Third Sector Strategy Group

Thursday March 20th 10am

**Present:** Tracy Kerr (VSGWL), Helen Davis (WLYAP), Stephen Newman (River Kids), Mark Vance (WLDAS) Ann Pike (Race Forum), David McDonald (Whitburn CDT), Collette Moran (School Bank), Neil Barnes (WLCAN), Angela Moohan (The Larder), Marcia Moreira (Health in Mind), Tracy Murdoch (Kidzeco), Electra (Firefly Arts), Gareth (Broxburn Utd)

Apologies: David Stewart (Fedcap)

1. **Welcome and Apologies:** Louise opened the meeting.
2. **Agency Presentation: Marcia Moreira (Health in Mind)**

Please get in touch with any questions or queries: Marcia.Moreira@health-in-mind.org.uk.

* Values, vision and purpose.
* 3 services running in WL: Peer connecting service, Ethnic minority, over 55’s.
* Variety of workshops, groups, 1:1 short term support.
* How to access the service – sensitive approach, “It is hard to ask for help.”
* Questions: 9-12mths waiting list for over 55s, 1-3 months for ethnic minority service. Recently recruited 2 new volunteers which will positively impact waiting times. Marcia advised that yes, they are seeing numbers increasing in WL. People are becoming more interested in peer support, the sharing of lived experience. Ethnic minority service is quite new, but people are starting to open up to support. Minimum age for support from 18yrs old. Support has been provided to someone from Palestine fleeing Genocide, which has been very difficult. Cross working and support is incredibly important particularly signposting people with trauma to more specialised organisations. Neil offered support to any Palestinians as he is a member of Scottish parliament subgroup. Marcia said she had presented at Race Forum and would be happy to present again if helpful.

Louise thanked Marcia for her presentation (please see attached).

1. **Action note from previous meeting Jan, actions and matters arising:** none.
2. **Council / Sector working group updates and discussion on ideas / plans**

Community planning partnership: Presentation – first in 6yrs - lasted over an hour and included strategic overview of the sector and two presentations: Eunice (West Lothian African Women’s Network) and Angela (Play works) who spoke about the work that they do and brought to life the role and value of the sector. First time presented in 6yrs. Opportunity to highlight the work that can be achieved together - if you invest in the sector, we can help you reach your goals. Partners can now reflect on how to work more closely with the third sector.

Child poverty data: Real focus in WL and Scottish / UK governments. Survey will be issued by public health Scotland, led by anti-poverty service, who will capture data however Third sector will also play important role.

5th Third sector annual report: Will be presented to Economy, Community and Empowerment Wealth Building PDSP on April 22nd – Alan requested case studies to illustrate the important work of the sector. Looking for at least 1 for each PDSP. Received: Corporate – CAB, Education - Dale Hub. Economy – Whitburn CDT. Still need case studies relevant to Housing, Public and Community safety, Social work and Health, Environment. This case study will be included in the strategic plan which is then tabled with each PDSP for 12 months. Case studies can be used in multiple forums and reports and are incredibly useful evidence, real value in storytelling. Opportunity to reflect what we do and show where the challenges are.

1. **VSGWL report**
2. 5-year Strategic plan: Launching April 1st. Thanks again to all stakeholders.
3. Communities’ mental health and wellbeing fund year 5 and 6 has been announced. £30m across Scotland – commitment to multiyear funding. Draft guidance just received. Launch around mid-September. 60-80% will be allocated for 2-year projects.
4. Events: Engaging Communities, [Events from 26 March – 9 April](https://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/events/)
5. Councillor Susan Mangan: Alan met with her, chairs CCP, suggest invite her to TSSG, new to third sector, keen to visit third sector orgs.
6. [Homepage - VSGWL Locator](https://westlothianlocator.org/): Official launch April 1st however is now live – check it out! Tracy shared her screen and explained how it works. Will be emailing members soon asking orgs to check their details – as many updates have been completed using Gateway external resource. Orgs can have as much or as little information as they want. You can search by location or category. Add / edit function or email Gateway – there will be a human check of submitted information to ensure appropriate. [Membership - Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian](https://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/organisation-support/our-members/) If you’re not a member, free to join, get in touch. Tracy.kerr@vsgwl.org.
7. **Forum / Sector updates**
8. PDSP reps updates / feedback: Formal structure, posted online live. If attending some prep and advice needed. Council do run training. Get in touch to discuss further.
9. WL Food Network (Alan): Letter sent to Cabinet secretary requesting funding, bank account being opening and comms subgroup established to look at sustainability including an event, perhaps aimed at local businesses. Collecting case studies, may create a video.
10. Children and Families Forum (Helen). Guest speaker: Thrive. Next meeting April 15th. [Children and Families Forum - Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian](https://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/working-together/children-and-families-forum/). Discussions included in work poverty and The Promise, which hasn’t moved forward as much as had hoped in third sector. West space site still being developed.
11. Employability forum (Alan): Local Employability Partnership (LEP): presentations from third sector colleagues Impact arts, The Larder and Routes to work about parental support initiative was well received. Some unallocated monies in the draft NOLB investment plan so third sector organisations and other LEP partners were invited at short notice to apply. An Assessment panel will look at this in next couple of weeks. Ann referenced the benefit changes in England announced this week, feeling that Scotland will be indirectly affected. What reasonable adjustments can be made to help employment be more accessible? And how does that sit within the Gateway strategic plan? Alan spoke about the recent Child poverty round table, chaired by Kirsteen Sullivan MP. Orgs who are providing employability support is so vital to so many people, brought to life in case studies to LEP.
12. WL Race Forum (Ann): Chinese Hub have moved into Crofthead centre and exploring additional funding to rent more of the space on a more regular basis to encourage collaboration and access to more groups. Safe space for all, particularly children. Organising South Asian event with the college connecting through food and dance.
13. WL Volunteer Network (Victoria): Guest speaker from Voiceability – independent charity providing advocacy. Discussions continued surrounding proposed volunteer celebration event in June and volunteer recruitment & retainment. Discussion around volunteer fair locations, possibly in June during volunteer’s week. Anyone welcome to join online meetings, last Tuesday of the month, 2pm.
14. Social Enterprise network / forum (Alan): Ongoing dialogue with WLSEN (who technically still exist) however Raymond (Civitas) in his role at the Gateway is going ahead with this, get in touch if you would like to be involved. <https://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/new-social-enterprise-forum/>
15. WL Climate Action Network (Neil): neil@wlcan.scot Ringfenced some funding for young people and would be keen to explore link between climate and employability, referencing apprenticeships, work placements, green skills, colleges and courses. Looking to set up a youth led group. Thanks given to all who attended annual gathering - cross collaboration and positive feedback. 12k awarded to 17 projects and look forward to seeing the impacts. 15k ringfenced for this financial year. Looking to provide climate leadership training. Some events in calendar including Linlithgow climate summit, please get in touch if you want events. Net zero training available. Working on energy Partnerships.
16. Older people’s provider (Tracy): Older people provider and memory support fair at Howden Park Centre was well attended and great feedback. What’s on where guide spring edition now available. You can download from website or hard copies are available.
17. CDT Forum (David): A couple of people have met across WL and next steps are feeling out how to progress, what would be useful. Meeting again end of April.
18. Developing young workforce strategy group: (Angela) First meeting in months last week at short notice. Angela was asked for information from the third sector. If there is anyone providing services in positive destinations and positive pathways? 800 young people in WL not attending school as ASN (assisted support needs) cannot be supported. Third sector do provide a range of services and this could be expanded for inclusion. Age - senior phase however looking at all ages, interventions to support disadvantaged families and young people. Alan suggested this be added on Employability agenda – next meeting April 3rd 1.30pm. Electra spoke about some of the work being done at Impact Arts with young people and Collette mentioned placements supported at the School Bank knowing the value of them to the young people, asking perhaps this is something more orgs can offer? They also work with Enable and Trust project at WL college, Duke of Edinburgh also support volunteering. Neil added that DYW is no longer being funded by Scottish Government. Muiravonside offer placements. How do we join the dots and advertise these opportunities? Angela is aware that some services are not accepting pupils with ASN which can be so disempowering for those young people and their families. Helen spoke about event she’s attending on Monday, to explore concerns about where there are gaps with education and young people. Neil mentioned a partnership between Cedarbank and private firm. Empowering futures – Bathgate academy S3 and above, amazing projects.
19. **AOCB**
20. Aid and Abet – Ann spoke about the work with the justice system. Vow project in Edinburgh lived experience people work with the police to put people in a better direction, couple years hard work, funding now received to run similar project in WL, 2 police identified, 2 volunteered on induction, Livingston. Ann hopes this will help young person. Would it be useful to have mentors come and guest speak. [Aid & Abet – More than a number.](https://www.aidnabet.org/)
21. **Next meeting**

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| 1pm May 29th | 1.30pm July 31st |
| 1.30pm September 11th | 1.30pm November 27th |

**Actions**

1. PDSP Case study request relating to Housing, Public and Community safety, Social work and health, Environment. 2 pages max, photos welcome, Description, and the difference you are making. **Any member to Victoria by April 2nd**
2. PDSPs – get in touch if you wish to be added to the mailing list or would like to be a rep / deputy. [Policy Development Scrutiny Panels (PDSP) - Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian](https://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/working-together/policy-development-scrutiny-panels-pdsp/)
3. Invite Councillor Susan Mangan to future PDSP – Victoria / Louise

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| PDSP | Rep | Org | Deputy |
| Corporate policy and resources | Stuart Barrie | VSGWL | Donald Forrest |
| Education | Simon Henderson | Simply Play |  |
| Housing Services | Silence Chihuri | FJSS |  |
| Public and Community Safety | Helen Davis | WLYAP |  |
| Social Work & Health | Mike Niles | Carers of WL |  |
| Environment and Sustainability | Carole Racionzer | Linlithgow |  |
| Economy Empowerment and Wealth building | Alan McCloskey | VSGWL | Matt Pearce |