



## Scottish Third Sector Research Forum meeting

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2020: 1:30 – 3:30 pm

Zoom meeting

### Minutes

#### **In attendance:**

Steven Marwick (ESS), Jane Marryat (ESS), Kat Macapagal (ESS), Matthew Linning (Volunteer Scotland), Andrew Dey (ACOSVO), Kerry Musselbrook (Iriss), Sarah Weakley (Policy Scotland), Ruth McKenna (Waverley Care), Louise Meikleham (OSCR), Ilse McKinnon (SCVO), Steve Grozier (SCVO), Dinah Aitken (SMC), Laura Robertson (Poverty Alliance), Lucy Mulvagh (ALLIANCE), Rebecca McGregor (Inclusion Scotland), Cathy Bulley (Queen Margaret University), Mark Meiklejohn (SG), Jane Cullingworth (VSSN), Karen McArdle (University of Aberdeen), Julia Green (Speaker)

#### **Apologies:**

Liz Ravalde (SG), Shubhanna Hussain-Ahmed (Coalition of Carers), Garth Reid (Speaker), Allison Mathews (NLCF), Hazel Robertson

#### **Welcome and introductions**

1. Steven welcomed everyone to the Zoom meeting.

#### **Minutes and matters arising**

2. The minutes of the previous meeting (Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020) were approved. Some actions have been postponed due to lockdown and will be taken forward and revisited by members as soon as possible, including the Participatory Research subgroup action to produce an infographic and Liz's initial exploration of Scottish Government support for third sector organisations' research work.
3. **Action: Kat** to upload March meeting minute to website.  
**Participatory action subgroup** to produce infographic when time allows.  
**Liz** to give update on SG support for third sector organisations research work when she has more information

#### **COVID-19, the implications for third sector research and the role of the forum**

4. Members split into breakout groups to discuss what is happening in third sector research at this time, and what role the TSRF could usefully play.
5. In summary the groups fed back the following points:
  - There is a general sense that there is a lot of useful research going on in the third sector, but there is a lack of coordination
  - There is a need to prioritise research so that demands on third sector and service users participation in research are manageable and to ensure that it can be useful in the longer term

- There are some concerns about whether current research is meeting proper ethical standards
  - Research in the beginning addressed immediate needs (e.g. resilience and wellbeing fund made available), but there is now a need to look at medium-term and long-term research and ask different questions – for example around third sector learning and solutions.
  - Where are the gaps in current research and who can the forum collaborate with moving forward (e.g. funders, academics)
  - The forum can have a role in coordinating and signposting to useful research, particularly on vulnerable groups that are not being heard.
6. **Action: Kat** to update TSRF webpage with links to useful places where research has been published and synthesised. **Forum members** to share any further relevant links.

### **Input from Julia Green – update on Public Health Scotland and Knowledge Services**

7. Julia talked about Public Health Scotland’s planning around the development of a Knowledge and Research Hub that will respond to Covid-19. The hub was planned to support different health reform efforts at regional and local level, led by Public Health Scotland.
8. There is already some existing work by Public Health Scotland supporting the development of a Knowledge and Research Hub. These are: a business case for an institutional repository that aims to make public health research more discoverable, and the development of a public health evidence network within Public Health Scotland.
9. This initial planning around the Knowledge and Research hub has now evolved to respond and coordinate Covid-19 public health research to improve knowledge development and sharing.
10. The Public Health Scotland hub working group welcomes suggestions and contributions from the third sector that might help in coordinating and managing current health research in Scotland.
11. There was discussion around what role the third sector can play to help with this initiative.
12. **Action: ESS to coordinate Forum members** to share ideas on how to best collaborate with Public Health Scotland on the Knowledge and Research Hub and other research activities.

### **Sarah Weakley, Policy Scotland**

13. Sarah talked about Policy Scotland’s [‘Urgently Needed Insights’](#) project, which aims to gather and publish commentary and knowledge in response to Covid-19. The project is not a research repository, rather, it is a space geared towards commentary and knowledge mobilisation, which is up on their website. The website is an opportunity for policy discussion between academics, policymakers and practitioners.

14. Policy Scotland is asking for third sector to give their response to Covid-19 for instance, on issues like community resilience. They are asking for blog posts on Covid-19 responses, as well as contributions to evidence round-ups that they can post on their website.
15. Sarah also talked about holding the joint Policy Scotland and TSRF seminar series online. She is inviting forum members to suggest potential topics for the seminars.
16. Karen raised that there is a need to talk about how vulnerable groups are excluded from policy-making in the 'new normal'. Sarah said this might be a potential seminar topic.
17. **Action: Forum members** to send their potential blogs, evidence round-up contributions and seminar ideas to Sarah.
18. **Action: Sarah and Jane** to plan joint Policy Scotland and TSRF webinar series.
19. Steven launched a quick Zoom poll to get a sense of the where members think the TSRF could usefully add value. 17 members voted.
  - Does the TSRF have a role to make third sector research 'discoverable'? Results: 14 Yes, 3 Maybe
  - Does the TSRF have a role to coordinate good practice about Covid-19 research? Results - 13 Yes, 3 Maybe
  - Does the TSRF have a role to make research usable? Results: 11 Yes, 6 Maybe

### **Conference planning discussion**

20. Jane talked about initial ideas on making the TSRF conference in February an online event given the ongoing uncertainty about face to face events. The event could be done over a week, and this could be an opportunity for participants to be creative with their online presentations.
21. The forum members agreed that planning the conference online was a good idea. Members were enthusiastic about the different formats that presentations can be delivered in, such as films and podcasts.
22. Forum members who will be holding similar large events online in the next few months said they are happy to feedback on what they might learn from setting up these events.
23. There was a suggestion to keep tabs on the potential conference topics that will come up in the months leading up the February.

*10 minute break*

### 24. **Cathy (Queen Margaret University)**

Queen Margaret University awarded over £92,000 in Covid-19 research funding in rapid coronavirus research funding from the Scottish Government. The University's two research projects aim to inform current health protection practice and policy in the provision of quality care, in health service settings and the wider community, in the context of Covid-19.

- **Research 1:** Research into the impacts of Covid-19 restrictions on loneliness amongst asylum seekers and refugees,
- **Research 2:** (Led by Cathy) QMU's Physiotherapy area is leading an interdisciplinary team of researchers from the School of Health Sciences who have been granted £28,326 for work on supporting recovery from illness experienced in isolation due to a pandemic.
- More info on the research projects [here](#).
- Cathy would like to know if any forum members want to be involved in the stakeholder group she is putting together for her research.

**Action: Forum members** interested in the QMU research and stakeholder group to get in touch with Cathy

### **Ethics – what do we know about ethical approaches taken by third Sector in Scotland and elsewhere**

25. Steven recounted the subgroup discussion around ethics from last meeting, where the members decided to pull together resources on ethics that the forum can signpost to.
26. **Action: Forum members** to share ethical framework resources to **Jane** for collation

### **Member speaker: Ruth McKenna, Waverley Care**

27. Ruth talked through the Waverley Care and Scottish Trans Alliance research: 'Exploring trans and non-binary access to sexual health services.' Both organisations recognised the lack of evidence around trans (including non-binary) sexual health needs, even as they are globally disproportionately affected by poor sexual health.
28. The research project asked: What are the experiences of trans people accessing sexual health services in Scotland? How could sexual health services better meet the need of trans people?
29. The peer-research project was designed by two trans peer engagement officers. The research methods used were a national survey with approximately 300 trans people (the largest in Scotland), focus groups and interviews with 32 trans people, and interviews with 8 NHS sexual health practitioners.
30. The survey findings showed insights on demographics and experience of sexual health services. For instance, approximately 60% of respondents are based in the Central Belt, 75% were aged 18-34. As for sexual health services, approximately 40% had visited sexual health clinics in the last 2 years, and 60% reported positive experiences.
31. The research also includes qualitative findings that takes into account the barriers and facilitators to accessing healthcare, ranging from individual, social and institutional barriers, among others. Some barriers identified were fear at the individual level, and transphobia and austerity at the policy level.

32. In terms of next steps: The report launch has been paused due to the coronavirus pandemic, but they are planning a digital launch in late summer/early autumn this year. They are also producing practitioner and community resources this year.
33. There was additional discussion about the barriers among trans people in rural communities to access sexual health services.

*Cathy, Lucy and Andy left the meeting*

### **Research updates**

#### 34. **Ilse (SCVO)**

- SCVO has been adding reports and resources to their Covid-19 evidence library.
- They are pulling together results and analysis from all the information they collected from early data on how Covid-19 has affected the sector.
- They are also planning to put out a report about the financial implications of the pandemic on the sector.

**Action: Forum members** to send relevant resources to Steve Grozier (Ilse maternity cover) for SCVO evidence library.

#### 35. **Louise (OSCR)**

- OSCR has published their report drawn from a survey of around 5,000 Scottish charities on the impact of Covid-19. The full report with useful breakdown of the data is available [here](#).

#### 36. **Matthew Linning (Volunteer Scotland)**

Covid-19 – Our main focus is on collecting intelligence and research data to help understand the contribution of volunteering during the pandemic and how its impact can be optimised:

- Media - systematic collection of press and social media articles from mid-March to date relating to volunteering and Covid-19. Our Excel spreadsheet with full text is shared with Scottish Government on a weekly basis.
- Surveys – engaging with partner surveys on the impact of Covid-19: OSCR, Scottish Volunteering Forum, Third Sector Interface Network. Volunteer Scotland is also commissioning Ipsos-Mori to run a series of volunteering related questions in their 1,000 adult omnibus survey in Scotland in June.
- Secondary data – capturing relevant data from YouGov, Ipsos-Mori and ONS – which are issuing research bulletins on a weekly basis. We are also working with the Scottish Government on their portals to relevant secondary data.
- Papers – Volunteer Scotland has produced working papers on:
  - Scotland’s volunteering response to Covid-19 (1 April)
  - A review of the local volunteering registration process during Covid-19 (10 April)

- The mutual aid phenomenon in Scotland (20 April)
  - Analysis of the volunteer sign-ups to Scotland Cares (5 May)
- Research – VS is part of a UK-wide research bid: “Mobilising Voluntary Action in the four UK jurisdictions: Learning from today, prepared for tomorrow”. We are also engaging with Glasgow Caledonian University, Policy Scotland and GCPH on ethnographic research on mutual aid in Scotland.

**Action: Kat** to promote above in newsletter.

### 37. **Rebecca (Inclusion Scotland)**

Two new publications from Inclusion Scotland:

- ‘Services for who? - the experiences of disabled people with other characteristics when accessing services’ - This report is the culmination of a 2-year DRILL funded research project which explored the experiences of disabled people with other characteristics when accessing services. (The DRILL parliamentary reception has been cancelled because of the pandemic). The report can be viewed [here](#).
- The initial findings from a survey of over 800 disabled people and their carers/supporters, about their experiences during the Covid-19 crisis has been published. The report can be viewed [here](#).

**Action: Kat** to promote above in newsletter

### 38. **Laura (Poverty Alliance)**

- They are running [a webinar series](#), ‘Build Back Better’ on the impact of Covid-19 on poverty and inequality as we look forward to moving out of lockdown. More information [here](#).
- Published two briefings on findings from surveys and consultations with member organisations: See 6 April briefing [here](#), and 2 June briefing [here](#).
- Their research project on Universal Credit will be published on 29<sup>th</sup> June. The Joseph Rowntree foundation (who funded the research) will host a webinar on 2 July. Invites for the webinar are still to go out.

**Action: Kat** to promote webinar in newsletter.

### 39. **Dinah (Salvesen Mindroom Centre)**

- Salvesen Mindroom Centre (SMC) has consulted with parents, carers and professionals as well as working with researchers at Universities of Edinburgh and Reading to produce a Back to School Toolkit – with the aim of supporting children and young people with learning difficulties, and their families, to prepare for a return to school whatever that may look like. We plan to evaluate the use and application of the Toolkit after schools have started back up.
- SMC has joined with our partners in the Salvesen Mindroom Research Centre (SMRC) in a project called Learning About Neurodiversity in Schools – the LEANS project. The aim is to support teachers to discuss with and teach primary school children on the topic of neurodiversity. Please join the LEANS mailing list to find out more about this project. [leans-project@mlist.is.ed.ac.uk](mailto:leans-project@mlist.is.ed.ac.uk)

- They are also planning to evaluate how the nature of their services have changed in Covid-19 later in the year.

40. **Jane C. (VSSN)**

- VSSN and NCVO will be partnering to host a virtual conference - 'Times Like These': Researching civil society responses to and recovery from COVID-19' - to be hosted digitally across 7th and 8th September (details below). This eConference will include two plenary sessions, featuring a host of expert speakers reflecting on research into and experience of how the COVID-19 crisis has affected the voluntary sector and volunteering in the UK and around the world. It will also feature four panel sessions, specifically reflecting on what COVID-19 has meant for philanthropy, mutual aid, volunteering, and voluntary and community organisations. The exact format of each of these four sessions will depend on the proposals that we receive to participate in them (see below). Further details are below. Registration and more information [here](#).
- VSSN is also doing monthly online peer support sessions targeted at new researchers.
- VSSN will be launching an initiative to create a repository of Covid-19 research specific to the voluntary sector and voluntary action.
- Jane C. is doing research at the University of Glasgow looking at the experience of disabled people during Covid-19 and is asking members to get in touch if they are doing similar research or are interested in the subject.

**Action: Kat** to promote conference in newsletter.

41. **Lucy (The ALLIANCE - shared via email)**

- My Support My Choice: People's experience of social care and Self-directed Support in Scotland Partnership – mixed-methods research project between the ALLIANCE and Self Directed Support Scotland (SDSS). Heard from 637 people around Scotland who access SDS/social care or have applied for it in the previous 12 month period, via a survey (online, paper, telephone), 1:1 interviews and focus groups. National and thematic reports (focused on people with learning disabilities, Black and minority ethnic people, people with lived experience of mental health problems, blind and partially sighted people, and women as users of SDS) expected to be published in July-August 2020. Local area reports (and local feedback sessions) – this activity has been indefinitely postponed until local authorities/health and social care partnerships are able to focus beyond Covid-19 emergency and phased recovery activity.
- Adverse Childhood Experiences Peer Research exploratory study – partnership work between the ALLIANCE, Public Health Scotland, Strathclyde University and Scottish Homelessness Network – asking people who identify as having ACEs what a full peer research project on what works/doesn't to mitigate/stop ACEs should look like (methodology and questions). Transcription and analysis phase – report expected July/August 2020.

- The ALLIANCE has been asked to sit on the Scottish Government's Covid-19 Mental Health Research Advisory Group. More information [here](#).

42. **Liz (Scottish Government - via email)**

- We have moved our focus entirely to work relating to the Covid-19 pandemic, providing analytical support to the Third Sector Unit in a range of areas including analysis of TSRF and Wellbeing Fund applications and awards, third sector resilience, formal and informal volunteering, and looking ahead to the role of the third sector in post-pandemic recovery. The work we previously had planned relating to the third sector has mostly been put on hold while we focus on the current crisis.
- **Request:** I am compiling and analysing all the evidence that comes into us in relation to the third sector and Covid-19, with a particular interest in any reports and publications by or about the third sector in Scotland on:
  1. The impact of Covid-19 on TSOs
  2. The third sector response to the crisis and challenges faced (and how these have been overcome)
  3. The concerns, needs and ideas of TSOs for the road ahead and the role that TSOs can play
  4. The needs of service users, particularly those from vulnerable groups

If any TSRF members have produced or know of any literature that might be useful, I would be very grateful if they would forward it on to me at [liz.ravalde@gov.scot](mailto:liz.ravalde@gov.scot)

**Action: Jane/Kat** to email Liz's request to members

43. **Kerry (Iriss – via email)**

- ( Not for TSRF newsletter as it is not published) Iriss has written: Transforming services for people using digital: mapping activities and exploring experiences - commissioned by Scottish Government and COSLA. The overall aim of the project was to undertake a mapping exercise to capture cross-sector digital service transformation activity in Scotland.

Objectives:

- Map high level work programmes of national delivery partners and other key stakeholders related to digital service transformation
- Contribute insight and learning about current cross-sector practice in supporting digital service transformation in Scotland
- Identify a Target Operating Model – or next steps en route – designed with and for delivery partners and that stakeholders can support.

Outcomes:

- Improved understanding of current cross-sector practice in supporting digital service transformation and opportunities for change, improvement and collaboration
- Increased awareness and clarity about who is contributing to which areas of activity

Key third sector orgs, like SCVO, the ALLIANCE and CCPS were part of this, with key roles to play, along with others.

- We have other publications - evidence summaries in our Iriss Insights series, and ESS outlines, but these are lit review/secondary research, and not necessarily of relevance to the third sector.
  - Service response to domestic abuse during COVID-19  
The evidence presented below reflects the developing guidelines and recommendations that statutory and third sector organisations are producing with regards to domestic abuse and COVID-19.  
<https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/esss-outlines/service-response-domestic-abuse-during-covid-19> by Andrea Bocioaga, Published 11 May 2020
  - Covid-19: Stress, anxiety, and social care worker's mental health  
We searched for academic research and grey literature using a wide range of search terms including social care, social workers, stress, burnout, anxiety, mental health, resilience, health and social care, wellbeing and Covid-19. As Covid-19 is a new phenomenon the quality of evidence in the available literature is relatively low but does contain valuable observations and suggestions for professionals working in social care. <https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/esss-outlines/covid-19-stress-anxiety-and-social-care-workers-mental-health>

44. **Shubhanna (Coalition of Carers via email)**

- We have been mainly focusing on supporting Carers Centres and carers with up to date briefings on what COVID19 and lockdown will mean for unpaid carers across Scotland.
- However, in partnership with the other National Carer Orgs, we have put together a short paper on the key asks from unpaid carers as to what they would like to see happen (in terms of support) as we come out of lockdown. Here is a brief summary of it on our twitter thread <https://twitter.com/CarersCoalition/status/1270290960203816962?s=20>
- Discussion Paper on Life Leaving Lockdown attached to minutes and for newsletter.

**Action: Kat** to promote above in newsletter

45. **Jane (Evaluation Support Scotland)**

ESS has created a [Covid-19 page](#) on their website to support third sector organisations evaluate new or changed services. It has many new resources, key messages and learning gathered from recent webinars. All ESS services are now being delivered online.

**AOCB**

46. Jane M. shared that ESS is commissioning a new website which will include a redesign of the TSRF webpage. This will be launched in late September/early October.
47. **Next meeting:** 9 September 2020, via Zoom.