Scottish Third Sector Research Forum meeting
Wednesday 9th June 2021: 10:30 – 12.30pm
Zoom meeting

Minutes

In attendance:
Steven Marwick (ESS), Jane Marryat (ESS), Kat Macapagal (ESS), Amy Baker (Cattanach Trust), Amy Calder (YouthLink Scotland), Jane Cullingworth (VSSN), Steve Grozier (SCVO), Debbie Maltman (Volunteer Scotland), Mark Meiklejohn (SG), Dharmveer Singh (SG), Kate Robinson (NLCF), Laura Robertson (Poverty Alliance), Elaine Wilson (Corra Foundation), Sarah Weakley (Policy Scotland).
Speaker: Julia Green, (Public Health Scotland)

Apologies:
Matthew Linning (Volunteer Scotland), Louise Meikleham (OSCR), Karen McArdle (University of Aberdeen), Rebecca McGregor (Inclusion Scotland), Lucy Mulvagh (ALLIANCE), Amy Woodhouse (Children in Scotland), Liz Ravalde (SG), Hazel Robertson (The Robertson Trust), Jennifer Goff (Waverley Care), Cathy Bulley (Queen Margaret University), Shubhanna Hussain-Ahmed (Coalition of Carers), Dinah Aitken (SMC), Alasdair Rutherford (University of Stirling), Andrew Dey (ACOSVO), Kerry Musselbrook (Iriss).

Welcome and introductions

1. Steven welcomed everyone to the Zoom meeting especially new members Kate Robinson from NCLF and Dharmveer Singh who will be taking over from Mark Meiklejohn who retires on 30th June 2021.

2. Steven Marwick thanked Mark Meiklejohn for all his support for the TSRF over many years and wished him well in his retirement.

Minutes and matters arising

3. The minutes of the previous meeting (Tuesday 10th March 2021) were approved.

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

4. No matters arising.

Update of TSRF work

5. Jane M. talked through the TSRF workplan for this year April 2021 - March 2022. We will run quarterly meetings on Zoom until we can resume face to face meetings. An update to this situation will be planned for next meeting. We will run 2 events in partnership with Policy Scotland (thank you Sarah for your support with these) and an event in February 2022 to showcase the use of TSRF ethics guide. We will disseminate the ethics guide over the summer.

6. We will have two subgroups: 1. Exploring the ethics of data sharing 2. Dissemination of ethics guide and then move onto another subject in later meetings.

7. We will be continuing work started last year to collect learning about researching online and publish the resource.

8. We will send quarterly newsletters, promoting members' research in newsletters and through our Twitter account.

9. We plan to encourage networking between TSRF members. We will talk more about this in September when we know if restrictions lessen re: numbers allowed to meet.

    Action: Jane to upload [TSRF workplan](#) to webpages

Policy Scotland/TSRF event

10. Sarah Weakley reported on the last event 'Using third sector research to influence policy and practice' which was on 1st June 2021. The event followed on from Policy Scotland's conference workshop on influencing policy. This had been very popular at the conference and was overbooked. The June event was fully booked (100 bookings and 65 attended) consisted of an input from Sarah introducing a stakeholder mapping exercise (this was very popular) and two presentations from third sector organisations – The ALLIANCE and Royal Town Planning Institute who spoke about the challenges of getting their research-informed voices heard. [Recording of the seminar and resources are on Policy Scotland website](#). The link has been sent to Policy Scotland networks.

11. We are planning one more joint event at the end of August/beginning of September before Sarah goes on maternity leave in mid-September. Sarah said she was open to ideas for the subject of this event but proposed that the event could be part of the dissemination of the ethics guide especially 'how to use this guide'. The meeting **agreed** Sarah's proposal.

    Action: Jane to upload links of seminar and resources on [TSRF webpages](#) and include in TSRF newsletter. Please can **all members** send to their networks.

    Members to get in touch with **Sarah/Jane** for ideas about the next event on ethics including anyone who wants to present.

12. Jane M. reminded the meeting that the TSRF conference report is on the TSRF webpages. This is in two formats: an infographic report and the same information in a video. All the conference presentations and resources are on the conference webpage.

    Action: Feedback is asked for on the formats of the conference report.

TSRF ethics guide

13. Jane M summarised the additions to the guide made since the last Forum meeting as result of the consultation. There are now examples of good and not so good practice examples. These are marked with appropriate icons. There is also a case study from Karen McArdle that explains decision-making at all stages of a research project. All comments from the consultation period have been incorporated.

14. Forum members agreed that this final version should be widely disseminated over the summer. At that time, we will ask people to let us know how they are using the guide and for more examples or case studies that we can added.

15. Jane M. said that there are 4 people who have been in touch who are using the guide and are willing to be case studies. They are Amy Calder (Forum member), David Gardner, Ishbel Smith and Simon Anderson, a freelance consultant, working with a third sector organisation. The case studies will be written up, perhaps in another accompanying document or added to the guide, to be decided later. This will form the basis for our event in February 2022 with case study subjects presenting.

16. Amy Calder said she had been using the guide to develop an internal ethics policy for YouthLink alongside support from the Scottish Analytical Programme and for a new project (Boys and young men in Scotland) which she has used the guide at proposal stages but intends to use it throughout the project. She would be happy to speak about using the guide for the policy development at the September Policy Scotland/TSRF event pending organisational approval.

Life events

17. Steven said that Kat is going on maternity leave from this week and Jane is semi-retired but is working one day a week on TSRF until September 2021. Jane will be the key contact for TSRF until then. Steven will keep the forum up to date about future arrangements.

Subgroups

18. The meeting broke into two groups to discuss 1. Ethics of data sharing and 2. Dissemination of TSRF ethics guide.

Ethics data sharing subgroup

Steven M, Debbie, Jane C, Kat, Mark, Steve C. Amy Baker.

19. The discussion from this group is reflected in a draft remit which can be found in the annex of this minute.

    Action: Steven to write remit to be circulated for comments from other members

Dissemination of TSRF ethics guide

Jane M, Amy C, Dharmveer, Elaine, Julia Green, Laura, Sarah.

20. Discussion took place about who to disseminate the guide to, and how. Additions to the prepared plan were: Social Research Association, SCDC (to connect with their Knowledge is Power project), GCVO, TSIs, Forum partners, universities (particularly through our university Forum members), Funders, Funders Forum, Scottish Grant Makers, SCVO funder group,

Scottish Government particularly the SG Analytical team but we should try to reach across a wide range of SG teams working with third sector.

21. We decided people should upload a link to the **guide webpage** (not the pdf) rather than upload the document to their own websites. This will enable us to edit it and keep this up to date especially with case studies and possible additional related resources e.g. data sharing resource.

Messaging about the guide:

22. It should be empathised that this guide is not just for researchers but for all those working with or in the third sector who undertake research activities e.g. focus groups, interviews (but don't see this as research). Also, this guide is about safeguarding for researchers and those you are working alongside. (Word ethics might not resonant with everyone.) People in third sector often think in terms of evaluation rather than research.

23. It is accessible to all and what everyone should be doing in regard to ethical research. 'Not creating more bureaucracy but taking you through what everybody should be doing'.

24. Will be useful throughout a research project and other activity such as internal research policy development.

25. It is useful to universities partnering with TSOs as they can signpost TS to guide for a better understanding of the ethics principles that their own ethics committees will be considering. Universities could frame this in terms of helping TS to understand ethics better and therefore enable them to be more involved in the ethics processes e.g. writing consent forms.

26. It is useful to funders for their own sake but who are supporting TSOs who are conducting research. Also, for funders who are commissioning research and evaluations. The guide to be framed as support for non-researchers and helpful for safeguarding issues. Funders will be instrumental in helping us reach TSOs and conveying the message that this is what they would expect of TSOs when doing research and evaluation about safeguarding and ethical consequences. This message would be appropriate for SG as a funder.

27. Scottish government – do lunchbox sessions of small groups of people. Amy Calder has link to analyst she is working with who is willing to talk at an event, he will jointly write a blog on their use of guide and who is willing to promote with SG.

28. This guide will be helpful for those providing training as an additional resource to signpost trainees to. E.g. GCVS, SRA and National Centre for Research, NatCen, ScotsCen, National Centre for Research Methods

Future plans

29. It was suggested that in the future a training module (for GCVS) could be developed perhaps as an online module, and a network developed to share and support TS researchers and discuss ethical dilemmas.

30. Ethics guide promotion as subject of the next Policy Scotland/TSRF event in August/September was discussed. This event could also test out the appetite for a network.

    Action: Amy to write a blog re: working with SG analyst on developing internal research policy and using the guide.

    Action: Sarah Weakley and Jane M to organise next Policy Scotland/TSRF event to disseminate the guide and invite those interested in taking part or helping design the event to get in touch with us.

    Action: Jane M to create and send communications plan and pack to Forum members with suggestions of wording for email and tweets. Jane to liaise with Elaine re: promoting guide to funders.

Julia Green - Public Health Scotland (PHS) Covid-19 research repository

31. Julia Green co-manages the Knowledge Services Team in Public Health Scotland. Over the last year have developed a repository of Covid-19 research published by Scottish researchers or with a focus on Scotland. This will help accessibility of Covid-19 research. It includes different types of research and formats e.g. evidence reports, videos, blogs, pre-prints and multiple platforms.

32. The repository is a single searchable point of research which is mainly open access. It gives PHS the opportunity to track and understand Scottish research with its integrated software.

33. Julia gave a demonstration of the repository – how to find it and how it works. https://publichealthscotland.scot/our-areas-of-work/covid-19/covid-19-research-repository/ Research can be searched for by topic, author, publisher.

34. The content is research undertaken by Public Health Scotland and higher education institutions. They are keen to broaden the content but at present it does not include research from third sector although it will be included if it is currently held within a university repository. Within the resources section there are links to TSRF and organisations such as Voluntary Health Scotland.

35. The Forum encouraged Julia to include third sector research. PHS will be developing an options paper for further development of the repository. Julia asked the Forum to test the site and give written feedback to give her tangible evidence.

    Action: Please email Julia with any comments or feedback

    10 minute break
    Julia, Sarah and Kat left the meeting.

Elaine Wilson presentation about the research approach of Corra Foundation

36. Corra is an independent trust with a [10-year strategy](#) that aims to strengthen and amplify people's voices and their power to make change. We continue to make grants and work alongside communities with increasing focus on challenging the barriers, active listening and responding to power dynamics that can influence change.

37. Corra also supports a learning culture where internal and external learning forms part of our knowledge and insights to help shape how and what we do. Corra is currently involved in several collaborations that aim to influence power and voice for people and communities we seek to serve.

38. As part of our place based working Corra is funding two communities (Dunterlie and Fernhill) to be part of the [Knowledge is Power](#) action research programme.

39. Corra is one of the partners in the Listening Fund Scotland, a dedicated fund supporting youth organisations to embed active listening within their organisations. The Centre of Youth Impact has just published findings from this work [Listening Fund Scotland evaluation](#).

40. Corra is also one of the partners who initiated the Social Action Inquiry in Scotland looking at how people can make social action happen in their communities which can make Scotland a better place to live. The Inquiry has now appointed two Co-Chairs and is currently recruiting two Co-Leads one with a focus on the social action and the other with a focus on research. More information and updates can be found https://socialaction.scot/. The Together we Help report https://socialaction.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Social-Action-during-the-Coronavirus-Pandemic-Report.pdf

    Action: Jane to include brief summary of Elaine's presentation in newsletter.

Research updates from members

41. **Jane C. (University of Glasgow/VSSN)**
    VSSN is organising two events:

    Voluntary Sector Studies Network Online Day Conference, 23rd June 2021 - VOLUNTEERING IN A GLOBAL PANDEMIC
    Sharing views and experiences from around the globe, about the difference voluntary action makes during and after COVID-19 pandemic.
    08:00 – 09:30; Asia, Pacific
    12:00 – 13:30; Africa, Europe
    16:00 – 18:00; Americas.
    The event will be online, in three sessions, for up to 450 viewers per session. The event is free but timely registration is required.
    We will hear from 15 panellists from around the globe what difference voluntary action makes during and after COVID-19 pandemic. The conference specifically aims to explore:
    - diverse international perspective
    - alternative approaches to the pandemic

- suggestions of what can be learned from the various approaches.
Register for each session you want to attend separately. Links will be sent 48 hours before the event. https://www.vssn.org.uk/events/voluntary-sector-studies-network-vssn-online-day-conference-23rd-june-2021-2/

'Emotion and Feelings in Voluntary Sector Work' series – Third session.
Thursday 1st July 10am - 12.30pm on Zoom
Two speakers: Dr Julian Manley from UCLAN (Preston) and Marilyn Taylor, Visiting Research Fellow, IVAR (London).

This event is for researchers, practitioners and funders from both the Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise field and those engaged in the psycho-social, counselling and therapeutic disciplines.
https://www.vssn.org.uk Booking will be available soon.

Next Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research conference is on 6-7th September 2021 Theme is leadership and diversity in civil society. Hoping this will be in person at Aston University in Birmingham.

Action: Jane to include in newsletter. And to consider moving next TSRF meeting as it clashes with the VSVR conference.

42. **Steve (SCVO)**
SCVO is working with SG and independent funders on a longitudinal project that SCVO are working on in collaboration with stakeholders. 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. Baseline survey has been signed off. This will be piloted next week and will move to full project in next few weeks. Working with SCVO policy team interviewing TSO asking about issues of funding and partnership working. They will be building profiles of organisations by income, geography, sector/thematic area. Pilot finished this week. SCVO are hoping to share learning once the full project is completed.

SCVO is reviewing its sector stats. They are planning to do these annually and currently having discussions about the content of the questions. Working with Karl Wilding who is looking at data needs of sector UK-wide and exploring collaborations with organisations to produce robust evidence and data.

43. **Mark (Scottish Government)**
Will disseminate the ethics guide internally. Mark thanked the Forum for being active and engaging over the years and providing great support for the sector. The relationship with Scottish Government continues and Dharmveer will be taking over.

44. **Amy B. (Cattanach)**
    Cattanach are at the early stages of:
    - Scoping a project in partnership with William Grant Foundation looking at holistic family support in Scotland. Exploring best practice and how it might inform Cattanach's funding decisions.
    - Planning research on foetal alcohol disorder and improving social work approach.
    - Looking at how to incorporate the infant voice into funding and evaluation processes.

45. **Kate (NCLF)**
    NCLF are partners in the Listening Fund and the longitudinal research with SCVO.

46. **Laura (Poverty Alliance)**
    We have published research about families on low incomes experiences of using public transport prior and during the pandemic, commissioned by Transport Scotland.

    PA are involved in the SG Get Heard Scotland programme. PA are reporting at the end of the month having consulted with people living in poverty about their experiences during the pandemic.

    PA are involved in a joint project with research centre for children's and young people's participation at University of Lancashire to do an evidence review peer led/participatory action research and a guide on doing peer-led research. These will be published this summer.

    Action: Jane to include reports in newsletter

47. **YouthLink Scotland (Amy)**
    YouthLink has published the Impact of LGBT Youth Scotland's Digital Youth Work on Young People
    https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/media/5686/lgbt-ys-digital-yw-research-report.pdf

    YS has been working over the last year to support young people to look at environmental impacts in their communities. This was completed this week. They developed an interactive resource on how to engage young people in heritage using a youth led research approach.

    YS has started a project about what it is like to be a boy/young man in Scotland, part of the 'No knives better lives' programme. They will be developing a national survey to be sent to all young men in Scotland and doing focus groups and interviews. This will run for a year.

    They are developing an internal ethics policy and are happy to share when complete.

    YS has a masters student working with them over the summer on their dissertation looking at carbon footprint of the youth work sector. They will produce a pod to disseminate findings.

The Scottish Youth Work Research Steering Group are developing their workplan for this year. Hopefully they will find some connections with the Forum.

Action: Jane to include reports in newsletter.

48. **Volunteer Scotland (Debbie and email from Matthew)**
    In Feb 2021 Volunteer Scotland published its Summary Report analysing volunteering participation during COVID-19 from OSCR's Nov 2020 dataset: https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/research-and-evaluation/publications/covid-19-research/impact-of-covid-19-on-scotlands-charities/.

    Our Report 'Who contributes the most to Scottish volunteering?' analyses the Scottish Household Survey 2018 data for formal and informal volunteering to provide new evidence on 'volunteering intensity' across key demographic variables: https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/research-and-evaluation/publications/who-contributes-the-most-to-scottish-volunteering/

    VS has a data lab student who will use AI to analyse press cuttings about volunteering and Covid-19. (750 articles)

    Action: Jane to include in newsletter.

49. **Rebecca (Inclusion Scotland) via email**
    In February 2021 Inclusion Scotland ran a survey to ask disabled people their views on key aspects of the Adult Disability Payment draft regulations. In March we published a report setting out the survey results and how we used these to respond to the Scottish Government's consultation.

    Action: Jane to include in newsletter.

50. **Salvesen Mindroom Centre (via email)**
    We have just worked with Salvesen Mindroom Research Centre (SMRC) to publish our series of policy and research briefings, which you can access on the website here https://www.mindroom.org/about-us/research/briefings/

    Over the summer we will host a University of Edinburgh Q-Step student to analyse data from SHFC on the experiences of further or higher education for pupils in Scottish schools with a disability or additional support needs (ASN).

    Our collaboration with SMRC continues, and the Learning About Neurodiversity at School (LEANS) project will be entering its evaluation phase in the autumn, working with 4 Scottish primary schools

    Action: Jane to include in newsletter

51. **Iriss (via e-bulletin)**
    Has published their latest insight which explores the background of Self-directed support policy and practice and considers its future.

52. **Voluntary Health Scotland via email**
    Has published their research on third sector perspectives on the need for an inclusive Covid-19 vaccine programme. They will host a dissemination event on 24th August event.

Non-members research updates

53. **Carnegie**
    Carnegie has shared a new podcast, [The Courage to be Kind.](#) The podcast features Carnegie Associate, Dr Elizabeth Kelly, in conversation with health journalist, Pennie Taylor, discussing the Trust's learning about kindness in health and social care in Scotland over the past 12 months.

    At the end of last year we published a report that reflected on the role of kindness in the healthcare response to COVID-19. Since then, there has been a growing conversation about the importance of kindness – for staff as well as patient wellbeing – and yet at the same time, concern that this might be lost amidst increasing pressure to remobilise and 'get back to normal'.

    In this new podcast, which is also hosted on the Scottish Government's [National Wellbeing Hub](#), Elizabeth and Pennie explore the role of kindness in care settings from a range of angles across six short episodes. As well as looking at it from the perspective of staff wellbeing, and sharing practical tools and resources, the conversation also explores the transformational potential of kindness, with challenging messages for the way that we now manage the recovery and renewal of our health service.
    All six episodes are now available.

    Third Sector Research Centre
    TSRC are hosting an event on 30th June about the impact of Covid-19 on the foundation and dissolution of charitable organisations. [Booking is open](#).

54. **AOCB**
    Steven suggested at a future meeting we hear more about the Scottish Government's Analytical Scheme from SG and from third sector organisations that have used it, such as, YouthLink.

55. Jane asked Forum for ideas of speakers. We don't have a speaker organised for September's meeting but we could ask James, VS student to talk to us about using an AI tool for analysis. Debbie thought this would be a good idea.

    Action: Jane to liaise with VS to organise speaker for next meeting.

56. **Next meeting:** This date has changed as there was a clash with VSSN conference. Please note the next meeting will be on **Tuesday, 14th September 2021**, via Zoom, **10.30 to 12.30pm**

Third Sector Research Forum (TSRF)
Subgroup on the ethics of sharing research data
Remit

1. The TSRF published a [Guide to Applying Ethical Research Principles in Third Sector Research](#) in June 2021. While creating and consulting on this guide TRSF members, conference participants and others told us that they would benefit from further resources on the related issue of data sharing.

2. By **"data"** we mean quantitative and qualitative data collected as part of a research process.   However the subgroup will sharpen this definition.

3. By **"sharing"** we mean
   - exchanging research data with other organisations for their research or as part of a research partnership
   - Publishing data in research findings

4. The subgroup will oversee the production of a resource or guide for **people in the third sector who conduct or manage in research**. People working for universities or public sector institutions that conduct research in the third sector may be a secondary audience.

5. The **purpose** of the resource will be that people in the third sector who conduct or manage research have
   - Access to templates and examples that they can adapt or use
   - Increased confidence or knowledge what is good practice and what is proportionate in relation to data sharing

6. The resource is likely to include:
   - Example data sharing agreements
   - Case studies or short examples about data sharing
   - Tips and good practice on publishing (and anonymising) qualitative data

7. **Risks to manage**: We need to avoid replicating existing data protection (GDPR) guidance. We need to complement and add value to the TSRF's existing ethics guide.

8. Likely approach:
   - 8.1 Get comments from TSRF members on this remit
   - 8.2 Small desk analysis of what's already out there and examples of data sharing agreements.
   - 8.3 Consult people who might have expertise to share (eg Rhona at SCVO, Scottish Government analysts, evaluation team in National Lottery Community Fund)
   - 8.4 Drafting with a TSRF subgroup including sharpening definitions
   - 8.5 Wider consultation at TSRF ethics event in Feb 2022.