

Scotland's Third Sector Research Forum meeting

Tuesday 30th August 2022: 10-12 on Zoom

Notes of meeting

In attendance:

Alayna Imlah (National Lottery Community Fund), Amy Calder (Youthlink Scotland), Cassy Rutherford (The Robertson Trust), Cathy Bulley (Queen Margaret University), Dharmveer Singh (Scottish Government), Gabija Povilaityte (Scottish Government), Hannah Tweed (Health and Social Care Alliance), Ilse Mackinnon (SCVO), Jane Cullingworth (Glasgow University), Kimberley Somerside (Voluntary Health Scotland), Laura Robertson (Poverty Alliance), Matthew Linning (Volunteer Scotland), Sarah Weakley (Glasgow University), Wendy Marsden (OSCR), Steven Marwick (ESS), Lucy Craig (ESS)

Apologies: Amy Woodhouse (Children in Scotland), Deborah Maltman (Volunteer Scotland), Dinah Aitken (Salveson Mindroom), Elaine Wilson (Corra Foundation), Fiona McHardy (Poverty Alliance), Jennifer Challinor (Critchton Trust), Karen McArdle (University of Aberdeen), Pat Armstrong, Rebecca McGregor (Inclusion Scotland), Steve Grozier (SCVO)

Facilitator: Philippa Bonella, consultant for TSRF review

Welcome and introductions

1. Steven welcomed everyone to the Zoom meeting and introduced Philippa Bonella, the consultant who carried out the recent review of the TSRF. He noted that the agenda for this meeting would focus on the next steps for the TSRF, to implement key recommendations of the recent review. As such there would not be space to share research updates, but these can be included in the newsletter.

Action: All to send research updates to Steven for inclusion in the next newsletter.

Minutes and matters arising

2. The minutes of the previous meeting on 7 June 2022 were approved.

Action: Lucy to upload minutes on website.

3. There were no matters arising.

Discussion on implementing the TSRF review recommendations

4. Steven presented current ESS suggestions on implementing the review recommendations. ESS proposes to prioritise the following:
 - TSRF evolves into a community of practice
 - Revised purposes [*draft*] to:
 - Support people and orgs in the third sector that do and commission research
 - Promote (the value of) third sector research

- Encourage improvements in research practice
- A core group that meets regularly to
 - plan the CoP activities
 - network with each other
 (all current TSRF members can join; thereafter group itself decides membership)
- Replace conference with more regular peer learning opportunities (*to discuss*)
- Website and regular newsletters.

ESS proposes that its role will remain to:

- Facilitate core group meetings
- Maintain website / newsletter
- Coordinate peer learning programme
- Facilitate events (but others should also be able to take a lead).

Other recommendations will need further discussion or may not be priorities given limited capacity.

5. Members then went into breakout rooms to discuss three questions:
 - Is it OK that the "Third Sector Research Forum" becomes the title for whole CoP?
 - What broadly should success look like?
 - Do you agree with suggested ESS roles – any do's and don't for ESS?
6. The members shared feedback from the breakout room discussions:
 - In general there was agreement to developing a community of practice and to keeping the name TSRF for this wider group. There was a suggestion to add a strapline to clarify what the Forum does and who it is for.
 - Suggestion to explain on the website the benefits the TSRF for different audiences (Scottish Government/third sector/academic)
 - Suggestion that the "core group" could be called a planning group, or steering group. , to avoid any sense of a hierarchy involvement.
 - There was general agreement to the proposed roles for ESS but a sense that the next step would be to clarify the role of the core group. It will also be important to think about how TSRF activities can connect to/complement the work being done by others eg SCVO, SRA, VSSN etc. **Jane Cullingworth** would check out if a connection is needed to VSSN.

TSRF success criteria could include:

- True partnership and mutual benefit – not making tokenistic collaboration.
- Benefit to wider people accessing services, not only benefit to the organisations but to individuals and service users.
- Broadening the number of people and range of people involved and engaged.

- People knowing about and engaging with TSRF.
 - Organisations knowing what support is available and how it will improve their research.
 - Importance of increased capacity, more partnerships, joint working, sharing.
 - Connecting people to information and information to people.
 - Being flexible in planning and responding to emerging issues, for example the current cost of living crisis.
 - Creating accessible resources that help members in their jobs, horizon scanning, thinking more creatively about what research means for them.
 - There being spontaneous contact between non “core group” members.
 - Events take place which are not organised by ESS.
7. Members went into further breakout rooms to discuss two questions:
- How **peer network programme** will work
 - Any priorities amongst **other recs** (and who might lead)?
8. The members shared feedback from the breakout room discussions about how the peer network programme could work:
- Importance of having a mix of one off events, short-life task focused groups and informal peer support/ sharing sessions.
 - Need for structured calendar for events and coordination in early stages. Plans could be developed by the core group and circulated early for others to join in. Co-chairs could be identified to help lead, with ESS support.
 - Focus on ensuring benefits of the forum reach where they really need to throughout multiple sectors.
 - Need to start with a realistic plan for the next 6-12 months and over time we can get more ideas from members as groups form.
 - There were different opinions about the value of an interactive communications platform (such as Slack or Teams) or which platform works best.
 - Updating and promoting the website – this should explain how people can propose ideas or activities to the Forum, how they can join, how activities get started and how they finish.
 - Hybrid meetings will be helpful to increase attendance.
 - Transparency of the planning group will be important, and two-way flow of ideas and information.

Other suggested priorities included:

- Training – the Forum could co-ordinate free access to training from specialist members.
- Mentoring has a huge and really important place – possible to join up with existing universities mentoring scheme? There is also the analytical exchange supported by Scottish Government.

9. Member offers to support early activities included: **Amy Calder** to lead an informal group to provide members with peer support around ethical dilemmas in research, which could meet a few times a year. **Alastair Rutherford** said might be able to take a lead in looking a research on the third sector research profession.

10. Steven summarised the next steps:

- The next newsletter will shortly be circulated to communicate about the review, about research updates and about what's next.
- ESS is recruiting a new staff member who will support TSRF
- Another meeting of this core/planning group would be useful soon
- ESS to draft proposed terms of reference for the steering group and to clarify the new roles of the TSRF and benefits to key audiences
- Amy to liaise offline with Steven to agree how to take forward the ethics group.
- A proposed first event could be planned soon focusing on research on the cost of living crisis.

Action: **Steven** to take forward next steps, until new staff member in place.

AOB

11. There was no other business.

Next meeting

Steven will get in touch with members to set a date for the next meeting soon.