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**York and North Yorkshire VCS Strategic Leaders Group**

**Meeting Notes – 18 August 2021**

**Attendees:**

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| Caroline O’Neill – Head of Policy and Partnerships, Community First Yorkshire |
| Carol Shreeve - Citizens Advice Mid North Yorkshire |
| Sam Alexander - Better Connect |
| Steve Biggs - Just The Job |
| David Sharp - North Yorkshire Youth |
| Helen Flynn - Nidderdale Plus Community Hub |
| Emma Pears – Chief Officer, SELFA |
| Karen Weaver - HADCA |
| Chris Wiley - Carer's Resource |
| Laura Brett - Wellspring Therapy & Training |
| Jan Garrill - Two Ridings Community Foundation |
| Bridget Blanchard - Innovation and Development Manager, Community First Yorkshire |
| Louise Wallace - Director of Public Health - NYCC |
| Jane Colthup - Chief Executive, Community First Yorkshire |
| Liz Lockey - Chief Officer, Hambleton Community Action |
| Liz Wilson - Welfare Benefits Unit |
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| A number of people gave their apologies not listed here |

1. W**elcome and Introductions - Zoom meeting management**

Caroline O’Neill Head of Policy & Partnerships welcomed everyone. Notes from the May meeting and presentation were emailed with the agenda.

1. **NYCC Health and Adult Services Transformation - Louise Wallace – Director of Public Health, NYCC**

* Role - improving and protecting the health of the population and working strongly with communities, NYCC Stronger Communities team and VCSE, to continue to build on the work already in place.
* Louise gave a presentation on NYCC Health & Adult Services Transformation (slides attached) which outlined the Adult Social Care Market Context, Current Commissioning Arrangements, Vision for Transformation, Health and Adult Services (HAS) Service Development Transformation Programme and where we are now.
* She talked through the importance of VCSE sector helping to shape how they continually transform to make sure they are meeting the needs of the people across North Yorkshire, recognizing that those needs are different in different places, in different communities.
* HAS are keen to build capacity around coproduction and making sure we engage and listen to the needs of people but not duplicate what is already happening. Organisations that have eyes and ears with communities already and work in partnership with each other.

**Discussion –**

* recruitment shortages in care are the same across sectors, public and voluntary sectors and they had groups of people looking at what potential solutions there might be
* unregulated activity is still work in progress, and from a commissioning perspective is an area we need to be thinking about as a VCSE sector, as part of a workforce development approach and linked with that is an investment framework
* colleagues expressed interest in looking in more detail at how this area of provision can move forward
* Louise was asked whether the county is moving forward its aspirations on developing the community support organisation as a policy and how much Louise’s department had done on thinking how it can link through to VCSEs. Louise advised that Lincoln and Marie-Anne Jackson had looked at this and that there was more thinking to do but from her own perspective she had been immersed in Covid response for several months but does think there is a big opportunity and further work will be taking place
* it was highlighted that unpaid carers and family carers need to be linked into any further thinking.

Louise advised that the messages from the meeting will be fed back to those who are putting the work plan together.

**3. Leadership and Workforce Wellbeing**

**North Yorkshire Leadership Hub update**

* Bridget Blanchard explained that part of Community First Yorkshire’s work is about developing leaders who either live or deliver services in North Yorkshire. This work is led by a steering group which is currently looking to expand. Anyone interested in being part of the Hub should contact Bridget [Bridget.Blanchard@communityfirstyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:Bridget.Blanchard@communityfirstyorkshire.org.uk)
* A leadership mentoring program has just been launched with the mentors being trained with the university of York. The idea behind the program is to support emerging and aspiring leaders in the sector. Looking at succession planning by matching less experienced or those new to the sector with more established and experienced leaders to help them grow the networks and look at career paths as we know these are not always well signposted in the sector. A cohort will start in September and another early 2022
* A coaching programme has been launched. The Hub is working with Coaching in York to deliver this. It offers immediate support to leaders in the sector to help deal with challenges or changes being faced. People are coming forward with issues around funding, resilience and sustainability.

**Community Renewal Fund and extending the HEY100 leadership programme to North Yorkshire**

Jan Garrill outlined the place based leadership programme in Hull called HEY100 (Hull & East Yorkshire). Continuing on Hey Confident Futures, launched during lockdown again for Hull and East Riding, and it is a program of support initially done on-line. The programme is aligned to what the North Yorkshire Leadership Hub has developed. It has been included in the Community Renewal Fund submission to extend it to North Yorkshire.

Jane Colthup endorsed the importance of having more than one leadership offering, as no one size fits all and people’s needs are different, which a choice of programmes provides. Hopefully we are successful with the CRF bid but if not still want to try to do it in some shape or form.

Sam Alexander advised that the Community Renewal Fund submission included other strands of voluntary sector leadership support, including: match funding to expand the coaching offer; Better Connect and contract readiness; Stronger Communities and community leadership; and accredited trustee training to be piloted through Calderdale College. Application value £994,000 in North Yorkshire and £170,000 in York. If successful the programme will run between September and March 2022, and is all about piloting activity to shape the UK Shared Prosperity Fund due for launch 2022.

1. **Workforce Wellbeing**

**Wellbeing champions and training programme**

Working with Humber, Coast and Vale NHS colleagues, funding to support the wellbeing of people working within VCSEs has been secured. This includes training for Wellbeing Champions, to act as in-house buddies, to help someone who is struggling and give people a person to speak to who can provide help and signposting. Victoria Russell from Community First Yorkshire is leading on this on behalf of partners across Humber, Coast and Vale. It is something we want to think about developing more widely and to be as commonplace as health and safety officers.

**West Yorkshire & Harrogate and Humber Coast & Vale and Care Partnerships**

Two Resilience helplines are available to all workers in health and social care, including volunteers:

[West Yorkshire and Harrogate](https://workforce.wyhpartnership.co.uk/)  Health and Care Partnership and [Humber Coast and Vale Health and Care Partnership](https://www.hcvresiliencehub.nhs.uk/) Wellbeing/Staff Resilience Hubs for everyone involved in health and social care

Caroline advised about the [Wellbeing at Work](https://communitysupportny.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Wellbeing-at-work-A4-Aug-2020.pdf) document, a piece of research and guidance which Sam and her colleagues did on keeping a healthy workplace as part of the Harnessing the Power of Communities Programme in Harrogate. It provides a handbook with lots of toolkits and resources for leaders.

**Workplace Wellbeing Partnership**

NYCC Public Health team lead this Partnership and Sam is a member. It is the steering group for the Workplace Wellbeing Award, a quality award for businesses, VCSEs and the public sector.

Better Connect has launched the [Thriving at Work](https://betterconnect.org.uk/our-projects/thriving-at-work/) Project, a program delivered by 12 VCSE organisations across York, North Yorkshire & East Riding. Looking at healthy workplaces and inclusive workplaces so we have experts in the partnership around disability, neurodiversity and mental health and an offer for businesses including the voluntary sector for support with looking at policies, procedures to make sure that workplaces are as inclusive as possible. There is also a whole strand on training over the next couple of years. Information available on [betterconnect.org.uk](https://betterconnect.org.uk/)

**Discussion**

* Comment was made that 90% of one of a new contract held, was designed to destroy anyone’s wellbeing who works on it and that over specifying and demanding outputs was being seen in a lot of contracts being looking currently issued. The comments were noted, and they go against the current conversations with grant funders and commissioners and our push for more outcome focussed/flexible funding as seen during Covid-19
* How to fund/back fill leaders or staff to attend development programs is not being addressed
* It was asked if the match funding was to pay for the back fill of time and wondered if that was something that was part of the offer. Sam indicated no it was not in that context, they were doubling the budget for coaching, to double the number of people that could be supported
* There was agreement that back fill funding was definitely an issue, and others would be interested in being a leadership mentor but would be unable to due to the time it takes
* Sam noted the importance of talking about these points, and other aspects such as paying a living wage and that it is something a lot of organisations would like to be able to do, but grants and contracts do not allow for that. We need to draw attention to those unintended consequences when contracts are put together.

1. **York and North Yorkshire LEP – skills and communities project ideas**

LEP Skills pipeline projects overview and templates was shared on 18 August with some suggested projects. Caroline explained that the York & North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership are keen to try to build pipeline projects which can focus on the skills strategy priorities in particular. Colleagues were asked to get back to her with ideas around some themes by Tuesday 24 August.

Sam mentioned about managing expectations and that there is no guarantee that the ideas will be taken forward by the LEP. It is about creating a pipeline of ideas so that if the UK Shared Prosperity or other funding opportunities are issued we are not starting from a blank sheet.

Colleagues noted the need to make sure the word volunteer or volunteering is included, especially as routes into work, young people and others getting into work for the first time or returning to work. Using google docs would be helpful for everyone to put their ideas down.

1. **North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Board (NYSAB) and Sub-groups**

Liz Lockey, provides the voice of the sector on the two sub-groups, and provided an update:

* Domestic Abuse Act is an increasing issue and on the back of referrals being handled NYCC safeguarding team have been getting a lot of small charities contacting them asking for policy templates. The team are wanting to combine adult, children and young people safeguarding guidance and provide useful links. The team also reiterated that these are two separate areas of safeguarding with different needs and requirements which must be clear in any guidance
* new protocols for safeguarding came out in 2019 and they have been revised again but they are not finalised, and the intention is to have those go live by end August. There are not a large number of changes. Available on NYSAB website
* colleagues are reminded about PIPOT (Persons in Positions of Trust) and reference may need to be incorporated or added to existing policies
* NYSAB has been sending out audits to a range of care providers and this raised a question about something similar going out to VCSEs, but it was recognised that the full audit was not appropriate, an abridged self assessment checklist and guidance document is being taken forward by Liz. Carol Shreeve, Steve Biggs and David Sharp volunteered to test out the first draft.
* A safeguarding engagement survey is due to be issued. What they are looking to do is find out what people’s knowledge is around safeguarding processes, structures and effectiveness.

1. **Local intelligence sharing and updates**

* Liz W said she was facing a challenge getting her staff back to the office as there was still resistance and asked for others experiences with remaining remote
* Liz L said they were working to a hybrid model with staff doing a mixture of office and home working days and that was the model they wanted to keep going
* Jan asked if anyone had cracked how to have zoom meetings with people in the office and remotely
* Carol said they did team meetings successfully through Google hangouts.
* Karen said her video conferencing system in Community House was very popular with her groups and asked anyone interest to get in touch with her.
* Helen said she felt things are coming back and they have had a number of sessions coming back together across Nidderdale
* Sam said they were continuing to offer full work from home given the amount of uncertainty around variants and strains and the office will be reopening for anyone wanting to go in. She did a staff consultation with a focus on psychological safely and creating an environment where people are open and honest about any fears that they have which was well received by staff
* Carol said it was their second biggest employment query was from people being asked to return to the workplace
* Emma asked a question around those who applied for grants and funding, and how people are seeing the playing field change in the new financial year. There are a lot more questions being asked by the funders with constant emails and short timescales
* Jane asked if anyone actually monitor the cost of bidding and suggested it be something that is done so we are able to present some sort of evidence based costs each time we bid for something as it would be quite powerful and something that we should look at.