

Baroness Liz Barker

Question: How do you see the role of charities in 2015 and beyond?

I think that charities will have a very important role to play in terms of community cohesion. Our society feels quite fractured at the moment and charities uniquely can find their ways into the spaces that other organisation and the state certainly cannot, and so developing diversity and maintaining social cohesion I think will be incredibly important for the sector post 2015. The second role which charities will play will be about improving public service outcomes. We have tried in government giving big grants to large organisations and frankly commissioning aspirations have not come through to reality so I think we are going to have to look at a much more localised, much more personalised solutions to public services and I think that using the Social Value Act charities will have to have a much greater role in that than they have had, and smaller charities than they have had in the past.

Question: What steps would you like to see Government take to support the sector?

I would like to see us do two things. One is to continue a lot of the work which has been done by this government helping charities to discover new tools to measure their outcomes and their effectiveness because I think that is incredibly important. And also to help charities to improve their digital presence, and to engage with new and younger people and supporters who they have not done so before. And the third thing I think which would be a key priority is to revise the Social Value Act to make sure it is much more widely used by commissioners and procurers, those procuring services.