

18/05/2025

Dear Colleague,

**Launching the Social Impact Gateway – opening doors to new income opportunities in Medway & Swale and East Kent.**

As VCSEF leaders, you know the sector is experiencing an increasingly competitive funding environment, during a period of political, social and economic volatility: Donations and sponsorship levels are decreasing and at the lowest levels recorded by CAF; reductions in statutory grant and contract funding continue; Health system restructuring and reductions impacting contracted service delivery; Global geopolitics are creating increased economic uncertainty for us all.

Whilst MVA and the VCS Leaders Network continue to evolve sector services and support to help us all respond to these challenges, there are also new national models of good practice that could further boost our sector's capacity to generate income.

MVA, working in partnership with SEK, are pleased to launch the Social Impact Gateway (SIG) model as part of our response to these challenges.

The SIG model gives **all sizes** of VCSEF groups/organisations access to **new funding** by amplifying access to business and public sector partners. The Procurement Act 2023 encourages public sector and corporate funders to deliver "public benefit" as part of their contracts. Many want to fund credible, local organisations, but don't always know where to find you or have capacity to manage the process for multiple grants on a hyper-local basis – the SIG model provides the solution and empowers us all to build stronger communities.

By providing simple, fair and transparent processes and support for local VCSEF groups/organisations to become affiliates with the SIG, the whole sector can gain access to new income opportunities in addition to those they already hold; diversifying their income streams and improving financial resilience in the face of present and future socioeconomic challenges.

Becoming an affiliate of the SIG is free and open to any VCSEF group or organisation in Medway and Swale and/or East Kent.

Why should you sign up today:

- Potential to access new sources of income
- Only need to sign up once, then apply for relevant funding opportunities
- Free support to develop your 'contract readiness' status
- Opportunities to build new partnerships with fellow SIG affiliates
- Participate in co-design conversations with buyers and commissioners.

To find out more and to join the SIG today:

In Medway & Swale (in Medway & Swale)

[www.mva.org.uk/organisations/sig](http://www.mva.org.uk/organisations/sig)

## What the SIG *is* and *is not*:

### The SIG *is*:

- ✓ Model aimed at opening up new funding opportunities for the sector
- ✓ Creating new pathways for statutory and business sector stakeholders to achieve social impact; including a facilitation function for channelling system level funding into hyper-local solutions and services
- ✓ Free to all VCSEF groups to become affiliates
- ✓ Aimed to reduce sector workload in relation to funding – organisational information only needs to be entered once, then any information specific to funding opportunities of interest
- ✓ A vehicle for local businesses and contractors to achieve effective and wider spread ESG and social value goals
- ✓ Partnership building support – SIG affiliates undertaken the same quality assurance checks, improving ability to identify potential partners
- ✓ Enabler for commissioner / buyer co-design conversations; helping to shape tenders/contracts that will achieve better outcomes for local people.

### The SIG *is not*:

- × A substitute for existing funding channels – if they already exist and are effective, there is no intention to divert them through the SIG
- × Gatekeeper to opportunities – the SIG model provides an impartial function for distributing funding that would otherwise not be allocated due to practical/policy restraints
- × An 'exclusive' club- it is hard wired into the SIG model to support/upskill organisations to reach minimum requirements to participate (moving them closer to being 'contract ready')
- × A 'top slice' platform for lead partners - if collaborative bids require a lead partner, they will be encouraged to bid on FCR basis. Similarly, SIG management fees will be commensurate with the work required, born by the commissioner/buyer, and transparent to SIG affiliates.
- × In competition with the sector – the SIG is aimed at securing income that would otherwise be inaccessible to the local sector.

To help future-proof the model and ensure it can be adapted to respond to any future system/local government boundary changes, we are working to ensure interoperability across Kent. SEK and MVA are currently doing this by developing and piloting this SIG model and application processes. We are committed to working collaboratively to support the alignment of any additional SIG (or similar) models as the need for wider coverage arises.

For further information and to see future opportunities, please do visit our website [www.mva.org.uk/organisations/sig](http://www.mva.org.uk/organisations/sig) or contact us directly.

Kind regards,

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