

South East Northumberland VCS Network Meeting 25th September 2018

State of the Sector

Activity 1

Your organisation over the last three years:-

Demand for Services

15 increased (11 paid staff, 4 volunteer led) **3** same (2 paid staff, 1 volunteer led)

Capacity to Deliver Services

7 increased (5 paid staff, 2 volunteer led) **10** same (7 paid staff, 3 volunteer led)

Number of Services Provided

14 increased (9 paid staff, 5 volunteer led) **5** same (3 paid staff, 2 volunteer led)

Total Income

5 increased (3 paid staff 2 volunteer led) **7** same (5 paid staff, 2 volunteer led) **5** decreased (4 paid staff 1 volunteer led)

Sense of Financial Security

1 increased (1 paid staff) **9** same (6 paid staff and 3 volunteer led. **2** same/decreased (2 paid staff) **4** decreased (2 paid staff, 2 volunteer led)

Summary

Demand for services has increased for most organisations and whilst some groups have increased capacity to deliver for others there has been no change.

Consequently for the majority they have increased the services they provide but in terms of income there is a fairly equal spread between those that have had an increase, stayed the same and decreased. For most the sense of financial security was the same but more felt it had decreased than increased.

Top three challenges over the next two years for:-

Your organisation

Table 1

- To grow not stay the same
- Maintaining Board of Trustees
- Keeping up with demand

Other challenges

- Recruiting volunteers
- Contractors not taking risks

Table 2

- Recruiting or retaining suitable volunteers e.g. youth
- Communication – in both ways with statutory organisations/funders/stakeholders/ social media/new channels e.g. centralised resource for VCS organisations to avoid conflicting events/fundraising – town, parish, county council, trade establishment
- Increasing demand on services – more wanted for less/same money, staff and volunteers are stretched and becoming more so.

Table 3

- Securing funding/contracts
- Having short term funding/contracts
- Promote organisation to wider audience

Table 4

- Financial uncertainty – funders more target orientated, fear of clawback, level of scrutiny, Brexit impact
- Staff and volunteer retention
- Time capacity

Table 5

- Funding
- Young/all ages volunteers
- Community awareness

Table 6

- Constant funding streams required
- Volunteers
- Competition/Genuine collaboration

Other challenges

- Venue and premises
- Capital funding
- Digital presence
- Participation – sustainability

Summary

The key themes in terms of challenges to organisations over the next two years are recruiting and keeping volunteers, securing contracts/funding, demands on services and community awareness of services.

Top three challenges over the next two years for:-

Beneficiaries/the people you work with

Table 1

- Benefit cuts stopping people accessing services
- Asking people/volunteers to do more /too much

Table 2

- Financial Exclusion – austerity, welfare benefits, impact on mental and physical well being from poverty, debt – problems associated with financial exclusion.
- Increased social isolation – social problems exacerbating health and care issues
- Reduced services – transport, social care, clubs which feed the top two issues

Table 3

- Less services/support
- High threshold to access services
- Information about services/support

Other challenges

- Universal Credit
- Accessing other benefits
- Job Centre Plus

Table 4

- Accessibility of mental health services
- Cost and access to job opportunities
- Ending of projects – what's next for people?

Table 5

- Involvement
- Reduce social isolation
- Community awareness

Table 6

- Cuts to other services/access to services/ changes to service policy/ staff moving on.
- Mobility issues – big county, access in rural areas
- Finance – poverty food/activities

Other challenges

- Not everyone can access the support they need, do they know where to go?
- Online can be difficult – IT can be a barrier

Summary

The key themes in terms of challenges to beneficiaries/ the people you work with include financial exclusion, access to and reduced services and support, social isolation and awareness of support.

Top three challenges over the next two years for:-

Voluntary and Community Sector

Table 1

- Financial stability (Brexit/Big Lottery/Council/European funding)
- Funding filtered through bigger organisations
- Partnership working (organisations withdraw when times are hard)

Other challenges

- The unknown: Brexit/European funding

Table 2

- Funding – complexity, length, availability, amounts of money

- Brexit /Devolution – ESIF funding removals, impact of jobs losses/austerity on the economy with such big infrastructure changes on the horizon
- More ask from charities and squeezing people who already contribute - donations

Table 3

- Greater demand/more pressure
- Funding/resource
- Linking with local employers

Table 4

- Attracting new visitors/customers
- Local communities disposable income
- Buildings and facilities

Table 5

- No time to volunteer/busy lives
- Communication awareness
- Promote benefits of volunteering

Table 6

- Funding competition - uncertainty where is funding coming from
- Training needs for staff to support future clients/communities with challenges =extra support (funding for social prescriptions)
- Issues of demand outstripping supply i.e. NHS staff

Summary

The key themes in terms of challenges to the voluntary and community sector include access to funding (impact of Brexit), volunteers and increased pressures on resources from increased demands

In what ways do you feel the VCS Assembly can support you with issues and concerns?

Table 1

- Board members (with skills)- maybe a board/organisation meeting
- Networking/linking between organisations

Table 2

- Training e.g. trustees, communications – twitter/facebook for people who don't know. Free/reduced prices – e.g. audit function

- Improved communication with external agencies – NCC ,NHS, Healthwatch, Ageing Well Boards
- More support for government legislation – GDPR, Auto pension enrolment etc.
- Review remit/reach of NCVA to help and support real grass roots organisations. Question about the capacity of NCVA from the Commission to be able to do the real hard work with very small charities.

Table 3

- Having more partnership events
- Ways to share experience
- Encourage users to access support networks

Table 5

- Share ideas/network
- Promotion of ideas e.g. volunteering, fundraising
- Central resource
- Support for groups

Table 6

- Training/support/ sector stronger with policies i.e. GDPR
- Funding
- Promotion of all services/groups and marketing
- Promoting opportunities to work together for people's wellbeing

Summary

The key themes in terms of the ways the VCS Assembly can support organisations include networks, sharing ideas, partnership working, marketing and training.