluntary Solutions (LDCVS), we draw on those fifty years of experience to support community action through:

- Supporting volunteering
 - Helping community organisations recruit and work with volunteers
 - Working with people who want to volunteer, brokering suitable opportunities
 - Being the local point of contact for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

- Supporting organisations
 - Supporting new start-ups and existing groups to develop and improve their structure, governance and forward planning
 - Helping them to find funding, primarily by supporting the development of funding strategies and application tactics, in addition to funding searches.
 - Offering a growing selection of training courses, ranging from food hygiene certificates to mental health first aid.
 - Providing good value payroll and independent examination services
- Supporting the sector
 - Developing and nurturing network and partnership groups such as the Children & Young People Multi-Agency Partnership, the VCFSE Leadership Forum, and the Community Learning Network.
 - Focusing on the voices and needs of children and young people through the Lancaster District Young People Foundation
 - Giving visibility to VCFSE organisations and their activities through coordination of the Lancaster District Directory and provision of social prescribing services.
- Grant administration through the Bay Foundation
 - Working with local and national government, and through individual and private sector philanthropy to help grants reach the grassroots organisations which can really make a difference
 - Supporting fundraising endeavours around issues of local concern

About the project

The Chief Officer and Trustees have considered a variety of ways to gauge the opinions of the organisation's ten staff on various aspects of their employment. An internal survey, the traditional method of gathering this information, was felt to be inappropriate in a small team due to the likelihood of individual members of staff being identifiable from their responses. The organisation's appraisal process asks staff to recount their experience of working in the charity and give ideas for improvement, however this is in the context of reviewing employee performance and setting goals and therefore may not provide adequate opportunity for candid responses.

The charity wishes to provide employees with an opportunity to give their honest thoughts about their experience at work, knowing that they will be reported truthfully and anonymously.

The selected consultant will hold individual meetings with each of the organisation's ten staff, including the Chief Officer, with the aim of gathering an overall picture of staff sentiment around these key areas:

- Enthusiasm for and enjoyment of work
- Good work is recognised, valued, and appropriately paid
- Responsibilities and objectives are clear and staff have the time, knowledge, space and equipment, and appropriate management to address them
- Colleagues treat each other with respect, understanding and appreciation.
- Work does not cause staff emotional exhaustion, undue frustration, or inappropriate stress
- LDCVS acts fairly with regard to everyone, no matter their ethnic background, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability or age.
- Any other issues employees would like to raise, including any recommendations that would improve their time at work.

In particular, we would also like to know the average score in relation to the question "On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is extremely likely: how likely are you to recommend working at Lancaster District CVS?"

Project Outputs

Assistance will be provided in setting up online or in-person meetings with the ten members of staff.

The consultant will produce a report which accurately reflects the comments of employees both positive and negative, ensuring that as far as possible it would not be expected that an employee could be identified by the reporting of their comments. The report may aggregate or summarise information or indirectly quote employees in order to achieve this.

The report will be used by the Chief Officer and trustees to inform their approach to the operation and structure of the organisation over the coming years, and particularly in relation to the development of a new business plan to be in operation from July 2025.

Personal Qualities

- Knowledge and experience of developing and leading charitable projects.
- Demonstrable understanding of ethical practices when interviewing individuals.
- A calm, professional and welcoming demeanour, and ability to make meaningful connections with people in a short space of time.
- A commitment to equity of access and opportunity for all.

Timescale

Report to be delivered within one month of receipt of a signed contract from LDCVS.

Fee

£750 to cover all planning, delivery and report writing.

Next steps

If you are interested in this commission, please send an up-to-date CV (with at least one reference) and a one-page cover letter outlining how your experience meets the person specification and your approach to planning and executing this project. Email these to hello@lancastercvs.org.uk before 12 noon on Friday 5 April.

If you would like an informal chat about the commission, you can contact Nick Smith by email at nicksmith@lancastercvs.org.uk.