



## Scottish Third Sector Research Forum meeting

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021: 10:30 – 1 pm

Zoom meeting

### Minutes

#### In attendance:

Steven Marwick (ESS), Jane Marryat (ESS), Kat Macapagal (ESS), Amy Baker (Cattanach Trust), Jane Cullingworth (VSSN), Steve Grozier (SCVO), Matthew Linning (Volunteer Scotland), Mark Meiklejohn (SG), Louise Meikleham (OSCR), Karen McArdle (University of Aberdeen), Rebecca McGregor (Inclusion Scotland), Amy Woodhouse (Children in Scotland), Liz Ravalde (SG), Cassy Rutherford (The Robertson Trust), Jennifer Goff (Waverley Care), Cathy Bulley (Queen Margaret University)

#### Apologies:

Lucy Mulvagh (ALLIANCE), Allison Mathews (NLCF), Sarah Weakley (Policy Scotland), Shubhanna Hussain-Ahmed (Coalition of Carers), , Dinah Aitken (SMC), Chris Harkins (GCPH), Alasdair Rutherford (University of Stirling), Andrew Dey (ACOSVO), Amy Calder (YouthLink Scotland), Elaine Wilson (Corra Foundation). Kyle Taggart (University of Glasgow), Fiona McHardy (Poverty Alliance), Kerry Musselbrook (Iriss).

#### Welcome and introductions

1. Steven welcomed everyone to the Zoom meeting.

#### Minutes and matters arising

2. The minutes of the previous meeting (Tuesday 1 December 2020) were approved.

**Action:** Kat to upload minutes on website.

3. Steven briefly talked about the topic of online research which has been discussed in previous meetings. Jane M. is continuing to gather insights from previous forum meetings, joint Policy Scotland-TSRF events, and the TSRF conference. The forum will have a more substantive discussion of the topic in the next forum meeting.

**Action: Members** to email Jane M. if they have any insights to add to the topic of online research.

#### Post conference feedback and next steps

4. Jane M. presented feedback from the conference which was generally positive. She talked through the following highlights:
  - 144 participants joined the morning plenary session of the 178 booked.
  - In total nearly 200 people had booked however there were a few cancellations in the week before the conference.
  - 100 delegates joined the afternoon plenary session and there were 80 remaining at the end of the session. Several left when we went into breakout rooms which our technical support said was common on Zoom.
  - Overwhelmingly, delegates rated the morning, and afternoon plenary sessions and workshops very informative or informative.
  - All the workshops were well attended (122 delegates joining workshop the first and second workshops sessions).
  - The conference outcomes were met, with a majority of participants agreeing they had increased or reinforced their knowledge of good practice in ethical third sector research.
  - 81% of conference evaluation respondents said they would use the evidence guide, 11% said maybe, while 4% said they were not sure.
  - Things TSRF may consider for future work (noted from conference):
    - There's a role for TSRF in promoting the benefits of participatory research. Might be completing previous subgroup work on participatory research or signposting to toolkits and advice e.g. <https://www.dur.ac.uk/socialjustice/toolkits/>
    - Set-piece and in-depth presentations on a specific piece of research with themed aspects (such as youth research, online platform and LGBT cohort) would be very helpful for TSRF members/quarterly meetings.
    - Explore the balance of care for researcher resilience (especially if they are the practitioner) and setting boundaries.
    - Explore researcher wellbeing as well as participant safety.
    - Further discussion about getting informed consent should be a topic of a TSRF event.
    - Digital – the pros and cons – what worked well and can continue beyond COVID, how to keep people safe, ability to use different platforms within their organisations, meeting people's diverse needs.
    - Policy influence – revisit this subject in more detail and time for conversation and sharing experiences.
    - Exploration of the tension between academics and third sector.
5. Members who attended the conference said the conference went really well and fed back the following points:
  - They liked the mix of presentations and videos for the morning plenary.
  - They thought the workshops were fantastic, and it was a great opportunity to network with other researchers in the sector.

- The technical aspects of the conference were organised well, speakers and workshops kept to time, and more participants were able to join because it was online.
  - The online conference was able to replicate the welcoming atmosphere that the TSRF conference is known for.
6. Jane M. told members that the recordings of the speaker presentations and slides for some of the workshops are now up on the [event page](#).

### **TSRF guide to applying ethical research principles**

7. Steven briefly recapped why the forum created the TSRF ethics guide. The document was presented for consultation during the afternoon plenary of the conference, where it received positive feedback.
8. The guide is still out for consultation until 30th April 2021 so that it can be finalised in June 2021. Based on positive feedback from the conference, we are not anticipating major revisions will be needed.
9. Members split into breakout groups to discuss ideas about what to do next in terms of ethics and research that might complement the guide, based on some insights we gained from the conference.
10. In summary the following points were agreed:
- **Action ESS:** Keep the guide 'live' so that it can be regularly updated with an appendix to relevant links (e.g. DRILL resources).
  - **Action ESS:** Set up a webpage where we can signpost to materials, such as other guides or consent forms. once guide is launched.
  - **Action ESS:** Hold an event in 12 months' time to see how people have used the resource.
  - **Action all members:** Identify case studies to exemplify the guide. This could include specific areas (e.g. researching with children) and case studies about things going wrong and what can be learned
  - Explore further the idea of a community of practice. However this requires a lot of work so we might want to link to existing communities of practice instead eg Social Research Association. Jane C shared info on a Manchester CoP that provides a model. **Action: Members** to discuss further once the guide is finalised and launched.
  - **Action ESS:** Set up a new **TSRF sub group** to explore challenges around data sharing – that includes sharing quantitative data and sharing / publishing qualitative data.
  - Other specific issues for further discussion either within the Forum or more widely include the issue of incentives, online research and the ethics of managing funders that want changes to research findings

11. In terms of communications, members pointed to the importance of making sure the guide is distributed and engaged with by members of the sector.
12. Members also discussed a proposal to create a logo or badge that organisations might use to say their research is in line with the TSRF ethics guide research principles. Members liked this idea in theory but recognised the practical challenges including the fact the guide is not really a set of standards and around ownership, management and monitoring of signing up to this badge. We agreed to revisit this idea at the event in 12 months' time

**Action: Members** to get in touch with **Steven/Jane** for ideas about promoting the guide, gathering relevant resources and case studies

*10 minute break*

### **Showing of the TSRF film**

13. Kat shared the [TSRF film](#) which was launched during the conference. She also shared the new member profiles added on the TSRF homepage and pointed to the TSRF conference event page.

**Action: Members** to help promote the film where possible.

**Action: Members** to email **Kat** with brief text for their member profile on homepage if they haven't done this yet.

### **Amy Woodhouse presentation about the research undertaken by Children in Scotland**

14. Amy gave a presentation about Children in Scotland (CiS) and the kind of research that the organisation does. CiS is the National Network Organisation for Improving Children's Lives who have over 500 member organisations across Scotland, a large proportion of which are third sector organisations. Their strategic priorities include championing the participation and inclusion of children and young people, working to ensure that support for children, young people and their families is appropriate, available and accessible, challenging inequalities, and leading and developing the children's sector workforce.
15. CiS aims to embed research within their wider work through a research cycle that includes understanding needs, testing solutions, influencing policy and legislation, supporting implementation and evaluating impact. In terms of methods, CiS often uses participatory action research, peer research,

digital engagement, and qualitative research. They have also increased research focus on early years (3-25 years).

16. Some examples of CiS research projects for 2020/21 are:

- Diversity in Teaching – children and young people’s views on diversity in Scottish organisation
- Living Museum Project – this is about access to museums
- Emerging Minds and Music & Mental Health SIRG – looking at the impact of live music experience with young people
- Independent Evaluation of Life Changes Trust Home and Belonging Programme – commissioned work to evaluate a housing programme
- Participation Through the Pandemic (Young Start) – a new 15-month peer research project exploring young people’s experiences of participation and engagement activity through the pandemic. They will be recruiting 6 peer researchers for the project. It will begin in April 2021 and will be using a case study approach.

17. For further information about CiS’s work, see:

- [Meaningful Participation and Engagement of Children and Young People. Children in Scotland’s Principles and Guidelines](#)
- [CiS Projects Page](#)
- [Digital engagement: getting it right with children and young people video](#)

**Action:** Kat to include brief summary of Amy’s presentation in newsletter.

### **Research updates from members**

18. **Volunteer Scotland** (Matthew)

- VS has analysed volunteering engagement in OSCR’s survey no. 2 of the impact of COVID-19 on Scottish charities (Nov 2020). Publication will be coordinated with the release by OSCR of their detailed report.
- See presentation on [COVID-19: Mutual aid volunteering in Scotland](#)
- As part of the study ‘Mobilising Voluntary Action across the UK’, The Scottish Government will be issuing in March 2021 a detailed survey on the impact of COVID-19 on volunteering in Scotland. It is targeted at Third Sector Interfaces, local authorities and Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs). Any support from the TSRF members in sharing the survey link to VIOs would be most welcome.

**Action:** Kat to include in newsletter.

19. **Steve (SCVO)**

The longitudinal project that SCVO are working on in collaboration with stakeholders is scheduled to be awarded next week. This project will examine how changes in the operating environment, such as Covid-19 and

Brexit, impact on third sector organisations in Scotland. It focuses on providing real-time data about how those changes are impacting organisations' finances, operations and services, and staff and volunteers. The data will allow us to explore the impact on the sector, but also how that impact varies across the sector. The project will run for 12 months.

Thank you to forum members for recommendations for freelance researchers. That contract will also be awarded next week. SCVO are developing a suite of organisational personas to deepen our understanding of third sector organisations in Scotland. This work is designed to allow SCVO to understand the issues that different organisations in the sector are facing and prioritise our policy work accordingly. The aim of this research project, *Organisational personas: Funding and Partnerships*, is to explore two of those important issues: funding and partnerships.

20. **Jane C. (University of Glasgow/VSSN)**

- [VSSN](#) is hosting the annual **Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research Conference** in partnership with the Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC), on **6-7 September 2021** at Aston University, Birmingham\*. The conference has a dedicated stream for new researchers.

This year's theme is '**Leadership, Diversity, and Civil Society**' and will provide a unique opportunity for academics, policy makers and practitioners from the UK and further afield to come together to share findings and discuss the implications of research for the sector's future as a site of social leadership and social justice.

The [Call for Papers: 2021](#) is now out. Deadline for abstracts May 7 – please submit [here](#).

\*Meeting in person to be kept under review and moved online if needed due to coronavirus restrictions

- The University of Glasgow and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine have been researching the experiences of disabled people in the pandemic. The findings have highlighted the central role that the third sector has played in disabled people's lives. A pre-print of our article, *Disabled People in Britain and the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic*, is available [here](#) and a blog based on the article is available from [Policy Scotland](#).
- I have just produced a [summary](#) of my PhD research, *Democratic Governance Through Intermediary Bodies: A Case Study of Third Sector Interfaces in Scotland*. I set out to explore the nature of an intermediary body's active participation in governance networks in Scotland (such as Community Planning Partnerships and Integration Joint Boards). The research considered if there was an impact on the independence of the intermediary body and what the involvement meant for its relationships

with the broader third sector. The research exposed a fundamental challenge: how do civil society actors participate in democratic governance while maintaining both autonomy from the state and legitimacy with civil society? Recommendations from the findings are that intermediary bodies actively assert their independence, maintain ongoing engagement with constituents, advocate rather than mediate, that participative structures be designed collaboratively by civil society and state actors and that the state not intervene in civil society infrastructure.

**Action:** Kat to include in newsletter.

21. **Rebecca (Inclusion Scotland)**

In November/December 2020, Inclusion Scotland conducted a survey on the Scottish Government's Fairer Scotland for Disabled People Delivery Plan to find out whether disabled people thought there had been any progress since the plan launched in 2016. We published a report on our findings that is available on our website - <https://inclusionScotland.org/disabled-peoples-views-of-the-fairer-scotland-for-disabled-people-delivery-plan/>

In December, Inclusion Scotland published research that we jointly commissioned with the Alliance exploring what incorporation of the Convention on the Rights of Disabled People means and what model of incorporation would work best for disabled people in Scotland. This research informs the ongoing work of the National Taskforce on Human Rights Leadership which will make recommendations on the legal framework for human rights in Scotland. The report is available on our website - <https://inclusionScotland.org/incorporation-of-united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-people-with-disabilities-crpd-into-scots-law/>

**Action:** Kat to include in newsletter.

22. **Cathy (QMU)**

QMU has been working on two Covid-19 related research funded by the Chief Scientist Office. While the research projects are finished the CSO has yet to publish them.

- Alison Strang from QMU has been working with the third sector on a study about the impact of Covid-19 on refugees. See report here: <https://news.stv.tv/north/refugees-in-scotland-struggling-with-isolation-during-pandemic?top>
- Cathy has been working on research about people's support needs during the pandemic which includes policy recommendations.

23. **Jen (Waverley Care)**

Waverley Care is gathering research through an online survey about the access of people from African communities to sexual health services and

HIV testing across Scotland. They are also doing focus groups with leaders and patients across Scotland alongside the survey.

They are also finishing their peer research interviews evaluating their HIV support project in Glasgow city centre, which supports people diagnosed with HIV or are at risk with HIV.

24. **Amy B. (Cattanach)**

Cattanach's current research projects include:

- Being Bold: Building Budgets for Children's Wellbeing with Katherine Trebeck

Dr Katherine Trebeck was commissioned by Cattanach, Children in Scotland and the Carnegie Trust to research what a Wellbeing Budget in Scotland might look like through the lens of children. This is in its final processing stages and will be ready for publication later in the month. Amy Baker has produced summary documents on policies related to children and young people in Scotland. These will be published later in the year.

- Big Ideas Vote- as part of the Action Project Commissioned by the David Hume Institute

This started with an initial scoping report by Amy Baker (Cattanach), with desk-based research on what matters to children and young people in Scotland, the UK and the World.

In early January, commissioned Children's Parliament and the Scottish Youth Parliament to encourage children to share their ideas for concrete ideas that would improve the future of Scotland. You can find more about what the children and young people said, and the linkage of their other streams by looking on the Action Project website:

<https://www.davidhumeinstitute.com/tap-conversations>

- First 1001 Days Movement

Working for Babies: Lockdown Lessons from Local Symptoms and Babies in Lockdown As part of the First 1001 Days Movement, Cattanach provided funding for research demonstrating the disproportionate damage COVID-19 has done to local support systems supporting 0-2s. The reports can be read here:

Working for Babies- <https://www.cattanach.org.uk/media/1419/210115-f1001d-working-for-babies-report-final-v10-compressed.pdf>

Babies in Lockdown- <https://babiesinlockdown.info/download-our-report/>

- Cattanach has commissioned two scoping papers ahead of the RSE Conference on Childhood:
  1. Ingela Naumann assessing the quality of early learning and childcare in Scotland
  2. Gabriella Conte analysing the costs of early learning and childcare

**Action:** **Kat** to include in newsletter.

25. **Karen (University of Aberdeen)**

Karen has just finished research in Fife which involved 154 interviews with vulnerable and disabled people about their experiences of the pandemic. She worked with 35 voluntary sector organisations to provide the framework for analysis of the information collected.

Karen is also doing an evaluation of a project in England which includes a literature review of arts and mental health research. This is a working document that Karen is happy to share this document with members who are interested.

26. **Liz (Scottish Government)**

SG has just finished an evaluation of parts of the emergency funding granted in March 2020 which will be published soon. They have evaluated the outcomes and process of the Wellbeing Fund Open and the Small Grants Funds applications.

SG is continuing to work with Volunteer Scotland on the survey about the impact of Covid-19 on volunteering. They are also working with SCVO on their longitudinal survey (mentioned in SCVO update above).

27. **Cassy (The Robertson Trust)**

The Robertson Trust has commissioned The Poverty Alliance to look at the links between poverty, education and work pathways for young people in Scotland. See the report here:

<https://www.therobertsontrust.org.uk/news-and-blogs/new-report-the-poverty-related-attainment-gap-evidence-review/>

They are also doing two internal research work: 1) looking at the impact of Covid-19 on individuals, communities and organisations, and 2) researching the needs of the sector to inform the trust's strategies going forward, apart from giving grants.

**Action: Kat** to include report in newsletter.

28. **Louise (OSCR)**

**Release of detailed data – November impact of COVID-19 on charities survey**

The full data tables from OSCR's second survey looking at the impact of COVID-19 on charities are being made available for further research and analysis. The survey closed on 15<sup>th</sup> November with the main findings published on 15<sup>th</sup> December. Over 2,500 charities responded to the survey, representing a cross section of the Scottish charity sector. Since then OSCR has carried out additional analysis of the detailed data to provide a more informed picture of the impact of the pandemic on different groups. The data tables for the November survey provide figures for subgroups including charity age, income, staff, region, scale, income source, legal form and sector. We hope the data will allow others to benefit from this insight and understand the challenges charities are facing. More information is available here: <https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-charities/surveys/>

**Open questions analysis – November impact of COVID-19 on charities survey**

OSCR's November survey on the impact of COVID-19 on charities contained two open questions – i) we asked charities to share their experiences and what they had learned; and ii) what OSCR and other charity sector support organisations should be doing to help charities overcome the challenges being faced due to the pandemic. Analysis of these responses has provided a greater depth of understanding in some areas of the quantitative findings and contributed to the picture of COVID-19 impact on charities on themes such as funding and fundraising, places and spaces and adaptability. We will share more of this information on our website, including what charities learned and what help they asked for, as the analysis is completed over the coming weeks.

**Action: Kat** to include in newsletter.

29. **The ALLIANCE (via email)**

The ALLIANCE and partners Self Directed Support Scotland (SDSS) have published thematic reports from their national mixed-methods research project about people's experiences of Self-directed Support/social care. 'My Support My Choice' (MSMC) heard about the pre-pandemic experiences of people across Scotland, and at the time of publication it is the most recent and comprehensive reflection of people's experiences of SDS/social care in Scotland prior to COVID-19. The thematic reports supplement the MSMC national report, and focus on the experiences of the following population groups: women as users of SDS; people with learning disabilities; blind and partially sighted people; Black and minority ethnic people; and people with

lived experience of mental ill-health. For more information about MSMC and to read the research reports, visit: <https://bit.ly/2NIzccqB>.

The ALLIANCE has also recently published two reports based on national engagement about people's experiences of health and care services during COVID-19, and on adult social care more generally. 'Health, Wellbeing and the COVID-19 Pandemic' reports on engagement with over 1000 people across Scotland's 32 Local Authority areas, carried out from September to December 2020. It was designed to support and inform the work of the Scottish Government's Mobilisation Recovery Group (<https://bit.ly/389RXuk>). The 'Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland - Engagement Report' documents findings from engagement with over 300 people who took part in 14 online events from late September to mid November 2020, and was developed to inform the independent review of adult social care in Scotland, led by Derek Feeley (<https://bit.ly/2KgJrvP>).

**Action: Kat** to include in newsletter

30. **Poverty Alliance (via email)**

We have published the following study looking at the Poverty Related attainment Gap Commissioned by the Robertson Trust.

This review has examined the evidence on the links between poverty, education and work pathways for young people in Scotland and across the UK. It found evidence that the poverty-attainment gap – already identified by the Scottish Government as a key priority – shows signs of increasing and risks being further compounded by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. See: <https://www.therobertsontrust.org.uk/news-and-blogs/new-report-the-poverty-related-attainment-gap-evidence-review/>

There is also a blog piece response by Professor Sue Ellis reflecting on this review. See: <https://www.therobertsontrust.org.uk/news-and-blogs/poverty-related-attainment-gap-time-to-think-differently/>

Also we have the launch of the Poverty in Scotland 2021 the latest in a series of books published by CPAG in partnership with Glasgow Caledonian University SPIRU and WiSE Centre, The Poverty Alliance and I-SPHERE, Heriot-Watt University. With Scotland having set statutory targets towards ending child poverty by 2030, and wider commitments made to eradicate poverty and hunger altogether, this new publication provides a comprehensive but accessible state of the nation assessment of how far the country has come in achieving anti-poverty goals, and what is now needed to make them a reality. We will be having a launch event and I can circulate the link to this later this week.

**Action: Kat** to include in newsletter

31. **Salvesen Mindroom Centre (via email)**

SMC is a member of the project team for the LEANS project. LEANS is 'Learning About Neurodiversity in School', and is run by a full-time researcher based at the Salvesen Mindroom Research Centre. The LEANS project is developing teaching materials that can be delivered at upper primary level to support children to learn about the concept of neurodiversity and difference. The materials have been developed with a neurodiverse team of teachers and will be piloted in schools in early 2021.

SMC will work with the University of Edinburgh Q-Step programme in summer 2021 to carry out quantitative research into the journey of disabled students into and through college and university.

SMC is a community partner with the Universities of Aberdeen and Dundee, in a research funding bid to explore the sharing of health data. The decision on the bid is awaited.

We are currently developing our 3-year business plan from July 2021 and will be scoping out the research that we plan to carry out in the short, medium and long term within our plan.

**Action:** Kat to include in newsletter

### 32. **Non-members research updates**

#### **Dying in the Margins: Uncovering the reasons for unequal access to home dying for the socio-economically deprived**

Dying in the Margins is researching people's experiences of dying at home who live in poverty as well as the experiences of their carers (family or friends) and practitioners who provide support. Researchers at the University of Glasgow End of Life Studies Research Group are looking to speak to people who have been bereaved and engage with them in supportive participatory ways through digital story telling. They are also using photovoice methods with people experiencing financial hardship and serious advanced illness who can document aspects of their day to day lives to show what more can be done to help. The research is being conducted in *Glasgow and Dumfries and Galloway*. Jane Rowley is the researcher on this project and can be contacted at [Jane.Rowley@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Jane.Rowley@glasgow.ac.uk). Please share details with your relevant networks or contact Jane directly. More details can be read through these documents: [Digital Storytelling flyer](#) and [Photovoice flyer](#).

### 33. **AOCB**

Jane presented proposed TSRF meeting dates for 2021-2022:

Wednesday 9th June 2021 10.30 – 1.00 (via Zoom)

Tuesday 7th September 2021 10.30 – 1.00 (venue TBC)

Wednesday 8th December 2021 10.30 – 1.00 (venue TBC)

Tuesday 8th March 2022 10.30 – 1.00 (venue TBC)

**Action: Members** to get in touch with Jane if they have issues with these dates.

**Next meeting:** Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021, via Zoom, 10.30 to 1pm