

Better Together VCS Forum –6 February 2024

Action Notes

Agenda Item	Key Issues	Actions/Links
Welcome & introductions	Kate Burrows welcomed everyone to the meeting at DCA. Introductions were made. 12 people attended. Apologies were received from Rachel Avery, Grace Crawford, Jim Cunningham, Alison Harding, Amanda Lacey, Helen Mulhearn, Gail McGee and Jenni Wood	
Durham University – Research Fellowship	<p>Neil Heckles, Senior Policy Engagement Manager, in the Research and Innovation Services at Durham University attended the Forum to give a presentation on research and engagement opportunities for the VCSE. The key opportunities are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> bring more research to bear on some of the issues that affect our local communities and make a difference to them creating capacity within the VCSE and between the partnerships to provide researchers to do the work reshifting the balance of power through commissioning so that communities identify the issues that they want the research to address increase the visibility of the University within the community for the University to create a ‘Durham Version’ of the Cambridge Centre for Science and Policy to develop network of academics and decision-makers to improve the use of evidence and expertise in public policy <p>Some BTF Forum organisations are already engaged with the University to carry out research work (Oases, NEPAC). The opportunity not only presents itself to not only do the research but to demonstrate the effectiveness that the organisations and their service delivery have on the community. It was agreed that the BTF support the continuation of this engagement with the University.</p>	<p>Presentation</p> <p>www.csap.cam.ac.uk</p> <p>Forum members requested to consider the invitation and link with Neil directly.</p>
VCS Representation on County Durham partnerships	An exercise to identify which of the County Durham Partnership sub groups have VCSE representation has been carried out. In addition, a survey which requests which other partnerships members of the BTF Forum members attend was distributed for comment, prior to circulation to the wider group. The survey will help to build a current picture and identify where the gaps are in both VCSE engagement in County Durham ‘partnerships’ and provide a catalyst for conversations with those groups regarding VCSE	Forum members were asked to review the survey and feedback any comments to Vicky .

	representation. It was suggested it may be useful to identify groups where there is VCSE representation outside of the BTF and the form will be amended accordingly.	
Review of Terms of Reference	The Terms of Reference for the Better Together Forum were reviewed and agreed, with the amendment that the notes are not circulated to the group but are available on the DCA website if required.	
Safeguarding Update	<p>Following on from the last meeting regarding the concerns regarding lack of confidence by the voluntary sector in raising an alert, Abby had requested a report which outlined that out of 46 concerns raised by VCSE organisations between April and November last year, only one resulted in a safeguarding enquiry. A further 'deep dive' audit has been requested on what actions were taken with the remaining incidents.</p> <p>A Safeguarding Adults development day was held which included a presentation from Durham police taking forward the Right Care, Right person initiative which focusses on joint working with partner agencies to identify the most appropriate agency to give vulnerable people the care and support they need. The police are looking to develop a workshop on this and further information on this will follow.</p> <p>The Fire Service are offering 'Eyes Wide Open' training in light of increasing fire fatalities both regionally and nationally (with a trend of those 70+ living alone in 1 or 2 rooms). Abby is following this up with more information to follow.</p>	BTF members are encouraged to keep anecdotal discussions ongoing with Abby.
Partnership Updates	<p>Kate gave a short overview on three presentations that were recently made to the County Durham Partnership. The following points were noted:</p> <p>North East Devolution Update – any group member wishing to link with the named DCC local authority leads under each thematic portfolio can raise this with Kate. Concern that the move to a larger regional framework will reduce the effectiveness of the links with the VCS at a local level was raised and some work to look at this is being led by VONNE.</p> <p>Inclusive Economic Strategy Delivery Plan DCA are looking at the impact of the Durham Pound project and how to monetise the impact of the voluntary sector.</p> <p>CQC Assurance Adult Care Self-Assessment – DCC Adult Services have recently carried out an adult social care self-assessment in preparation for any forthcoming CQC inspection.</p>	<p>Links to Presentations</p> <p>countydurhampound.co.uk</p>
Information Sharing	Pioneering Care Partnership – a ten year contract funding bid for Wellbeing has been successful in a joint project between the PCP and CDFT. As a result, the PCP are currently recruiting for a Wellbeing 4 Life Manager with a four year programme coming online around Wellbeing 4 Life; Cancer Awareness; Join the	www.pcp.uk.net

	<p>Dots, Health & Wellbeing and Healthsquad. A new project focusing on men’s mental health, Men’s Pie Clubs, is also being developed.</p> <p>Moving On – Moving on work with around 150 young people around County Durham. They have just completed their OFSTED successfully. It was reported that there is a historical low of cohort of young people are in work with the remainder in NEET due to the cost of living and the availability of subsistence benefits. This poses the question of how young people move on to live independently of the charity.</p> <p>County Durham Community Foundation – efforts are currently focused on retaining multiple funding programmes going into 2024/25, particularly those around poverty.</p> <p>Family Action - this service for young adult carers covering County Durham has recently been appointed contractor for the Darling Young Carers service</p> <p>Age UK – Rebranding to highlight that the service is offered to those age 50+ is being rolled out with a focus on wellbeing. Age UK are working with the ICB around digital inclusion for healthcare. A funded programme offering Maintenance Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (MCST) for moderate dementia is available.</p> <p>Durham Christian Partnership – assistance with energy costs has increased along with the demand for debt advice. New staff from the CAB have been recruited to DCP. It was noted an AICD conference is planned for around April under the theme of Housing.</p> <p>Healthwatch - working with GPS to make guidance more accessible for those with autism with a view to extending this to hospitals, where possible. Healthwatch are looking to extend and diversity their Board. A new Youth Engagement officer has been appointed.</p> <p>Alzheimers Society – subject specific officers are now in place for veterans, young people and prisons.</p> <p>Durham Community Action – a new Volunteer Passport scheme has been launched which will offer training for volunteers to help them to move in and out of volunteering.</p>	<p>www.movingondurham.org.uk</p> <p>www.cdcf.org.uk</p> <p>Family Action</p> <p>www.ageuk.org.uk/countydurham/ BTF Forum members asked to note and refer where appropriate</p> <p>www.durhamcp.org.uk</p> <p>www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk</p> <p>Alzheimer’s Society</p> <p>Volunteer Passport Scheme</p>
<p>Date of Next Meeting</p>	<p>The date of the next meeting will be Friday 19th April at 9.30 p.m. which will be a Policy Conference at Bowburn Community Centre. The focus of the conference will be around Ageing Well, with a presentation from Robyn Holmes of Age UK.</p> <p>Following on from Policy Conference, the next Forum meeting will be Tuesday 18th June at 13.30 p.m.</p>	