

TSPC Covid Recovery Sub Group

Tuesday 1st December 2020

13:00 – 14:00

Chair – Claire Bennett

Attendees:

Patience Bentu – Race Council Cymru

Catrin James - Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services

Carl Cooper – Chief Officer Powys CVC

Anna Nicholl - WCVA

Ben Lloyd – WCVA

John Rose – National Lottery Community Fund

Officials:

Chris Buchan

Aaron Fortt

Jenna Pugh

Elizabeth Hawkin

Paul Dear

Notes and Actions from previous meeting

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

Comments on Draft Proposals from “Relationships” Work Stream.

- Be clear what the “principal sectors” are
- Ensure “regional” structures are included -
- Ensure we’re having discussion with volunteering wales network
- It is noted there has been limited discussion of the *Review of Strategic Partnerships*.
- Yan example for this could be the upcoming youth work strategy recommendations and how the youth sector are involved in them.
- Get recommendations from WLGA and see what relationships look good and bad.
- CJs are being seen by the sector as a backward step on involvement.
- The model used should be that of an ‘enabling state.’

Focussed discussion on the “Support” Work Stream against the key themes asking:

A detailed discussion was then held around the “Support” 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?**

Governance

- Often when organisations are in need of support, the ‘presenting’ issue is not the underlying problem. In many cases this problem is about governance. Holistic support often works best for longer term organisational resilience.
- Safeguarding is a core part of governance and often some smaller organisations struggle in this area. This can also be true for orgs working outside of areas where safeguarding is traditionally considered to apply and may not be aware they need to engage in safeguarding.
- An organisation may need different skills in its trustees at different times, for example different skills are needed during a period of organisation growth, or change, or recovery.

Funding

- It will be useful to feed into discussions within Welsh Government about the longer-term grant funding of the voluntary sector, including reducing need for competition. This would lead to stability and longer-term relationships.
- Related to this, multi-year funding agreements would be helpful.
- Funding is important and sometimes it can difficult for the statutory sector to see beyond funding as a means of support.
- Most voluntary sector organisations do not have any money from the public purse.
- The emergency funds from WG were welcome.
- There has been a recent focus on procurement, and this could continue after withdrawal from the EU is complete.
- Some organisations will be struggling to survive, including those that haven’t had problems before. This includes the risk of qualified accounts, how can we deal with organisations that have had that?
- Funding streams and supporting community wealth fund, where are the different pots of funding coming from?

- The funding situation in Wales is fragile and there are limited numbers of funding opportunities (and even fewer Wales-specific ones). In the short-term we should consider opportunities to improve this.
- The Welsh Funder's Forum has worked well during this period.
- Funders have been flexible during this period and it would be useful to know if or how this would continue – for example, what is the justification for going back.

Policy design

- There is concern that some local community groups, that are small and often lack formal governance structure who will not be able to partake in social prescribing/isolation programmes, for example, as they aren't able to 'play the game' – i.e. deal with referrals and the monitoring which would go with this. There should be a discussion about how to minimise this.

Other issues

- Improved data and information on voluntary sector support in Wales could lead to better partnerships as voluntary sector organisations will be aware of others' work.
- Other key issues which are needed to sustain the voluntary sector include IT and legal support. The first underpins everything and the second can be unplanned and complex. Financial planning is also a concern, and linked to longer-term planning.
- Look at the community connectors are support services which have helped bridge gaps during the crisis. They have provided essential support for those who need it.