

VCFS Commissioning Workshop at Lancaster, Wednesday 06 September 2012 at CVS

Over the next three years, what do you think the needs of the people of the district will be?

Good Health

Good nutrition/food

Meaningful relationships

Statutory changes have produced gaps in provision, and pressure on voluntary services e.g. mental health needs rising.

Housing – quality as well as type/quantity

Employment – paid and unpaid

Volunteers – more to do more

Meaningful livelihoods – use of peoples time gives meaning/offers a good service to the community/caring e.g. childcare

Isolation & dementia particularly within ageing population/impact on families

Transport – getting to places – young and old

Access to services

Information and advice, consistency of message e.g. benefits, jobseekers

Joined up services – avoiding unnecessary duplication, talking to each other, proper links – not in Boxes

Social Support – voluntary sector – frontline e.g. around housing

Changing priorities of statutory sector – voluntary sector having to pick up

Icing on cake → fire-fighting

Welfare Reform Act – changes that could half peoples income i.e. much greater impact than changes before hitting the same people more than once

Crisis support as rules change – Crisis international 25-60% up

Regulations change but need remains, who picks this up?

Geography – funding between Kendal/Preston Lancaster/Morecambe consortiums?

– coming together locally likely to increase Family Relationship Support

Domestic Abuse – different set up for U18s Always been a gap

Knock on effects (cycle) e.g. unemployment trigger/early intervention

Fact portfolio to assist with funding bids e.g. save time/effort/duplication

Information – even about what exists now – awareness of changes – though same higher expectation of service

Are there any gaps in provision?

Housing- affordable housing for young people and older people, points system is difficult, relies on IT – what about people non-IT-literate?

Statutory changes/closures puts pressure on voluntary services

More resources and finding to allow change and support, with more flexibility

Benefits/jobseekers restructure has impacts in different areas especially disability and families

Funders too project orientated – not long term. Funders need to look at sustainability of work. Sometimes projects take longer because staff are part time and/or voluntary

Access to IT – lots of jobs only available online – not everyone is comfortable with IT

Mental health support – need for service user lead peer support, these people are lost, not seen, seem to have no voice – drug users not getting correct support – severe and enduring mental health needs gaps due to recent decisions

Access to IT – library not suitable for everyone

Basic literacy, basic skills

Welfare Reform Act – changes that could half peoples income i.e. much greater impact than changes before hitting the same people more than once

Future Gap - Legal Services Act – less provision in whole of W Lancs – debt – housing – legal aid awareness/support

Domestic Abuse – different set up for U18s Always been a gap

Employment – so much unemployment, employers are not employing people with muddles backgrounds because so many 'easier' applicants. Especially young men under 30 – risk of dropping out of society – subculture – need appropriate support to avoid this

Older pool of volunteers – increasing age of retirement – a need for voluntary organisations to find ways of linking in to retirement schemes, leaving work for retirement eg hospitals, university – also childcare responsibilities

Need to cover organisations which no longer around e.g. adult mental health, CHIPS; or may exist in much diminished form

what does it still provide?

Funding structure where everyone fits e.g. if not quite health, not quite education round peg/square holes

Age profile of volunteers (students) – volunteer bureau

Information – even about what exists now – awareness of changes – though same higher expectation of service



Does this provide any opportunities to work together in a different way?

Developing communications so more people know about what resources are out there

Volunteering – personalised service esp for higher skills e.g. pathways for skilled volunteers

Expansion of some current VCFS services – doing more of what works

Better use of public buildings e.g. schools during evenings, weekends and holidays, land for allotments, orchards, etc, St Leonards House

Moving from a centralised, hierarchical structure to a networked, web, evolving, equal, organisations working together and listening to and trusting each other

Sharing resources

Local currency + time banking to break cycles of unemployment

Need to trust statutory organisations – need more understanding that what is promised will be delivered. E.g. it would be good for statutory officer to spend a day with VCFS worker

Large organisations cannot force this change

Move away from protectionism, parochial attitudes (this often comes from the passion people have about their area of work/concern)

Increase revenue funding available

How many partners can we get together in a bid (i.e. value for money) added value of joint bids – more scope – broader client base, broader benefits

Collective working relationship – recognising expertise

Partnership approach

Work experience – County as corporate parent.

Progression route e.g. Strawberry Fields/Stewards

Volunteering – appropriate roles, volunteer support

Training for group on how to work collaboratively – skills, legal implications

Strong agencies – currently not talking together – duplication of errors/ideas – some sense of co-ordination – by ‘theme’ rather than just a v high level one?

Share a story about a recent time when your organisation did some of its best work and made a real difference. **What have you learnt about the best ways for the voluntary sector to work?**

Providing a safe place – haven

Having paid volunteer co-ordinators

Volunteers willing to give time and resources

Access to professional services

Because we're volunteering, people appreciate that we're doing this because we care

Being able to give flexible responses according to individual needs – service-led

Being welcoming/approachable/non-threatening/accessible/independent

Up-skilling workers and volunteers

Giving volunteers high quality training

Minimal bureaucracy

Having the time to befriend and really understand people

Identifying real needs – by being embedded in the community we serve

Individual help on a one to one basis to assist people struggling with health problems etc when crisis support didn't work

Getting together – like-minded groups to play card etc and look after themselves

People who live in squalor can be a problem to help – volunteers could be in danger from cleanliness issues

People who are in total isolation allowing volunteers to take them out of their living space and giving change of outlook and new connections

Making connections for groups bringing different contact together made a “big difference”

Barton Road CC no support for community work so member volunteered to set up a sewing group – inspirational – bringing older and younger people together

Take people out of isolation on outings and talks – relaxation and comfortable company

When asked to choose the top three most important things:

Personal contacts + trust

Networking links with appropriate agencies

Communication vital

Further comments:

Volunteering can change people lives. Volunteers need time to be 'nurtured'.

Relationships can develop in an environment perceived as safer.

Passion is fine but do those with passions need opportunity to enthuse others and share the passion

The sector changes lives for people as 'clients' and for people as 'volunteers'.

More shared resources. Time/time bank – practical resources.

Volunteers + training

Access to volunteers

Success rate info employment from volunteering

Short term benefits e.g. addiction rehab often ruined by financial shortfall – need for longer term commitment

e.g. CLN had to 'chase funding' – led organisation away from 'ethos' and lose support

People some time need 'time' opportunity to look at their issues in a 'safe' environment to see the 'bigger' picture – still 'reluctance' to access benefits

Imagine three years into the future – voluntary sector is thriving, even within limited budgets. What does it look like?

By working together, what can we do to achieve this vision?

Networking

Trust

Communications

Funding led rather than project led – be aware!

Passions and opportunity to share

Service user led- experience

Cascade of services from one contact

Act as a link between services and public

Communications between statutory services and VCFS

Accessible, approachable, non-threatening

Independent!

Recognising expertise

Funding needs long term being met

Longer funding streams

Don't want – external agencies delivering local services
 Do want local agencies – local solutions, local problems
 Continued over page...

Imagine three years into the future – voluntary sector is thriving, even within limited budgets. What does it look like?

By working together, what can we do to achieve this vision? (Continued from previous page)

Success rate voluntary into employment
 Time and capacity to replace and train volunteers
 Voluntary sector – not third sector
 People know where to go for the help they need
 Information sharing including statistics, local base
 Access to good pool of volunteers
 Access to good pool of volunteers
 More core funding. Realistic timescales.
 Diversification of income streams.
 Training, skilling up – how to work collaboratively.
 More volunteers taking
 Flexible funding
 Encourage more volunteers
 Better networked and more collaborative
 Supporting workers
 More support to enable volunteers to take on responsibilities
 Statutory services fulfilling their responsibilities not taking the easy option and just sending (dumping) people to the third sector
 Community hubs – voluntary sector groups working in the same building. The Cornerstone.
 More user led organisations, expand hours, Morecambe as well as Lancaster, better funding
 Real communication between statutory and voluntary sector services not tokenistic. Need action.
 Appropriate access to information e.g. supplying hard copies as well as web based.
 ? Clearer definition between voluntary groups working on needs and those working on hobbies.
 Thriving and well supported local organisations sharing expertise and aims to deliver local services.
 Co-ordinated services – enable regular forums (like this) to discuss and solve issues.

Everyone can spend a day per week on a choice of volunteer opportunity (so max 4 day working week) and obtain reward in timebank/local currency payments – need core funding for voluntary organisations to do this.
 Funder listening to voluntary sector about need and fund longer
 Training and support for harder to reach 'potential' volunteers to build confidence and skills
 Inform young people of career opportunities within voluntary sector who have good education – empower sector with clever people!

Organisations represented (numbers of people if more than one)

Lancaster Voluntary Sector Forum:

Barton Road Community Centre (x2)

Birchall Trust

Children's Society

CVS (x4)

North Lancs CAGB

Olive Branch

One Voice

Peer Support (x2)

Red Rose Recovery

Relate Lancashire

St Thomas's Church

Strawberry Fields Training

Transition Lancaster