

## “Who funds you?”

It’s a question that is sometimes asked of think-tanks. Because think-tanks are, by definition, seeking to play a role in the development and implementation of public policy, many people want to know who funds them. We think it’s a reasonable question and one that deserves a reasonable answer. At the SMF, our answer is to publish all our sources of funding: any organisation that gives us money to support our work will be publicly identified. We think that’s the right thing to do, not least because the SMF is a registered charity. Charitable status is a legal and financial privilege granted by Parliament, and privileges bring responsibilities. While charities are not legally obliged to declare their funding, we believe that the nature of our charity makes such disclosure necessary.

Where funding is related to a particular project, any publication or event related to that project will clearly highlight that funding; all the publications on this website show any relevant funding.

Not all funding is related to particular projects. Some organisations donate money to support the general operations of the charity.

Transparency about funding is part of a wider set of SMF policies that ensure anyone engaging with us and our work can have confidence in the integrity of that work and of the charity as a whole. All our projects are assessed before they begin to ensure that they meet our charitable purposes and serve the wider good. Our board of trustees - which includes parliamentarians from three parties and senior figures from journalism, finance, law and business - oversees the selection and management of projects and final decisions about funders.

Any funder who supports a particular project signs a contract with the SMF setting clear rules for the management of the project, including a guarantee of complete editorial independence for the SMF. Our analysis and our conclusions are ours and ours alone.

Any funder who supports an event where politicians or other public figures attend signs a contract that states clearly that the SMF cannot and will not guarantee the attendance of politicians or public figures at that event. We always seek to engage policymakers (of all sorts and parties) at the highest level, to ensure our work has the greatest possible impact. But we do not accept funding that is in any way contingent on or related to contact with such policymakers.

The SMF as an organisation is committed to transparency and integrity. While all SMF staff and trustees are responsible for upholding these standards, final responsibility often rests with me. As director and chief executive of the charity, it is my job to ensure that the organisation commands the confidence and trust of everyone who engages with us. I take that job very seriously, not least because of my background. I worked as a political reporter and commentator for several years, and continue to write as a journalist from time

to time. In that capacity I have written many times about issues of money and influence in politics and policy. I know that secrecy breeds suspicion while transparency brings trust. The SMF is and always will be an organisation that can be trusted.

James Kirkup, SMF Director

Further information about our funding and governance is available via the links below and on our page on the [Charity Commission website](#). If you require more information about how the SMF is funded, please contact [director@smf.co.uk](mailto:director@smf.co.uk).