



Community & Voluntary Sector Panel
Meeting Notes
Thursday 9th July 2020 at 2:00 pm
Online via Zoom

Chair: P2000 and Tada RSN – Geraldine Lawless

Panel Members:

ABC Seniors Network– David Hammerton, Armagh Rural Transport – Diane Irwin, Banbridge Twinning Association – Gilbert Lee, County Armagh Community Development – David McMullen, Craigavon Area Foodbank – Chris Leech, Derrylee Community Group – Frances Kerr, Migrant Support Service – Brendan MacPartlin, Mounview and Grey Estates Community Association - Jonathan Mercer, Portadown Carers – Tracey Gilliland Salvation Army – Martin Stevenson, Scotch Street Youth & Community Centre – Andrew McCreery, , Ulster GAA – Anne Garvey, Volunteer Now – Edel Cunningham, West Armagh Consortium – Stephen Fields, Womens Aid – Eileen Murphy

Others in Attendance: ABC Council – Jennie Dunlop, Michelle Markey, Prospect Awards CIC – Anna Clarke,

Apologies: Craigavon & Banbridge Volunteer Bureau – Donna Stewart, Donaghcloney Community Gardens – Walter Ferris, IncredABLE – Nigel Hampton, Inspire Wellbeing – Cheryl Lester, LLTCA – Claire Patience, Mencap – Liam Burns, Regeneration – Keith McCann, Waringstown Together – Lenny Deans

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| 1. | Welcome & Introductions |
| | Geraldine Lawless, P2000 and Tada RSN welcomed everyone to the meeting, with a special welcome to Tracey Gilliland and Eileen Murphy for attending their first meeting of the Community and Voluntary Sector Panel. Geraldine took members through zoom rules. |
| 2. | Panel Members Key Issues |
| | Geraldine introduced Anna Clark, Prospect Award CIC to lead this part of the session. Anna introduced the task and explained there were 3 elements within this agenda item: a) Members to put main issues into chat/whiteboard & into breakout rooms, b) Break out groups to discuss initial covid response and issues, c) Feedback to main rooms |

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| | <p>Anna invited panel members to share what they felt were the key issues/themes that emerged over the last few weeks via the chat function. The issues</p> <p>Panel members entered 4 breakout rooms in small groups to reflect on key themes that were shared in the group chat and agree 2/3 collective themes to feedback. The feedback from the breakout session are detailed in Appendix 2.</p> <p>Similar trends were appearing from a number of members around: Mental and physical health, coordination of food support, social isolation, support for the sector to return to normal activities, wellbeing of volunteers.</p> |
| 3 | <p>Panel Members Presentations</p> |
| | <p>Chris Leech, Craigavon Area Foodbank, Presentation of Food Survey Findings</p> <p>Chris presented the key findings from the survey panel members undertook during June. He elaborated on the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local community and voluntary sector organisations acted quickly to meet the need for food • The sector also delivered a range of activities to support wellbeing in their communities including: signposting & helplines, befriending, accredited counselling, online activities, fuel & utility vouchers etc. • Respondents reflected on what they had learnt from providing food assistance during the crisis. What worked? • Respondents were asked what changes would they would make if this process is required in the future? • There was broad agreement about future needs and the value of working together • 93.5% were interested in working with other organisations in the future to provide a coordinated approach to meeting critical food needs in their community • 60% respondents interested in being in panel <p>David Hammerton, ABC Senior Network, Age NI Consultation Findings</p> <p>David shared the findings from a recent Age NI consultation. David elaborated on the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 groups of older people identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Those that can resume normal activities social distancing permitted ▪ Those that should be able to resume normal activities but confidence has been lost and we need to ensure they don't slip into social isolation ▪ Those that always needed home support • The survey covered the following domains <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outdoor spaces and buildings Fear of social distancing in public areas 2. Transport Transport services severely reduced – causing concerns about missing appointments Concerns around public transport of hospital appointments and going to seniors groups. Is it safe to use? 3. Housing |

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| | <p>Scams targeted at vulnerable older people Fear of living independence and quality of life Fuel poverty highlighted Help needed in the home for household chores particularly changing bedding, washing and ironing clothes plus household repairs.</p> <p>4. Social Participation Disconnection and a loss of purpose and usefulness in the community Loss of some healthy habits Bereavement – stress worry and unable to visit sick relatives Lack of availability of hot meals</p> <p>5. Respect and inclusion Positive feedback: Greater knowledge and awareness of services Improved Community Spirit</p> <p>6. Civic Participation Signage of social distancing Loss of contact Fear of 2nd wav +side neighbours looking</p> <p>7. Communication and Information More offline needed Broadband issues Landline and service issues</p> <p>8. Community and Health Concerns around future plans eg flu jabs no information – barriers and access to health surveys Health and nutrition was affected</p> <p>Action: Food Survey Presentation to be circulated to panel members and findings from Age NI Consultation.</p> <p>Reflections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2nd wave poverty related if not from the virus ● Importance of panel voice and using its voice in planning stages ● Work done on food was very commendable – another area needs attention helping people with universal credits and particularly migrant community ● Reflect on learning and need for coordination of plans ● Rural areas helping own communities ● Sept/Oct opening up programmes – how do we do that with all the restrictions in place? ● TADA working across the rural areas – referrals coming from community groups - |
| 4. | Community Planning Update |
| | <p>Jennie Dunlop acknowledged the volume and diversity of the support provided across the borough by the sector. She provided an update on community planning and plans for recovery as a result of the pandemic. Community planning has been fast tracked over the last few months. Jennie advised that the Community Planning Strategic Partnership at their meeting in June agreed to convene a Community and Economy Thematic Action Planning grouping to agree the collaborative actions needed to support the community and the economy for next 12 months. Some of the actions that are already in the existing plans will</p> |

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| | <p>still be important as we move through recovery. Thematic Action Planning grouping to meet from end of July to start of September to agree short-term actions and that the Place thematic grouping will meet later in the year to agree longer-term priorities.</p> <p>Jennie highlighted that the CVS is crucial to the recovery plan and that a small number of panel members will sit on Community & Economy Recovery Action Planning Grouping, areas of work agreed from this meeting can be put forward for the partnership's Community & Economy Recovery Plan, she also emphasised the importance in consulting with S75 groups about the plan and the panel role in facilitating this.</p> |
| <p>5.</p> | <p>Agree Priorities for action</p> |
| | <p>Using the chat function Anna asked panel members to share what they felt where the top 3 issues</p> <p>Moving Forward/Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning how we move from response to recovery to resilience. From dependency to empowerment. • Whose guidelines do we follow and why? • Show leadership rather than wait for leadership • Build on the community volunteering – new people, different demographics • Build confidence around continuing to volunteer/ returning to volunteer • Support to CVS to return to running programmes - safely <p>Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration in emergency need response • Coordination of response to avoid duplication and identify shortfalls • Impacts of reduced funding for CVS and other services • Strategy planning Partnership Co-Ordination • A plan that learns from Covid issues and makes a community plan that can quickly come to operation and target the key area with coordination. <p>Mental & Physical Health & Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helping to build people up and get people back to social interaction to reduce isolation, improve health, fitness etc. • supporting those who support others – carers, telephone advisors, • big increase in domestic violence and impact on mental health <p>Jobs/Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People need jobs, the economy is critical and focus on workforce. • Much of the local economy relies on low skilled workforce and migrant workers. 10% of local population. Also high % of care workers and key workers from BAME communities – emphasis on workforce also needs to recognise needs and circumstances of BAME workforce <p>Poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to recognise and address fact that many people are living on or close to poverty line and were even before Covid19. It has highlighted and exacerbated this fact. • Need to ensure that all the Government financial assistance gets directed to those who really need it |

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| 6. | Next Steps |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPT to write up the notes and send a proforma out which highlight key issues and panel members to complete if they want to be involved in a working group to take forward issues. • Those interested in getting involved in priority work areas to meet end of July • Co-design for Shared Leadership Programme end of August – Eol - places limited • Call for new panel members August – September |
| 7. | Thanks and Close |
| | Geraldine thanked everyone for attending the meeting and giving up their time. |

Appendix one Agenda Item 2:

a) Main Issues

- Mental health concerns
- Getting back into programmes
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Collaboration of groups - when it works its great. When it doesn't it causes issues
Identifying real needs and getting help to those that really need it
- Mental health and wellbeing issues.
- Tackling isolation
- Learning from covid-19
- Social distancing seems to have been abandoned in rathfriland. Particularly concerning to the elderly and those who were shielding.
- For our organisation a key concern going forward is the distance that has to remain. Going forward we can only carry 5 members in a 16 seater and 2/3 in a 9 seater - this will greatly reduce the capacity we have for supporting the community.
- Partnership working
- Willingness of so many people to step up to help but a lack of overall coordination of this.
- Re starting community events activities in local community facilities
- Future financial impact, lost jobs, cost of living, rates
- Restrictions re social distancing
- As a carer myself looking after severely disabled young people and looking after a group of ladies in our group what we have found is
- Isolation
- Loneliness
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Carers were not able to access help although we reached out to council and a number of other groups only 1 came forward to help us
- Community getting back again
- Health and safety instruction for volunteers
- Needed to use i.t. in place of seeing people face to face.
- 2. The importance of the next phase, where unemployment and general financial etc are going to be prominent
- Devastating impact encore business, sport/games events stopped no revenue stream from games, etc
- Special needs_ 1 social isolation esp among elderly, those with health issues, rural dwellers, also parents of children with special health or educational needs. 2 - income loss esp those on low incomes - some received very little financial support
- Our 2nd concern is getting volunteer drivers back to work, guidelines is only under 70's, if we follow this we lose 95% of our volunteers. Also talking about bubbles ie 1 volunteer to 1 member - again this will curtail our work immensely
- Re building community confidence
- Taking a lead for the future expected spike - there is a lack of evidence/awareness that progress is being made to prevent the chaos witnessed at the start of this lockdown
- Mental health issues need to addressed professionally
- Getting people areas for fitness and healthy exercise

- There has been a complete shut down in most aspects of life. The ABC council was no exception.
- Plus side: tremendous involvement in aiding wider community - delivery of food & other parcels, delivery of key public health messages, support for mental health and wellbeing of volunteers & wider community
- Arranging meetings where many members are elderly and/or have health needs. Many are anxious about going out esp into groups
- Outstanding community support witnessed

B&C) Feedback from Breakout Sessions

Group one

- Mental health and the opportunities for physical health and fitness throughout lockdown and its impact on vulnerable people
- Isolation and Loneliness
- Collaboration and partnership working – when it worked it was great and when it didn't it caused some problems

Group two

- Physical and mental health
- Funding – all focused on Covid impact – not enough on restarting
- No real leadership – localised community support
- Guidance from Executive not clear and some communications are conflicting

Group three

- Increase level of danger
- More mental health
- Domestic violence increased
- Community support very important – awareness of training need for those on telephone response to
- Environmental issues improved
- Social isolation very prominent in rural areas
- Financial impact – cost of living increased
- Need for people to properly trained in mental health support
- Lack of coordination – people doing own things
- Need for services to be restarted eg dentists,

Group four

- Mental health
- Physical health
- Volunteers/carers – responsibility placed on them
- Loneliness, social isolation
- Finances/budgets
- Huge challenge of going back to delivering programmes and adhering to social distancing
- Unemployment

- Food poverty – need for coordination next time
- Willingness of people to step forward – lower levels of volunteers when people return to work