

## **TSPC Covid Recovery Sub Group**

**5 November 2020**

**13:30 – 14:30pm**

**Chair** – Paul Dear

### **Attendees:**

Patience Bentu – Race Council Cymru  
Catrin James - Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services  
Carl Cooper – Chief Officer Powys CVC  
Kate Young –All Wales Forum of Parents and Carers  
Anna Nicholl - WCVA  
Ben Lloyd – WCVA  
John Rose – National Lottery Community Fund  
Chris Johnes – Building Communities Trust

### **Officials:**

Chris Buchan  
Aaron Fortt  
Jenna Pugh  
Elizabeth Hawkin

### **Notes and Actions from previous meeting**

All agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting was an accurate note.

### **Comments on Draft Proposals from “Volunteering” Work Stream.**

- Be clear what the “principal sectors” are
- Ensure “regional” structures are included -
- Ensure we’re having discussion with volunteering wales network

### **Focussed discussion on the “Relationships” Work Stream against the key themes asking:**

A detailed discussion was then held around the “Relationships” work stream with respect to the main issues, asks and opportunities. All comments were captured - the following is a summary of the main points raised:

- **What are the issues/asks/opportunities?**
- The third sector is the mediator between the state and the citizen/community voice – we need to review and reflect on whether we really are creating the

opportunity for this “voice” to be heard in the planning and delivery of services and interventions.

- But there are communication and cultural working barriers stopping/hampering community action/activism. PSBs are not typically good at engaging with communities or community organisations. There are examples of good individual relationships but they are fragile and vulnerable to changes in policy and personnel.
- Some relationships have improved due to COVID but there are concerns about how we sustain these improved relationships – and continue to breakdown institutional barriers.
- The sector is crucial to tackling all of the major issues we face in Wales – but they need an enabling environment in which to operate. But what does an “enabling” relationship with Government and public bodies look like? We have good rhetoric around ways of working in legislation, policy and guidance, but it isn’t translating into action at a local level.
- The third Sector are writ large in Government’s policy/strategy documents but this isn’t translating into involvement in planning and delivery (and the associated resource) on the ground – and the third sector doesn’t have enough direct contact with Government to influence this.
- There are expectations associated with some government funding around relationships – but reporting back and tracking/checking seems to be light touch – there isn’t enough holding to account in the system.
- There is a power imbalance between the third sector and public bodies, created by the fact that WG fund them directly and the third sector are secondary recipients of funding via the public sector “gatekeeper”. The relationship is not just about the funding, it also includes things like releasing assets. We have to find ways of redressing this imbalance – some funders give money directly to the third sector, which immediately strengthens their negotiating position within potential delivery partnership.
- We also need to consider how we use our inspectorates/auditing regimes more - if bodies aren’t inspected or audited against particular expectations & requirements in relation to voluntary and third sector matters, there’s always a risk they won’t act. Is there a role of the Auditor general in this space – especially around Social value?

- We know the importance and value of the sector and their relationships, but do others? Are we using the right language (e.g. social return on investment) and do we have enough good examples to win hearts and minds?

### **Suggested Areas of Action:**

- We need to find ways of ensuring that good relationships are systematised/in-built (even if that sometimes involves WG dictates about joint working e.g. SSF)
- There are good examples of where relationships are working (e.g. Pembs – Umbrella for Change) – we need to find ways to embed this good practice more widely – helping CVCs and LAs to be more proactive through e.g. better leadership, better use of funding levers (to improve the local capacity of the sector).
- We need to describe what an “enabling” relationship looks like i.e. what would we like to see more of. We need to find ways of illustrating good practice and ensure it is the public sector that are the advocates delivering the messages instead of them always coming from the third sector (this will give them real power).
- The Social Services and Wellbeing framework is better than the Wellbeing Act at promoting ways of working and investment in social value (and social value organisations) – we need to understand why that is and work out how we encourage more of it.
- We need to see Welsh Government using its levers to ensure the involvement of the sector in service design and delivery is a “must do” not a “nice to do” – setting expectations through e.g. funding and procurement processes and regulatory frameworks/processes, statutory guidance – and ensure this is audited against. Ensure that fine words in high level strategy documents are backed up with specific actions in action plans and measures in performance reports e.g. Health Board INTPs mention the role of the voluntary sector but does not mention it in the associated delivery plans or performance mechanisms / KPIs
- We need to look at how the role of Auditor General can be linked to aspects around Social Value.

- We need to explore more equitable ways of funding (e.g. “requirements based”) that remove the power imbalance between sectors and the marketization of service delivery (allowing all the sectors to play the role they should to create the best services for communities).
- Covid has brought to the fore that the right balance is needed between the government’s corporate parent role and the role of society to take responsibility for itself. We need to have a real conversation about what kind of model we want to embrace in Wales – do we for example want a “participatory democracy model” and all that entails in terms of e.g. open budgets etc.
- We need to shift from pilot programmes (of which we have plenty of examples) to making things happen.
- We need to ensure more transparency around how the existing influencing structures around how e.g. portfolio meetings work.
- We need to look at increasing the diversity of Regionalised working groups (where key decisions are being made).
- WLGA are a key force for engagement – they have to be closely involved (and embracing of) this work.

**Agreed Action:** Based on the Recovery group’s discussion WCVA and WG officials will pull together a set of high-level proposals to begin to address the issues and opportunities raised for the Recovery group to consider, comment on, and add to ahead of them being developed in more detail (see below)

### **High-level draft proposals:**

#### Short/medium term

WCVA, Third Sector Unit officials to work with WLGA on priorities for joint action and relationship (volunteering/CAT/Social Value) and spreading good practice (using LAs as advocates). Building an evidence base by collecting examples of good practice to bring work to life.

Map and Influence emerging key docs e.g. Socio-economic Duty Statutory guidance: This will be an important tool for getting LAs and health boards to engage proactively with our most disadvantaged communities – need to ensure the language of statutory guidance is strong in terms of expectations

around the involvement of the third sector. This work should also include a review of public sector equalities duty.

Review the emerging TSPCs Funding and compliance sub-committee workplan for overlapping actions, e.g. issues around audit, sharing knowledge and good practice.

Working with WCVA to map third sector conversations TSPC members are having to identify gaps or areas for contribution, e.g Environment, Foundation economy.

Welsh Government potentially to signal policy intent to begin to address the disconnect in Welsh Government - to begin to put support for community action onto firmer policy ground. More coherent join up of our commitments across government. Use the ELGC committee inquiry report into the impact of COVID on the sector as a rallying point to start getting out these strategic messages and push a cross-party approach to this.

#### Longer-term

Develop community policy that draws on the three key elements identified (Relationships, Support and Volunteering):

- Articulates how the whole of government can contribute to that goal – starting with National conversation
- What type of country and communities do we want to live in and support?
- Sets expectation around the role and involvement of the sector
- Articulates how the levers of government (procurement, audit, funding etc) will be used to enable the sector and communities to thrive.
- Includes how we'll look after the infrastructure that's key to the healthy functioning of our communities (providing voices) and Hardwiring community organisations into the e.g. work of PSB