

Covid-19 3rd Sector Response Forum – 23.07.20

Attendance

Elaine Hill	CSREC
Jennifer Shelock	Committed to Ending Abuse
Debbie Jupp	Committed to Ending Abuse
Steve McQueen	Sustainable Thinking Scotland
Michele Reap	Falkirk and District Association of Mental Health
Barry Jordan	LGBTY+
Chris Grant	Abilitynet
Claire Strong	Neighbourhood Networks
Donald Park	FV Voluntary Sector Group
Rab Barrie	FV Voluntary Sector Group
Duncan Hearsom	Dial a Journey
Sarah McHardy	Families Outside
Julie Ryan	Forth Environment Link
Hannah Gray	Strathcarron
Mairi Grant	NHS Forth Valley
Maria Ferrari	Cyrenians
Martin Kenny	Royal Voluntary Service
Sarah Murray	Royal Voluntary Service
Sharon Laing	Aberlour
Susan Docherty	Falkirk Carers Centre
Kenny Gillespie	Falkirk Council
Rebecca McDonald	Falkirk Council
Miranda Wilson	Falkirk Council
Jen Kerr	CVS Falkirk
Claire Bernard	CVS Falkirk
Lynsey Hansford	CVS Falkirk
Scott Malcolm	CVS Falkirk

Minutes

FC Introductions

- Introductions from Kenny Gillespie and Rebecca McDonald
- Both state that FC want to listen to communities
- Thanking communities and 3rd sector for support for people line – keen to take learning from this forward
- Money is community's money and it should be about what the community wants
- PB now called community choices (1% of council spend minimum) – need communities help to do that
- Transparency is key
- Kenny and Rebecca's team available for meetings or advice etc

Moving forward - Renewal

Things are going to get rougher – deaths, unemployment, and economics

- How do we take learnings from Covid and move forwards?
 - Relationships are very important
 - Community organisation have led the way
 - Statutory have supported from behind
 - People got the support they needed
 - Deeper into communities and vulnerable people lives
 - Take learnings positive and negative
- How can we support FC to have better relationships with 3rd sector and communities?
- MK RVS liked the way council run the line but handed over responsibility of service provision to the 3rd sector – what is needed is that this trust continues
 - Pulling resources for ordering of products
 - Buying local, using local volunteers, keep things local – not in an obstructive way
- What do people expect from the FC?
 - What can they afford to provide?
 - Avoiding duplication between statutory and 3rd sector
 - Avoid creating dependencies
- CBC CVS after success of what 3rd sector has put in place, we need to guard against statutory services taking over
 - Sticking to what we specialise in, have trust in 3rd sector delivering (high performing teams)
- HG Strathcarron – we want to keep 3rd sector and volunteers empowered to continue their good work and to build on the work, which was unsustainable through support of FC, CVS etc
 - RMCD FC echoes that all points raised she agrees with and is encouraged by what she is hearing so far
 - Strengthening partnerships and relationships
 - Communities have become the front line, gained confidence (attainment) and it would be nice to build on this
- JS CEA – limited contact with statutory and slow response at the beginning – whereas 3rd sector decided that the families they work with need the support and that it was easier to adapt in terms of managing risk. This put the onus on the 3rd sector to pick this up at the beginning while statutory were planning how to respond etc (this is a strength of the 3rd sector and its been challenging)
 - Increased risk for vulnerable children and its been a challenge to mitigate that risk (adult and child protection – they have also found this to be inconsistent across the area) again especially when those statutory services are reduced it's hard to signpost people which creates more work for 3rd sector orgs
 - Increase in domestic abuse over last few weeks
 - Staffing has been an issue
 - This highlights how multi-agency working is important and illustrates how FC could work with 3rd sector
 - Sharing information (coordinating applications to allow greater ease of communication – just like today FC on Zoom which they normally cannot access)

- Sarah McHardy Families outside
 - Families fear that there will not be a return to services
 - Challenging working online when used to face to face
- MF Cyrenians
 - Worked with the different phases (people had developed anxiety and agoraphobia) so they worked with clients outside socially distanced – the face to face contact has been transformative after online
 - Befriending service would be good
 - Difficult to work round confidentiality issues but that is the beauty of fast response of 3rd sector
 - Been helping people connect digitally (CVS provided it info to Lynda Ross Hale)
 - Message to council bring back face to face
 - Dependency – have moved to fortnightly tying in with benefits – people have been okay with that – linking in with other services such as foodbanks etc
 - Need to keep things moving particularly with Food
- The food issue is about social inequality not just food – should we keep support for line open??
- Susan Docherty Falkirk Carers Centre – carers survey around what they expect from the carers centre
 - Funding for carers to purchase IT equipment – still support there
 - Survey showed that they were offering 32 hours more care per week (average)
 - Some elected to stop home care so they did not contract Covid-19
 - Adult support care plans initially did not get done but they are coming back now
 - Veg you Ledge FEL project provided food boxed to carers
- JK Reduction in mental health access even though they were available and online due to not going to GP's
 - So, there are a group of carers that have been working hard for a long time now, FC should prioritise those people
 - Individual to this is the hidden risk to children (quadrupling of child report in last 4 months)
- RAB Resilience Partnership
- BJ LGBTY+ - young people with autism struggling to communicate using telephone especially mental health services (just be aware of other barriers)
 - Assumptions made that young people will be able to access digital services (sending emails etc)
- JK – sensory centre says it is difficult to lip read via online conference call type platforms and with masks – sight impaired used to doing assisted shopping and cannot do that due to social distancing
- Sarah McHardy families outside – privacy concerns about online (sharing things that could be used later as evidence to get them into trouble.
 - Similar to people not contacting SFP line due to circumstances like having people live with them they have not declared etc
 - CEA finding the same kind of barriers – pros and cons – cannot speak in the house due to who is there, but also some share more due to finding it easier than in person
- CB CVS – what would have happened if the 3rd sector did not pick up the slack
 - 3rd sector need the same level of resource that statutory service have

- There is a lot of coordination between social work, 3rd sector, schools, named individuals etc – CEA as an example
- HG Strathcarron – the more barriers someone has the more difficult it is to keep contact and provide services
 - Informal support – there are some things that only communities can do – relationship boundaries etc which makes informal relationships provide better interaction and engagement
 - Litter picking – Denny - people do litter picking and FC pick up black bags – those is a simple example of how communities work with statutory services
 - Communities have the power to change their communities through influence, peer pressure, etc
 - how do we change the expectation of who does what?
- Sustainability – for example in the food sector there has been great creativity
 - Growing food to supply food banks
 - Community meals
 - Teaching people to cook
 - Recipe card in food parcels – send pics of your meal (social interaction) now developed in to cooking sessions
 - Food is social, green
- SMCQ STS – sustainable farm model
 - Collect rainwater
 - Grow food for food banks
 - Keep their seeds
 - Campus powered by solar panels
 - Social prescribing – mental wellbeing, employability to grow food for foodbanks
 - Biochar project –
 - 10-15 volunteers who are regular – Steve started thinking this would only be of benefit to the organisation but no realised it benefits the volunteers themselves
 - Covid response team from Bo’ness – helped get STS involved and growing their organisation
 - FC has a statutory duty to create a sustainable food plan and groups like STS and FEL – the plan for Falkirk is as much their plan the 3rd sectors as it is FC
 - Strengthening partnerships between 3rd sector and statutory
- DH Dial a Journey – main concerns are that they have been working with groups and acre homes but is not hopeful that this will return any time soon
- KG FC – procurement route – to be looking at local suppliers and investing in local
 - Inclusive growth comes a lot from 3rd sector by creating inclusive jobs, lots of people with disabilities, lots of female employment
 - As public budgets have shrunk 3rd sector have had to find their own funding through fundraising
- RB FV VSG – son has LD and was part of a council run service which stopped but there was no communication on how to access other services (FC could have been signposting etc???)
- It not just about having the correct technology but also the access to internet etc
 - Digital training
- Engaging with DWP, SSS, CAB regarding income maximisation
- CS Neighbourhood Networks – digital has helped them reach clients and are going to keep that going as another resource which may result in building capacity

- CG Abilitynet – Digital Inclusion – connecting Scotland devices have now been given out and Abilitynet are supporting 6 clients from Falkirk area
 - Connection (costs money)
 - Provision of devices (more devices required there is still a shortage)
 - Abilitynet still providing support across Scotland and have 5 volunteers in Falkirk
 - Abilitynet now support charitable organisations for free (help with teams, zoom etc)
 - RMCD – FC looking at connectivity equality within the Falkirk area and will be part of the plan which is being developed
 - CG linking in with RMCD regarding digital inclusion
- MA FVSC – assisted shopping
 - Assisted shopping should be accepted by most retailers now
 - [RambleTag](#) – connect the person with sight loss to sighted assistant
 - Covid has presented groups of people who have suffered – FC should speak to the people with inequalities to find out what they need and what kind of things can help
 - Digital Inclusion – number of service users who are digitally excluded. They have been sent iPad but cannot set them up because they were not sent with voice commands activated etc. So FVSC have digital champions helping them set up
 - Statutory services not aware of the things required to help vulnerable people
- 3rd sector's assets are being able to reach out and mitigate barriers to vulnerable groups

Summary

- Help with procurement
- Recognition of 3rd sector's expertise, knowledge, and existing relationships
- CVS proactive contact helped coordinate 3rd sector response and link 3rd sector to statutory services – CVS as a conduit for information to and from 3rd sector and statutory – information providers – CVS working with FC £350k help with rates with FC contact CVS
- Proactive approach has been successful – charities can react quickly – charities want to deliver; they do not want to rely on council but would like their support

Kenny G response

- Connecting Scotland 205 devices which have been awarded – only 3 councils were in the pilot scheme
- Rise of poverty and need for support – digital inclusion within child poverty and families – FC trying to provide more connectivity
- FC as a whole
 - Promoting
 - Only local authority and 3rd sector to provide funds to food fund – shows good working relationship
 - Transparency
 - Listening – targeted support and building or working relationships
 - LOIP (Falkirk Plan) – the partnership takes to communities and 3rd sector and intend to get non tokenistic input from communities

Strathcarron Befriending Service

- Hannah.gray13@nhs.net – to find out more about

Falkirk Council COVID-19 Recovery: Community Engagement Survey:

- <https://say.falkirk.gov.uk/corporate-housing-services/covid-19-recovery-community-engagement-survey/>
- Here is email address to feedback any further views: councilofthefuture@falkirk.gov.uk
- Both close on 14 August.