

Voluntary Sector Health & Social Care Forum

Notes of Meeting held 22 September 2009
At the offices of the Community Council of Shropshire

Present: Enid Smith – Impact
George Rook – Red Cross
Marion Youens – A4U
Anne Seymour – TTDW
Kath Goodchild – HCC Whitchurch
Julian Price – SHA
Celia Macintyre – Community Council of Shropshire
Julia Baron – Community Council of Shropshire

In attendance: Sam Hill, Joint Commissioning Team

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies

George was welcomed to his first meeting.

Apologies had been received from Nicola McPherson – Mayfair Centre, Liz Warren – Citizens Advice Shropshire

2. Notes of meeting held 22 July

These were agreed as a correct record.

3. Matters arising

- Letter to Simon Kenton – still to be sent.
- Celia Bahrami to be invited to a future meeting when dates determined.
- Kathryn Downton – agreed that it would be good to invite to a future meeting.
- JB reported that Stephen Chandler had found the Forum meeting very useful and would welcome and invitation to future meetings when dates agreed.
- Enid reported that Impact had been successful in their bid for a bursary from the Capacitybuilders 'Real Help for Communities' fund to look at possibilities for collaboration/merger with other organisations. Currently working with a consultant looking at the options.

- Compact Consultation – response from the Forum was drafted and forwarded.

Marion Youens asked if the Compact will also be adopted by the PCT once formalised and if so whether it will include the acute hospitals. Marion briefly outlined a particular problem A4U are experiencing which is being taken to the National Compact Mediation Service and also being referred to the Public Law Project.

There are issues about raising the profile of the value of the sector and the place of the Compact.

Action: To be referred to Voluntary Sector Assembly for further discussion. One suggestion was a workshop for quantifying the savings generated by delivering services through the VCS.

- Vetting and barring scheme

JB updated that a half day conference is being organised by the Community Council of Shropshire which will be held at the RSH Education and Conference Centre. Currently three dates are 'on hold' waiting for confirmation from the Home Office that they have a speaker (*subsequently confirmed as Friday 27 November*). This will be a free event with places for 100+ people to attend. JB to circulate confirmed date as soon as known.

4. Voluntary Sector Assembly

An email had been received from Helen Herrity about the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Marion has been in touch with Jamie Tratalos to find out more about what is involved.

Impact of the recession. JB explained that each Forum of Interest has been asked to have a standing item to track the impact of the recession. Preliminary survey work has indicated that early impact on the sector has been limited and largely positive (increased resources to cope with increased demand).

The issue for Forum members will be now to unpick the impact of the recession from the impact as a result of the change of administration. There will be a need to monitor where the decisions get made about what gets cut and in particular if it appears to support political preferences, rather than general cuts. Similar concerns are being raised by the Scrutiny Committee.

Marion noted that A4U have been getting more referrals from other voluntary sector agencies who have reached the limit of their own capacity and want to be able to signpost on to other organisations.

5. Guest Speaker – Sam Hill, Head of Partnership & Business Planning in the Joint Commissioning Team (local authority and the PCT)

Sam began with an overview of Joint Commissioning which has been established in Shropshire since 2002. This was with the purpose of bringing together health and social care to integrate the way people use service 'pathways' – where services cross over. The Joint Commissioning Team is based at William Farr House but also has offices at the Shirehall. The majority of finance comes from the PCT with a strategic overview of Shropshire Council finances.

The focus for the Joint Commissioning team is on client services, working with stakeholder groups in each area of specialisms. Sam advised that the agreed

strategy for Joint Commissioning runs until next year and work is currently underway on the joint strategic needs assessment, which is being refreshed this year.

Forum members were then invited to ask questions:

Q What is the relationship between the (national) procurement hub and the (local) Joint Commissioners?

A Logically Commissioning starts with the stakeholder groups but there is increasing awareness around competition rules and which contracts they apply to. (Sam agreed to take back to the team that when they are doing their detailed work they need to take account of local factors and organisations).

Q What is the current position regarding PCT finances?

A Joint Commissioners are currently doing 'scenario planning' eg what would be the impact of various percentage cuts, in order to determine and negotiate where those cuts might be made. This is an issue for organisations not currently in the systems by blocking entry. However not all opportunities for new projects are blocked. If organisations have a proposal for project, a business case needs to be worked up to identify how much things would cost and how much it would save. The business case then needs to work through the system of the Joint Commissioners and stakeholder groups.

It was noted that not all organisations have the capacity to engage with the stakeholder groups and in particular where the work of the organisation cuts across more than one stakeholder group.

It would be helpful to have a 'decision tree' to show where decisions got made.

Sam was thanked for her attendance at the Forum.

6. Updates from VSHSCF reps on other groups

PCT engagement, communications and governance group

Marion reported that this is a very interesting group but expressed concern that the voluntary sector doesn't have the level of authority or kudos to make a real impact.

Workforce development group

Celia advised that she hasn't been able to attend the last couple of meetings and will do a report at the next meeting.

7. Any Other Business

Personalisation agenda – Jenny Pitts is the key person in Shropshire Council.

The physical disability and sensory impairment partnership board is being reconvened after 5 years in abeyance. The inaugural meeting will take place in 13 October.

8. Dates of future meetings

These were set as follows:

17 November – 2 pm

19 January – 2 pm

16 March – 2 pm

All meetings to be held at the Community Council of Shropshire meeting room.