



Shona Robison MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government

By email

9 December 2022

Dear Ms Robison

### **Investing in Communities Fund – Slippage in Decision-Making**

We are writing to raise our concerns about the delays in communicating the outcomes of the Investing in Communities Fund (ICF). We have had a number of our members contact us raising their concerns about the delay.

Applicants were asked to submit their bids by 28 June 2022, nine months in advance of the project spend beginning in April 2023. The guidance for the ICF noted that ‘all eligible applications will be considered by the Independent Panel – currently expected to meet in November or December 2022’ and ‘we expect to advise all applicants of the outcome of their applications by the end of December 2022.’ An email sent to applicants now notes that it may not be possible to let them know before the end of February 2023, and this two-month delay will have a significant impact on organisations, both those seeking funding to continue existing projects and those investing in new work.

Many of the applications will be to continue to fund existing posts. It would have been much better practice to let applicants know the outcomes of their bid by the end of December to allow them to seek alternative funding, or to undertake a redundancy process with staff. As redundancy notices can be required to give up to 12 weeks’ notice, this slippage in decision-making means that staff will now be issued with redundancy notices, some of which may be rescinded if the funding is forthcoming. This has a negative impact on morale and on staff retention and undermines the government’s own Fair Work aspirations.

The current cost of living crisis needs an immediate investment of resources, and for applicants who were planning much needed new projects this delay means that their projects will not be up and running on 1<sup>st</sup> April. If applicants had been informed of the

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outcome in December as planned, the first three months of 2023 could have been spent on recruitment and planning for the new projects, but the late decision-making will delay organisations' urgently needed response to the crisis.

Therefore, we are calling on you to take the following steps:

- Allocate sufficient resources to the ICF team to allow all applicants to hear the outcome of their bids as soon as possible, and by the end of January 2023 at the latest
- If this is not possible, allow all continuation projects an additional two months' funding to allow them to wind down their projects in a manner that is fair and respectful of the staff and clients involved
- Meet with us to discuss how we can work together to ensure that Scottish Government funding decisions and payments are made and communicated in a timely manner, so that situations like this do not arise again in future.

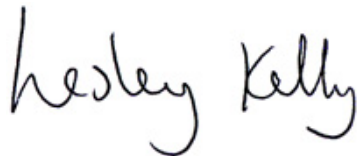
Yours sincerely



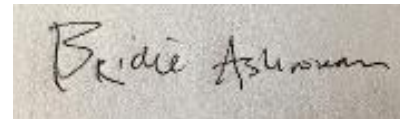
Anna Fowlie, SCVO



Anthea Coulter, Clacks TSI



Lesley Kelly, Midlothian Voluntary Action



Bridie Ashrowan, EVOC

Pegs Bailey, TSEF

On behalf of SCVO, The Third Sector Employability Forum, and The Third Sector Interface Scotland Network



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