



Community & Voluntary Sector Panel meeting  
Meeting Notes  
Monday 28 June 2021, 7.00 pm  
Online via Zoom

**Attendees:** ABC Council – Jennie Dunlop, Michelle Markey, Prospect Awards CIC – Anna Clarke, Clanmill Housing – Austin Kelly, Migrant Support Service – Brendan MacPartlin, Action Mental Health – Colin Loughran, P2000 – Geraldine Lawless, , West Armagh Consortium – Stephen Fields, Ulster GAA – Anne Garvey, Craigavon & Banbridge Volunteer Bureau – Donna Stewart, ABC Seniors Network – David Hammerton, Disability Action – Colin McElroy, NIACRO – Edell McKee, Lislea Community Association – Sheila McCreesh, Craigavon Area Foodbank – Chris Leech, Armagh Rural Transport – Diane Irwin, Linking Generations – Vikki Titterington, Links Counselling – Laura Wylie, Scotch Street Youth & Community Centre – Andrew McGreery

**Apologies:** ABC Community Network – Emma Brannigan, The Fitzone Foundation – Sean Collins, Inspire Wellbeing – Cheryl Lester, Volunteer Now – Edel Cunningham, Salvation Army – Martin Stevenson, Womens Aid – Helen Cranney, County Armagh Community Development – David McMullen, Mencap – Liam Burns, Southern Area Hospice Services – Roberta Wilson, Richmount Rural Community Association – Joe Garvey, SLNRA – Mary McAlinden, Community Advice Craigavon – Jennifer Fearon

## 1. Welcome & Introductions

Geraldine Lawless, Interim Chair of Community and Voluntary Sector Panel welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted and Geraldine invited panel members to introduce themselves.

Geraldine shared the infographic that was designed to highlight the challenges raised by Panel members at last meeting.

Geraldine congratulated Chris Leech and Donna Stewart on their presentations at the World Community Development Conference where they shared their experience of participating in the Shared Leadership programme.

Geraldine advised that since the panel last met the new Terms of Reference was circulated for consultation and adoption. No further amendments were made and the draft has now been adopted by the Panel.

## 2. Outline of Election of Steering Group Process

Anna provide a brief overview of the Steering Group's

- Role and Purpose
- Membership
- Outline of Steering Group Election Process and key dates outlined below.

Date/Deadline	Action	
Mon 28 <sup>th</sup> June	Explain process at CVS Panel meeting	
Tue 29 <sup>th</sup> June	Call for Expression of Interest circulated with electronic link to form	
Mon 26 <sup>th</sup> July (midnight)	Deadline for submission of Eols (electronic format)	
Tues 27 <sup>th</sup> July	Prepare the Voting forms for circulation	If more than 10 Eols received
Wed 28 <sup>th</sup> July	Send Voting forms and Eols to Panel members –Open Voting electronic link	
Wed 4 <sup>th</sup> Aug (midnight)	Deadline for logging votes	
Thurs 5 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Communicate results to all Panel members	
Week beg Mon 9 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Convene 1 <sup>st</sup> meeting of Steering Group to chose Chair and Vice Chair and decide Panel and Steering Group meetings for remainder of year	

Anna clarified that all panel members were able to hold membership of an action team in the implementation and delivery the Covid 19 Response & Recovery Action Plan could still sit on an action or other group and the membership is not limited to the Steering Group membership.

Chris requested clarification if there were only 8 members nominated to sit on the Steering Group, how the 2 vacant positions would be filled, for example host a call-out for Expressions of Interest at a later date. Anna advised that the Steering Group would make the decision to do a call-out to fill the 2 spaces and possibly specify the expertise they're seeking. The new Steering Group Members would still need to follow the same process and submit an Expression of Interest as the other members of the Steering Group.

### 3. Key Focus of Meeting – Mental Health

Geraldine advised that the key focus of the evening was on Mental Health and invited Colin Loughran, Action Mental Health to give a brief overview. Colin has noticed a difference and increase in the need for mental health services and requests for training in the past year.

Panel Members were divided into break-out rooms to discuss the following questions:

1. What have you been doing since the previous meeting which took place last year
2. What supports are needed for staff and volunteers

#### Group 1

##### Q1

Craigavon Area Foodbank and Migrant Support Services help with basic needs, advocacy and to sign-post to mental health services to prevent users' mental health deteriorating further. There has been a development of online resources for sports groups and this can help with social interaction. Health & well-being officers are in each of the GAA clubs to the players and to the volunteers. Emmanuel

Church runs the Connect Café which is a social café environment and runs health & well-being programmes and 1-to-1 support.

## Q2

People are exhausted and needing a break. More self-care and support is needed for volunteers to prevent them from feeling burnt-out. A lot of volunteers are bored with Zoom. Training is also needed for volunteers to handle domestic violence situations.

## Group 2

### Q1

Armagh Rural Transport and Disability Action have introduced a health cash plan called BHSF which users make monthly payments towards and pay-outs are given annually. The contributions go towards 24/7 access to GPs and counsellors.

Disability Action have seen an increase in the need for tools and resources for staff and sign-posting. Staff are getting back to their primary work and a lot more disclosures need to be completed. A lot of clients are now saying that mental health is over-coming more issues than they previously would have had. Their programmes used to be person-centred programmes but are now having to change to online services which doesn't suit all clients, especially clients living in rural areas. They are now linking in with other partners.

Craigavon & Banbridge Volunteer Bureau run the Good Morning programmes which are seeing a lot of loneliness. A peer group has been set up to support volunteers.

TADA sought help from Action Mental Health to support volunteers who were experiencing difficult situations during lockdown.

## Q2

Disability Action again said there was a need for additional tools and resources for staff to help with sign-posting. The programmes weren't suited to being hosted online as it is easier to talk face-to-face.

Craigavon & Banbridge Volunteer Bureau's Good Morning programme and Peer Support Group had helped users and had given feedback to the trust.

The group agreed that some volunteers were nervous to return to their posts and front line staff in DART had to complete risk assessments and had to assume everything at face value and what they were told was the truth. These also create a lot of red tape. The staff are wondering if things will ever pick up again because elderly people are not returning or even going out. They have got into a rut and are still staying at home.

The art provision in P2000 was lost at a time when it was needed most. Everyone is exhausted trying to maintain their jobs and a burnt-out will occur soon.

## Group 3

### Q1

Linking Generations were trying to help keep people connected through resources packs focusing on mental health & well-being which they originally developed to be distributed locally but have now been distributed across Northern Ireland. There were seeds to grow and an opportunity of everyone to share ideas and advice. A pen-pal scheme was also set up.

Lislea Community Association did a lot of information-sharing by forwarding on information they received from statutory partners or other groups to people who would have benefited from the information. The group has also put in an application to PHA's CLEAR project and hope to hear an update soon. The focus meanwhile is getting people back to meeting face-to-face.

Links Counselling used different strategies focusing on prevention and early intervention for all age ranges. Children from aged 4-years-old could have received therapeutic support. Sign-posting, support groups and educational programmes were also given to other forms of mental health and

well-being support and also help keep people connected with everything else that was happening in communities that could help.

## Q2

There was an increase in people coming forward with issues around mental health issues. Staff and volunteers have felt under stress to deal with situations they aren't skilled in. Some people feel they won't enjoy summer as there will be no holidays.

## Group 4

### Q1 & Q2

West Armagh Consortium are seeing an increase in need but have a range of things going on for prevention and services available. The Men's Shed which was originally set up for older men is seeing a lot more younger men joining. There is a part-time social prescriber. Trainee counsellors are given the opportunity to gain experience and work in the community by the referrals received through social prescribing. Online programmes are also run for yoga. A menopause café was ran for the first time during the past weekend.

NIACRO are getting back out to visit people and are seeing an increased need in support. Some families are going through crisis from a family member being in prison and people are feeling very unmotivated. Staff have recently undergone mental health first aid training because it can be very hard to encourage people to seek help from their GP.

ABC Seniors Network act as a lobby group and are very involved in the Age-Friendly Alliance. They set up some services the last year after receiving funding for well-being packs. They also have a well-being champion. Some of the things they have noticed are the lack of confidence and uncertainty about getting back out there and also the increased waiting lists across the health service which causing a lot of anxiety.

Colin suggested that members can forward any queries or support they'd like to himself, Donna or Geraldine and can develop a plan of action to support everyone. Colin had also noted the great learning from the Panel and there is the opportunity for learning internally instead of from outside the Panel.

Colin Loughran, Action Mental Health outline the supports available elaborating on the following points:

- Services available in the Borough
- Southern Area Protect Life
- Southern Area Protect Life – raining offered
- Southern Area Protect Life – strategic links

Copies of presentations can be sent out after the meeting.

A menti-metre was sent out asking everyone action they would like to work on.

# Actions to take forward...



## 4. AOB

The Expressions of Interest form will be sent on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and all interested panel members who were interested in being part of the Steering Group should complete the short online expression of interest before the closing date of Monday 26<sup>th</sup> July.

## 6. Thanks and close

Geraldine thanked everyone for their attendance and participation and wished everyone a restful summer. Geraldine also reminded everyone to reach out to other members if they needed to.

A copy of the Zoom chat can be found at appendix one.

## Appendix one: Copy of Zoom chat Community and Voluntary Sector Panel Meeting

- Colin McElroy: yes
- Anna Clarke: Thanks everyone, now recording
- Anna Clarke: infographic will go onto website and can also be shared on social media
- Anna Clarke: theme of the conference was Our Connectedness, Resilience and Empowerment
- Anna Clarke: Any more questions on the election process please drop them in here.
- Clive Bowles: Apologies I have to go. Any further infomra
- Clive Bowles: Any further information please forward to me . hit button to ealry
- Anna Clarke: <https://forms.gle/DBbGocqcL9nkLYQEA>
- Anna Clarke: folks if you were taking notes using the google link, can you hit SUBMIT on the bottom of the form now please
- Jennie Dunlop: Anna, I'll have to email mine as we can't get onto google docs
- Vicki Titterington: Hi everyone sorry I have to go! Good to meet you all if anyone is interested in connecting generations please get in touch with me [vicki.titterington@bjf.org.uk](mailto:vicki.titterington@bjf.org.uk) I included our network sign up link above and the wee resource pack we worked on can be downloaded here <https://www.linkinggenerationsni.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/lgni-intergenerational-activities-pack-.pdf> speak soon!
- Geraldine Lawless: can everyone mute please
- Anne Garvey: Apologies everyone, I need to leave now. It has been a very interesting session.it would be useful to have a copy of Colin's slides please if that is possible. Many thanks
- Anna Clarke: <https://www.menti.com/2ddmfh9qi8>
- Colin McElroy: Apologies folks. Have to scoot on also. Thank you to all
- Anna Clarke: some really good ideas.
- Anna Clarke: if you keep clicking on the link you may be able to add more ideas
- Donna Stewart: Thank you Colin for sharing much needed services
- Chris Leech: thanks for your really helpful input Colin
- Michelle Markey: I can leave the link open for a few days if people think of further ideas.
- Donna Stewart: That would be great Michelle thank you
- Anna Clarke: Can you email it out to people then Michelle so everyone has the link after meeting finishes?
- Michelle Markey: Yes no problem.
- Anna Clarke: That is a substantive resource Colin
- Laura Wylie: You do an amazing job Geraldine. Thank you!