



Community Work Ireland working collectively  
to support and promote community work as a means  
of addressing poverty, social exclusion and inequality

Community Work Ireland,  
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October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017

Liz Canavan,  
Department of Rural and Community Development,

Dear Ms Canavan,

We write to you following the recent Community Work Ireland Annual General Meeting to convey to you a sense of the concern expressed by participants about the prospect of private, for-profit companies tendering for the delivery of the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme and other programmes to address poverty and social exclusion that have traditionally been implemented by not-for-profit organisations with Government support.

Drawing on the UK experience and more recently on the experience of Local Development Companies in the implementation of the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme, research conducted by Community Work Ireland on the marketisation of such programmes illustrates a number of risks including; an increasing threat to the independence of community sector organisations; a reduction in the quality of services and supports to disadvantaged communities under a veneer of value for money; cherry-picking where 'clients' that are more likely to succeed are chosen over those that require more intensive supports; changes in the conditions of workers.

The concerns expressed by participants at the CWI AGM fall into a number of categories:

- The deep concern at the implications of for-profit entities gaining a foot-hold in work targeted at achieving social inclusion;
- The concern that the previously collegiate, partnerships have been replaced by secrecy as a result of the competitive nature of the process;
- The concern that competitive tendering processes, and the secrecy that surround them, make it difficult for programme designers to provide sufficient support to those tendering to implement.

These concerns, as well as rumours of the intention on the part of private companies to tender, are causing fear and instability and we ask you to urgently review the current processes and re-consider these overall mechanisms for the future. CWI members strongly believe that all programmes and interventions to address poverty, social exclusion and inequality should be exempt from competitive tendering and privatisation on the basis that the impact of marketisation fundamentally and regressively alters the way in which they are delivered. We ask how 'value for money' can be achieved when companies are deriving profits that should be reinvested into the communities that need investment the most. We welcome the possibility of the National Framework Policy on Local and Community development cross-sectoral Working Group, which we are members of, undertaking work on this matter.

**CWI Directors:** [Anastasia Crickley](#); [Patricia Brennan](#); [Oonagh McArdle](#); [Ronnie Fay](#); [Áine Deely](#); [Jamie Gorman](#); [Seanie Lambe](#); [Obert Makaza](#); [Catherine Lane](#); [Siobhán McLaughlin](#)

We will be in touch with your office to seek the soonest possible time to arrange the meeting we have already requested and would like to discuss the issues raised above in addition to the other matters listed in our previous letter

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anastasia Crickley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

Anastasia Crickley, CWI Chairperson