



performance hub



Future Focus 5

How are social attitudes changing?

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Future Focus 5

How are social attitudes changing?

Whatever plans we make, changes in our external environment have an influence on third sector organisations (TSOs)¹. These might be reducing

or shrinking sources of funding, changing government policies and regulatory priorities, shifting social attitudes, new technologies, and so on.

All organisations can become more successful by spending some time improving their understanding of the likely future of these external pressures and using this to make a stronger organisational strategy.

Some view this as a luxury: "It's only for rich charities", or as impossible: "It's stargazing! You can't predict the future!" Others think that it is just an intellectual exercise that won't change what their organisation does. Others appreciate that it is one of the critical tasks of the chair, the board, the chief executive and senior managers, but they still put it off: "I'll do it after

¹ Charities, voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises

this next funding application”; “...after this next board meeting”; “...once the new trustees are recruited”.

This is understandable; a good analysis of the future does take time, and can involve learning new skills. For people with little time on their hands, NCVO Third Sector Foresight and the Performance Hub² have produced the *Future Focus* series to provide ready-made analyses of the future changes that are most likely to affect small and medium TSOs. Each guide focuses on a different topic. For those keen to learn how to do it themselves, we have also published *Looking Out*, an accessible introduction to help TSOs develop these skills.³

This is the fifth guide in the series, exploring the changing attitudes of a diverse UK population. It suggests ways for you and your colleagues to use this information to help make strategic choices and plan ahead. The first four guides looked at the topics of funding, volunteering, new technologies and local democracy (see page 46 for details).

² See further information and support page 44 for details.

³ Looking out: how to make sense of your organisation's environment, www.performancehub.org.uk/lookingout

How to use Future Focus 5

In the following pages, we outline the most important *drivers* that we believe will affect how social attitudes will change over coming years.

What are drivers?

Drivers are major forces or trends that could positively or negatively shape the future of your organisation.

These trends and issues may already be influencing your organisation or some parts of it at the moment. But these are the drivers which we think will grow in importance for small and medium TSOs in the coming years.

This guide will help you explore how social attitudes are changing in terms of how we think about difference and relate to each other; how this will impact on the third sector and how your organisation might take advantage of opportunities and minimise any risks.

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Each driver includes:

A short description of what is happening, what is likely to happen in the future and why, plus an outline of some of the risks and opportunities this might present for your organisation.

Strategic questions designed to help you think about how the drivers may affect your organisation in the future, and whether/how you might need to respond.

How will your organisation respond? Jot down your thoughts as you read in the blank spaces provided.

So what? Now what? 34

A worksheet to help you pull together your thoughts about the drivers and to start considering responses and next steps. You might find it useful to work through this section with colleagues or with your trustee board.

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Setting the scene

The UK population and the attitudes of the people within it are diverse and unsurprisingly, their views can be contradictory. Public attitudes have significant implications for much

of the third sector's work, from campaigning, volunteering and service delivery, to its workforce and funding.

The overarching theme of this guide is how we think about difference and relate to others. It explores how the UK's economic and demographic landscape is changing, how attitudes have already changed in relation to this over the past twenty years, and how these attitudes are likely to change further in future.

The British public are increasingly tolerant of difference in some areas, eg, towards ethnic diversity, the freedom to define one's own identity or multiple identities, and roles within the workplace and family. However, there seems to be less tolerance in other areas, such as towards immigrants, the redistribution of income, older people, those living in poverty and some behaviour of young people. In this climate, there has been a growing emphasis, both publicly and politically, on individual responsibility and self-reliance.

Creating and developing a community which has common values that are shared across different cultures – the process of ‘social cohesion’ – is dependent on striking the right balance between diversity and unity, as well as tackling intolerant attitudes. Where this is not achieved, there is a risk of marginalisation, fragmentation and further inequality. There are broad implications for the third sector to consider here regarding its role in civil society as the ‘good’ society; that is, a democratic society that builds bridges between different communities and promotes social justice.

There are also implications for TSOs in how they reflect the diversity of society within their own organisations and the extent to which these issues are relevant to a TSO’s core work and the people it works with.

A snapshot of the UK population





Driver 1

Poverty and the welfare state

Economic prosperity in the UK over the last decade has meant rising affluence and higher living standards for the majority of the population. However,

nearly one fifth of the population still live in relative poverty.⁴ This is much higher than in other wealthy nations.⁵ Income inequality currently stands at historically high levels. If the predicted economic slowdown does take place, levels of poverty may rise in future.

People tend to be more concerned about inequality (gaps between rich and poor) than about poverty.⁶ People are less supportive of campaigns relating to domestic poverty than international poverty, and the rise in overall living standards means many do not recognise it as a legitimate issue.⁷ In this climate, TSOs

⁴ Defined by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation as households living on less than 60% of median income after deducting housing costs.

⁵ Monitoring poverty and social exclusion, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007

⁶ Public attitudes to economic inequality, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007

^{7,8 & 9} 'Understanding public attitudes towards poverty: Getting the public's attention', Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007

need to consider their place and role in helping to create a just and equal civil society.

Although general support for the welfare state remains, a significant proportion of people view it as a 'club', where only those who have contributed are entitled to benefit.⁸ This attitude may become more prevalent as increased global migration and an ageing population place even greater demands on the welfare state in the future. This may lead to greater support for a system of benefits awarded to those who have earned them through the tax system.⁹ If this 'club' mentality spreads to attitudes towards charitable giving, it could mean less support for already marginalised groups of people.

Moving forward

- Does your organisation have a role to play in addressing inequality and giving a voice to marginalised communities and groups?
- Can you provide activities that contribute to a cohesive and inclusive society?
- How can your organisation communicate differently about poverty in accordance with people's shifting attitudes?

How will changing attitudes towards poverty and the welfare state impact on your TSO?

In five years' time, will your organisation be picking up the pieces from a slimmed down welfare state?

Use the box to jot down your thoughts.

How important will this driver be to your organisation in the next five years?

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH



Driver 2

Class and socio-economic status

The decline of traditional industries and the fast post-war growth in the service, enterprise and knowledge economies have resulted in a more affluent society

with less distinct class boundaries. More people identify themselves as middle class than forty years ago.¹⁰ However, social mobility in the UK has declined and is the worst in Europe.¹¹ This is despite a decade of social policies designed to encourage a society where all individuals have the chance to succeed.

The way in which individuals establish class identity has become more complex. There has been a declining involvement in institutions such as trade unions and political parties which used to reflect degrees of class solidarity. However, class remains a fundamental influence on people's attitudes, values and behaviours;

¹⁰ Who do we think we are? The decline of traditional social identities, British Social Attitudes, National Centre for Social Research, 2007

¹¹ Intergenerational mobility in Europe and North America, Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics, 2006

a larger proportion of middle class or wealthier citizens vote in elections and participate in processes of governance (eg, by becoming school governors or local councillors).

In the past, notions of philanthropy where the rich simply gave to the poor, did little to address the root causes of poverty, and meant that charities often reinforced class divides. Today, the sector has the potential to help break down traditional boundaries, challenge stereotypes and encourage the least well off to play an active, fulfilling and influential part in society. However, routes into the third sector which depend on volunteering or internships may only attract those from wealthy backgrounds.

Moving forward

- How can your organisation encourage service users and others to take on roles that they might not have otherwise believed were open to them?
- What can your organisation do to ensure it provides people from differing backgrounds with the same opportunities to participate in your work?

How will changing attitudes towards socio-economic status impact on your organisation?

In five years' time, will your workforce, trustees and volunteers be from a wider range of socio-economic backgrounds?

Use the box to jot down your thoughts.

How important will this driver be to your organisation in the next five years?

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH



Driver 3

Ethnicity

Britain has long been culturally and ethnically diverse. Immigration levels peaked in 2004/2005, due to rapid migration from the new European Union

member states. Ethnic minorities now make up 8% of the total UK population, though this percentage varies widely across the country.¹² As global population movements become more frequent, the UK is likely to become more diverse in future.

British society is increasingly tolerant of diversity and multiculturalism. In 2005, 62% of the population said they believed multiculturalism makes Britain a better place to live.¹³ In attempts to promote diversity, the Government has introduced policies that emphasise multiculturalism by valuing and preserving different cultures and identities within society. However, concern that these policies may have contributed to rising extremism and social fragmentation has now

¹² 2001 UK Census

¹³ Multiculturalism poll, BBC/Ipsos MORI, 2005

prompted a policy shift towards cohesion, and the creation of a single national identity focusing on integrated 'Britishness'.

Meanwhile, concern about immigration has risen in the last decade particularly after the recent increased immigration from Eastern European states. This is often driven by labour market competition and negative attitudes from some elements of society.¹⁴ Rural areas in particular have experienced more immigration than in the past, and a simultaneous deterioration in attitudes to immigrant communities.

The third sector's response to issues of ethnic and cultural diversity could have a significant impact on the future of social cohesion in Britain and the development of civil society as the 'good' society.

Moving forward

- What relationship does your TSO have with different communities and how could you contribute to community cohesion?
- Does your TSO have a campaigning or advocacy role to play to combat negative attitudes towards ethnic groups or immigrants?

¹⁴ Blair's Britain: the social and cultural legacy, Ipsos MORI 2007

How will changing attitudes towards ethnicity impact on your organisation?

In five years' time, will your service users be from a wider variety of ethnic backgrounds and will they have different needs?

Use the box to jot down your thoughts.

How important will this driver be to your organisation in the next five years?

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH



Driver 4

Personal identity

Personal identity – how we define ourselves in relation to others – has become increasingly complex. Individual freewill and autonomy have

become important social values. This individualism, although often associated with selfishness, also links to growing notions of self-reliance and personal responsibility.¹⁵ Our willingness to accept without question what those in authority say, has declined.

Faced with diverse and contradictory opinions, ideologies, faiths, sub-cultures and communities, people are less willing to conform to narrowly defined identities. A sense of individual freedom enables people to define their own identities, often based on multiple cultures or values, and to express more fluid personalised needs and preferences, eg, a person might define themselves as a Scottish African with diabetes as well as a British Muslim environmentalist.

¹⁵ The Responsibility Gap, Henley Centre and the Salvation Army, 2003

Nevertheless, there can be tensions between the need to 'stand out' and to 'fit in', particularly amongst young people.¹⁶ The growth of new technologies has made it easier for people with similar views to find each other but may limit debate between different social groups and potentially increase isolation.

For TSOs, an increase in the diversity of preferences and needs means it will become harder to make assumptions about the requirements and identities of service users. Meanwhile, a growing emphasis on individual responsibility (eg, consumers purchasing ethical products) is replacing more traditional collective activism.

Moving forward

- Do you feel confident that your organisation fully understands your users and their needs?
- Can you facilitate the transition of potential supporters of your cause from individual to collective action?
- What role might your organisation have in supporting those who do not feel so empowered or have less confidence in their own identity?

¹⁶ D_coding the Leading Edge, The Henley Centre Headlight Vision, 2008

How will changing attitudes to individualism impact on your organisation?

In five years' time, will you be tailoring your services and/or activities more to suit individualised needs and preferences?

Use the box to jot down your thoughts.

How important will this driver be to your organisation in the next five years?

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH



Driver 5

Different generations

Expansion of residential care and a decline in the extended family (except amongst some ethnic minority communities) means different generations

are less likely to live together. By 2021, an estimated 2.2 million people over 65 will be socially isolated.¹⁷

Attitudes of different generations to each other are shifting. Two in three people think that those under 30 and over 70 have little in common. However, negative stereotypes are significantly reduced when people have direct contact, eg, young people with older friends are 82% less likely to hold discriminatory views about older people.¹⁸

Tolerance towards young people has declined, exacerbated by fear of crime and negative media coverage. This fear is generally worse in poorer communities.¹⁹ Government's response has been a

¹⁷ Office for National Statistics

¹⁸ How Ageist is Britain?, University of Kent survey for Age Concern, 2007

¹⁹ Blair's Britain: the social and cultural legacy, Ipsos MORI, 2007

tough stance on anti-social behaviour. However, the amount of crime young people are responsible for also tends to be over-estimated.²⁰

As the population ages, stereotypes and prejudices may lead to inter-generational tensions. The ageing population and tight public finances are placing pressure on state services and pensions. This has serious implications for the sustainability of the welfare state which depends on finance from the younger generation.

TSOs may have a particular contribution to make to improve inter-generational understanding, as they are often able to give a voice to marginalised groups within society, such as those perceived as anti-social in their behaviour or isolated older people.

Moving forward

- Can your TSO help facilitate dialogue between different age groups and the wider community?
- What can your organisation do to combat stereotypes and recognise individuality and points of difference within/between different generations?

²⁰ The Respect Agenda six months on: How are we measuring up? Ipsos MORI and the British Crime Survey, 2005

How will changing attitudes to different generations impact on your organisation?

In five years' time, will attitudes towards young and older people be based in reality or fear and stereotypes?

Use the box to jot down your thoughts.

How important will this driver be to your organisation in the next five years?

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH



Driver 6

Gender and family structures

People have greater freedom to make different choices about their family and work life than 20 years ago. More co-habitation, lone parents, divorce and

civil partnerships have resulted in changing gender roles and family structures. Recent legislation and changing attitudes have made discrimination on the grounds of gender and sexuality less acceptable.

The number of women in the UK workforce has been increasing for 30 years and they are having children later or not at all. A quarter of women born in 1972 will have no children by 2010²¹ and half of British women say that life could be complete without bearing children, twice as many as 50 years ago.²² It has become common and more socially acceptable for women to have careers, regardless of whether they have children. Many more women work in areas such

²¹ Office for National Statistics

²² Childlessness in Europe, London School of Economics, 2003

as law and medicine, traditionally considered to be the preserve of men.

Men are more likely to be active in the home and with the family and are less often the sole breadwinners. Only 17% of men now think earning money is a man's job while women should keep house, compared with 32% in 1989.²³

Attitudes towards homosexuality are also more tolerant. Since 2002 for example, more people have supported than opposed gay adoption.²⁴

Moving forward

- Does your organisation offer flexible or part-time working opportunities and good maternity/paternity benefits?
- Do all your organisational policies reflect an awareness of the different gender roles and family structures of your users and your workforce?

²³ New families? Tradition and change in modern relationships, British Social Attitudes, National Centre for Social Research, 2008

²⁴ Adoption survey, British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering/Ipsos MORI, 2002

How will changing attitudes to gender and family structures impact on your organisation?

In five years' time, will your organisational policies need to reflect more diverse family structures and gender roles?

Use the box to jot down your thoughts.

How important will this driver be to your organisation in the next five years?

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH

**So
what?
Now
what?**

**Considering
strategic
implications
for your
organisation**

Hopefully you now have a better understanding of some of the key drivers that will influence how changing social attitudes may affect your organisation in the coming years. The next step is to turn this information into choices about future actions.

This process is covered in depth in *Looking out: how to make sense of your organisation's environment* (see page 4) but the following questions will get you started. Why not consider them with colleagues or with your trustees?

Selecting the most important drivers

First of all, how important did you think each of the six drivers would be for your organisation?

Driver 1: Poverty and the welfare state

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH

Driver 2: Class and socio-economic status

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH

Driver 3: Ethnicity

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH

Driver 4: Personal identity

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH

Driver 5: Different generations

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH

Driver 6: Gender and family structures

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH

How much time do you have to consider these further? If you're short of time, pick the one or two which are the most important for your organisation. If you have more time, consider more.

So what? Strategic opportunities and challenges

You may already have started to jot down ideas about what these drivers will mean for your organisation in the future. We suggest you develop these ideas a little more, perhaps by drawing up a table like the one below. Opportunities and challenges should be medium to long term and focused on the changes to your organisation's strategy that you may need to make.

Driver	Opportunities	Challenges

Thinking about your stakeholders

Stakeholders are those who have an interest in what you do. Don't forget to consider how these drivers may impact on them, and how this may then influence your relationships. Consider:

- Your workforce – both paid and voluntary
- Your users and beneficiaries – both direct and indirect
- Your funders – individuals, corporates, trusts and foundations, statutory agencies
- Other players – your competitors, your collaborators, those who complement you, other TSOs, private sector providers, public sector providers
- Other stakeholders – the media, general public, policy makers.

Now what? Strategic opportunities

Once you've understood what the future could look like, you can identify actions that you can take which will maximise opportunities and minimise the negative effect of risks and challenges. It can be helpful to think about three kinds of opportunity:

- **Improve** – what opportunity does your new knowledge give you to do what you do better?
- **Innovate** – what opportunity does your knowledge give you to do different things?
- **Improvise** – what opportunity does your new knowledge give you to manage risks and threats?

Why not develop some ideas and options for these different types of opportunities? You could draw up a table like the one below.

Improve	Innovate	Improvise



Taking action

A case study

This example sets out the actions one TSO takes in response to these drivers to help put it on a stronger footing in the years to come. This organisation is

fictional, but its story is based on anecdotal experiences from real TSOs.

Acting Up, a theatre group for children and young people in a town just outside the M25, is run from a local community centre by a centre manager and a group of volunteers. The centre is situated on the edge of a large housing estate bordering onto a more affluent part of the town. The vast majority of the group's participants are middle class children from outside the estate and the volunteers tend to be parents, largely mothers, of those attending.

Recently, a significant number of immigrants from various countries have moved into the area, adding to a small existing immigrant population. The population as a whole is becoming more diverse. There is also a

considerable ageing population; a home for elderly people and a small estate of sheltered housing are situated near the community centre.

The theatre group has become quite insular; its volunteers have largely been recruited by word of mouth amongst friends. It is a long time since anyone from a different background joined.

After reading this Future Focus guide, one of the volunteer parents in the group starts thinking about how the group might be more open and responsive to the changing community. She speaks to some of the other mums and they decide to try to reach a more diverse group of young people by playing a more active role in making links between different parts of the community.

Initially, they visit a couple of local schools and talk to parents to encourage more young people from the estate and the immigrant communities to attend. Once a few new people start coming, more follow. As well as attracting new members, they also make a special effort to recruit some male volunteers to the group.

One of the new volunteers overhears some of the younger children making prejudiced remarks about older people. This sparks an idea for a project to address issues of prejudice and misunderstanding. Acting Up puts on a performance for the older people living locally, with refreshments and a chance for the young people to meet with their audience.

The next project is suggested by one of the fathers from the estate who has recently joined as a volunteer and who is a youth worker for the local council. He's aware of a dance group that has been set up within the local immigrant community and suggests a jointly run community day that celebrates the different cultures in the area through performance and food. It's a great success and subsequently becomes an annual event.

Although these new projects attract a more diverse group of young people to attend, their parents often aren't involved. One of the barriers to volunteering has been that the organisation, previously run by relatively affluent women, had never made provision for volunteer expenses. Turning the community event into an ongoing project attracts funding from a local

charitable trust. This enables Acting Up to pay expenses, attract a wider range of volunteers and as a result, do more outreach work. Its performances continue to deal with social issues and the experiences of young people in the area.

**Further
information
and support**

Performance Hub

The Performance Hub works to help voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations achieve more in a number of ways, including helping organisations to think ahead.

www.performancehub.org.uk/thinkahead

Infoline: 0800 652 5787

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Born Abroad: an immigration map of Britain

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/uk/05/born_abroad/html/overview.stm

Young People and British Identity

Ipsos MORI/Camelot Foundation, 2007
www.ipsos-mori.com/polls/2006/camelotfoundation.shtml

Centre for Intergenerational Practice

Beth Johnson Foundation
www.centreforip.org.uk

A Study of Childlessness in Britain

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1998
www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/spr738.asp

Blair's Britain: the social and cultural legacy

Ipsos MORI, 2007
www.ipsos-mori.com/publications/srireports/bb-social-cultural.shtml

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for your
board!*

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**How are social
attitudes
changing?**

This is the fifth in a series of guides to help third sector organisations think about likely changes in their external environment and how these changes could affect them. A good

analysis of the future does take time, but it's not impossible and shouldn't be seen as a luxury.

All organisations can become more successful by spending some time improving their understanding of the likely future external pressures they will face and using this information to help make strategic choices and plan ahead. These guides aim to help you do that.

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