

Better Together VCS Forum – 13th June 2023

Action Notes

Agenda Item	Key Issues	Actions	Resp.
Welcome & introductions	<p>Kate Burrows welcomed everyone to the meeting at the Humankind offices. Introductions were made. 15 people participated.</p> <p>Apologies were received from: Abby Thompson, DCA; Andrea Hobbs, Association of Teesdale Day Clubs; Emma Crawford-Moore, Family Action; Grace Crawford, UTASS; Hannah Johnson, Alzheimer’s Society Durham; Helen Mulhern, Investing in Children; Jill Thorpe, Foundation Durham; Joanne Appleby, Oases; Peter McLellan, Durham Christian Partnership; Rachel Smith, Family Action</p>		
Skills for Life - Multiply	<p>Sarra Scougall attended from the Skills for Life Team and gave a presentation on the Multiply programme – a service for adults aged 19+ offering them an opportunity to improve functional numeracy skills through free personal tutoring, digital training, and flexible courses. The course is facilitated by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).</p> <p>The group were asked to make contact with the team if they identify any service users or additionally, staff and volunteers that they feel may benefit from the service. A copy of the presentation is provided with contact details for the Development Officers.</p> <p>The County Council are working with 12 commissioning partners to deliver the programme and as part of a discussion about commissioning, BTF members are asked to consider where there are opportunities that the voluntary sector could deliver services, but restrictions in relation to commissioning are preventing them from doing so. Kate will be able to feed this back into the Funding Advisory group for the UKSPF.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. https://www.durham.gov.uk/multiply 2. Multiply Presentation 	All to note
Building Healthy Communities	<p>Kate gave a verbal update on the BT Policy Forum in May and in particular the Policy Forum Report. This was followed by a presentation by Kirsty Wilkinson, who gave an overview on County Durham Together. Kirsty mentioned that unfortunately, Public Health were unsuccessful in getting through to the next stage of the NIHR Research Collaborative Fund however they are still moving forward at the development of a collaborative approach through the CDT logic model.</p> <p>A point was made about the capacity of VCSE organisations to participate in multiple forums particularly with the inclusion of regional and national requests. It is hoped that the development of</p>	<p>CDT Presentation</p> <p>Durham Insight</p>	

	<p>a central repository for research, information and evaluation data will increase the effectiveness of data sharing and reduce the need for duplicate meetings.</p> <p>VCSE led Community Research and Engagement Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pioneering Care Partnership lead the covid resilience team (now the community resilience team) supporting connections within communities and building and evidence base through community engagement activities. The Resilient Communities Group (a multi-agency group with a focus on adult mental health, chaired by Carol Gaskarth) has established a test and learn group undertaking evaluated projects feeding into the wider evidence base sitting alongside some commissioned research in support of the Community Mental Health Transformation. • County Durham Community Foundation, in conjunction with Durham Community Action, are exploring setting up a Poverty Truth Commission within County Durham. This is being considered within the context of the Poverty & Health Alliance work, for which Lottery funding is being sought. The Poverty Truth Commission will bring together a group of people with lived experience of poverty to help identify issues with a focus on local geography • DCA are working with The Rural Design Centre and the National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise to develop a Community Research Network in Weardale/Teesdale and Derwent Valley. A discussion event is taking place at Citizens House on the 13th July and any VCSE organisation interested in attending should contact Fiona Christian fiona.christian@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk <p>Joanne Thorns mentioned Communities Together Durham’s collaborative work with regional universities around the Living Wage and there was a brief discussion on the merits of working with the regional universities for research purposes. It was noted it is sometimes a challenge to identify the right areas within the Universities to work with, however there is now a central research and business team within their university on research and development which should make things easier in the future. Action: This idea could be discussed at a future meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that a recent user survey by CDC received increased participation through digital forums/media/point providing a larger data capture that can be used for the future. The organization. Datakind were mentioned as a possible analysis tool for data research.</p>	<p>Poverty Truth Network</p>	<p>Vicky/Kate</p>
<p>Partnership</p>	<p>Safeguarding</p>		

<p>Update</p>	<p>A pre-meeting Safeguarding meeting was held. In particular there was a lot of discussion around Mental Health and reference was made to the new video diaries developed by Healthwatch which showcase young people's experiences of mental health, services and support in County Durham.</p> <p>County Durham Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Environment Partnership are preparing for the review of the Climate Emergency Response Plan2 • The Economic Partnership have developed an Inclusive Economic Strategy and an action plan for its delivery is being developed. 	<p>Healthwatch Video Diaries</p>	
<p>Information Sharing</p>	<p>Members were given the opportunity to share any information with contributions from all attendees.</p> <p>One action note for inclusion at a future meeting arose from the discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North East First Credit Union are offering a 0% interest free loan scheme – Action a presentation from NEFCU will be a future agenda item 		<p>Vicky/Kate to note</p>
<p>Special Item</p>	<p>Special thanks were given to Ian Hunter Smart who is retiring after many years of supporting the VCSE both in a direct role and in his role within Durham County Council as an advocate for the work of the voluntary sector. He will be missed by all and he was wished well for his retirement.</p>		
<p>Date of Next Meeting</p>	<p>The next meeting will be a forum meeting on 15th August in the UTASS Offices in Middleton in Teesdale and it was agreed to amend the start time to 2.00 p.m. for this meeting.</p>		