

# COMMUNITY, VOLUNTARY AND FAITH SECTOR CONFERENCE REPORT

## INTRODUCTION

Wirral Council co-hosted an event with representatives from the community, voluntary and faith (CVF) sector on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The conference was designed to build momentum on the considerable work already undertaken with the CVF sector (the sector) during the pandemic and to look to identify opportunities for working collaboratively in the future across a number of themes.

The conference was designed and facilitated by and with the sector, led by a task and finish group comprised of representatives from a range of CVF organisations reflecting the sectors diversity, and officers from Wirral Council (Full list of members is provided at the end of the conference report).

On the day, 38 local community, voluntary and faith sector representatives attended along with several senior Council officers and Cllr Yvonne Nolan as Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board. A full list of delegates can be found at the end of the conference report.

### ***Conference Outline and Objectives***

The conference aimed to achieve the following:

1. Reflect on how COVID-19 has impacted the sector
2. Understand the needs and asks of the sector
3. Celebrate good practice locally and across the City Region
4. Identify opportunities for collaboration
5. Understand what we want to achieve and how
6. Set strategic intent for working together in the future

A copy of the Conference Agenda is provided at the end of the report, which combined speaker presentations and dedicated, themed breakout workshops. The presenter speakers were:

- Paul Satoor- Chief Executive Wirral Council
- Cllr Yvonne Nolan- Chair of Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Julie Webster- Director of Public Health, Wirral Council.
- Mark Camborne- Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods, Safety and Transport, Wirral Council.
- Carol Johnson Eyre- Chief Executive Citizen Advice Wirral
- Bev Morgan-Chair, Chief Executive Group
- Lewis McDonald- Delamere Centre
- Ben Gilchrist- Chief Executive, Caritass
- Sally Yeoman- Halton and St Helens VCA
- Warren Escadale- NAVCA

Paul Satoor opened the conference and thanked the sector for their efforts during the pandemic. Julie Webster set out the aims of the day and reflected back on the findings from a CVF conference in January 2020 and previous work the Council and the sector have done collaboratively. Mark Camborne and Carol Johnstone-Eyre reflected on

their experiences of working as part of the humanitarian cell during COVID-19. Representees from the sector also presented some of the challenges the sector have faced during the pandemic and the challenges associated with recovery.

The second half of the programme focused on the strategic vision with Cllr Yvonne Nolan setting out the objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Board. Julie Webster outlined the Wirral Plan 2020-2025 and the desire to continue to involve the sector in its ongoing development. Sally Yeoman from St Helens CVS presented the VS6 picture and Warren Escadale, NAVCA set out the key principles of infrastructure. (Presentations web links available at the end of the conference report).

Delegates were then invited to participate into breakout groups to discuss in more detail proposed future action covering the following themed sessions:

- Volunteering
- Development – support, sustainability and resourcing
- Collaboration and Social Action
- Strategic Influence and voice of the sector
- Tackling Inequalities Together
- Collaboration and Equal Partnerships

The following key notes were reported by breakout group facilitators:

Theme	Key Discussion Points
Volunteering	<p>The value of volunteers in businesses and communities throughout COVID was well received and the versatility of people was appreciated.</p> <p>There is a support required around the investment into volunteers at the front end and retention. There is not enough capacity for employed staff to do it.</p> <p>There is concern across the sector that they will lose volunteers when they return to work from furlough etc.</p> <p>The Community Action Wirral (CAW) volunteer management tool needs to be shared wider across the sector.</p> <p>As we move out of COVID-19 there needs to be recognition that COVID-19 has had an impact on people’s wellbeing and not everyone will be as work ready as they may think. Volunteering opportunities need to be valued and the sector needs to be trusted to look after these people.</p>
Development-support, sustainability and resourcing	<p>If social distancing continues more office space or hot desks will need be required to support the sector.</p> <p>Strategic approach to supporting CVF with digital infrastructure would be helpful. Organisations are in different places with IT literacy thus a pooling of resources around low-cost training and resources would be useful.</p>

	<p>Support with social media engagement, developing content, and strategically tracking how much the target audience is engaging and how to increase reach would be useful.</p> <p>Need to bring smaller organisations in as provider to support more people in the community, how to market and increase resources, build and maintain websites etc.</p> <p>Move towards place-based models and working with nearby anchor institutions which may have longer-term resource.</p> <p>The sector is keen to share skills and support smaller organisations to grow but there is no formal platform for this skill-sharing. Swap-shop database of what different charities/ partners are good at e.g, support submitting accounts.</p> <p>Catalogue of where all Wirral’s organisations are and what services they provide would be beneficial.</p> <p>A structured series of themed sessions could be run with groups from Humanitarian Cell, overheads for small organisations could potentially be shared via joint contracts in e.g, Centre of Birkenhead.</p>
<p>Collaboration and Social Action</p>	<p>Lots of examples of the sector having an equal voice through the Humanitarian Cell - big / small, local / quasi-statutory groups all equal and represented.</p> <p>Collaboration continued during “unlockdown” as well, e.g. when the Central Food hub finished and provision returned to local projects and organisations. Local organisations were not just ‘left to get on with it’ but there was transition.</p> <p>Wirral Info Bank positively valued as a common, visible, platform that demonstrated we are working collaboratively by providing a single point of access for all Wirral people.</p> <p>Challenge is to continue collaboration as goals may not align like they have with COVID-19 across organisations as closely as we move on.</p> <p>How does the sector get their voice heard in “business as usual” times, not just “Emergency Planning”? Collaboration needs to be part of the formation of strategy not to see the CVF sector as just about operational delivery.</p> <p>Important we have the same understanding of what is meant by terms such as “collaboration” and “equal partnership”, within our own networks.</p>

Theme	Key Discussion Points
Strategic Influence and voice of the sector	<p data-bbox="448 237 1461 304">Public sector has to change from their top-down approach. People who know the problems are the people who live there.</p> <p data-bbox="448 344 1461 450">How can the sector hold the public sector to account, what is the forum through which this is done and who are the champions within the Council?</p> <p data-bbox="448 490 1481 595">The sector needs to take more responsibility, we do not evaluate what is going on around us. However, the crisis has allowed us to do this and we have the power to make change as well.</p> <p data-bbox="448 636 1474 741">The conversations should be a conversation and not a dialogue in order for true co-production. Humanitarian Cell has allowed this to happen as an opportunity to feedback the views of the sector.</p> <p data-bbox="448 781 1469 999">There has to be a level of co-ordination for the way in which the Council engages with the sector. Lots of work needs bringing together for example; Humanitarian Cell, Community of Practice (COP) Community Wealth Building, Health &amp; Wellbeing Board CVF Reference Group, Community Action Wirral and the work of Capacity Lab. There are too many overlapping streams of work in terms of a strategic environment.</p> <p data-bbox="448 1039 1426 1106">Need to develop a set of behaviours about how the Council engages with the sector and vice versa.</p> <p data-bbox="448 1146 1481 1330">There is a desire to have more time with the Council's most senior officers. What is the single point of access for CVF to public sector organisations e.g. who is the lead Cllr, is there a lead officer? Clarity and transparency on access to Senior Council Officers and Elected Members is required.</p> <p data-bbox="448 1370 1437 1476">The system is invisible to people. Smaller organisations do not know how to approach, and other organisations do not have the capacity or time.</p> <p data-bbox="448 1516 1442 1621">Need to think about how we communicate as CVF organisations, how we communicate with others and how we receive the information and the platforms we get information from.</p> <p data-bbox="448 1662 1289 1700">Early Help Model needs more development with the sector.</p> <p data-bbox="448 1740 1182 1778">Need more time to get to the real root of the issues.</p>
Tackling Inequalities Together	<p data-bbox="448 1816 1469 1995">There are health inequalities in our most deprived areas: Bidston/St James, Birkenhead/Tranmere, Seacombe/Rockferry, Licard etc. A joined up approach from Public Health/Statutory working collaboratively with VCF sector to tackle them can make a huge difference in redressing the balance; funding will support sustainability</p>

	<p>Listen to VCF sector-voices of experience; most were set up to fill gaps in services. Provide opportunities for young people to have new experiences/to try new activities for free. Education can be fun/informal.</p> <p>Long-term conditions are one of the major causes of poor quality of life in England. VCF sector can engage with 'hardest to reach' communities in way the public sector can not. Feedback from community groups is that it is not always helpful to have 3<sup>rd</sup> parties drop in on community settings; enable VCF to deliver this as sustainable community model</p> <p>Improve opportunities for young people by supporting local community groups who engagewith young people around mental health and well-being and confidence building support . Prevent issues escalating. Use small group work which builds/establishes trust throughlong term engagement.</p> <p>Work with VCF sector re: shared data; we have a wealth of information and statistics that could help the bigger picture and bring external resources into the borough.</p> <p>Domestic/sexual abuse bigger issue than people realise. Collaborative work with public health/statutory/VCF sector to address these issues is necessary. Perpetrator programmes should be developed jointly with a wealth of experience from VCF sector.</p> <p>Tackling inequalities of health associated with behavioural risks (such as poor diets). We need to address the wider network of factors that influence these behaviours such as poverty/access to affordable healthy food including donated food from food banks, social supermarkets.</p> <p>Tackling inequalities is a matter of fairness and social justice, something that VCF sectors have been continuously striving for evidenced by our plugging the ever-increasing gaps in services due to increased thresholds. It is important that VCF sectors have seats around the table and are included in open and transparent discussions and considered when funding is discussed as a priority and not an afterthought. This shows a willingness for real equality.</p> <p>Accessibility being an afterthought as opposed to considered at planning stage especially around I.T accessibility for all. Impact of poverty prevents so many people from accessing universal support. Make this simple and accessible for all, as it this excludes most disadvantage from all communities.</p>
<p>Collaboration and Equal Partnerships</p>	<p>Lots of good examples of partnership working in Wirral during lockdown.</p>

	<p>Co-production is key when working with adults with learning disabilities as a means to formulate ideas and what consultations should look like rather than just doing a consultation and being done to.</p> <p>Find a way to vote together on priorities, Health and Wellbeing Board CVF Reference Group needs to be done right and to understand what is and is not in scope, carrying the actions from the Humanitarian cell workshop forward. These all needs consolidating into one work programme and one forum.</p> <p>Query around the structure of the CVF in Wirral e.g. does Community Action Wirral represent the whole sector as VS6 said or can it be refocused? Infrastructure support to the sector needs to be trusted, representative and have two-way communication.</p> <p>What are the mechanisms for best practice CVF-Council working? Clear leadership needed in the local authority, facilitation capacity, how to access the right individual within an organisation to commission the best collective services. ABCD approach can help with this, could and should work on feedback within and across the system to ensure accountability.</p>
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## CONFERENCE CLOSING

The following next steps were set out to continue to develop how the sector and Council work together:

- The Conference report will be circulated to those participants who attended and circulated more widely. The Conference Report will also be provided to the Health and Wellbeing Board at the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021.
- The Working Group will lead on the development of work under each workstream identified through the thematic focused groups. These will report actions back to the Working Group in early August 2021.
- A further conference with the broader CVF sector is scheduled for September 2021 which will provide a further opportunity to develop the thematic workstreams.
- An updated report detailing progress will be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board at the meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

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## CVF WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Ben Gilchrist	Caritass
Amy Butterworth	Make it Happen
Bernie King	WEB
Chris Allen	Make it Happen
Jamie Anderson	Age UK
Alex Fisher	Community Voice
Keith Addenbrooke	St James Church
Aline Macready	Wirral Multicultural Organisation
Bev Morgan	Koala NW
Keelan Early	Cradle to Career
Zel Rodgers	Community Action Wirral
Sophie Clarke	Capacity Lab
Nicola Jones	Wirral Council
Angelina Cliff	Wirral Council
Dan Sharples	Wirral Council

## CONFERENCE DELEGATE LIST

Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
Paul Satoor	Wirral Council	Carol Johnstone-Eyre	Wirral CAB
Cllr Yvonne Nolan	Wirral Council	Bev Morgan	Koala NW
Julie Webster	Wirral Council	Ben Gilchrist	Caritass
Mark Camborne	Wirral Council	Lewis MacDonald	Eastham Delamere Centre
Rachael Musgrave	Wirral Council	Amy Butterworth	Make It Happen
Emma Wilkes	Neo Cafe	Adam Mellor	
Anna-Louise Van Der Merwe	Foundation Years Trust	Fergus Adams	Wirral Council
Aoife Blanchard	Wirral Council	David Maguire	Wired
Julian Eyre	Wirral CCG	Jamie Anderson	Age UK
Michelle Gough	Wirral Council	Julie Horman	Wirral Council
Justine Molyneux	Involve North West	Julie Kay	Older People's Parliament
Nicola Jones	Wirral Council	Louise Healey	DWP
Rebecca Mellor	Wirral Council	Lisa Leece	Forum Housing
Lizzie Carlie	Wirral Mencap	Micha Woodworth	Healthwatch Wirral
Sandra Gilbert	Wirral Mind	Keith Addenbrooke	St James
Sophie Clarke	Capacity Lab	Aline Macready	Wirral Multicultural Organisation
Zhara Hossain	Wirral Change	Tiffany Subinyoung	Wirral Change
Bernie King	WEB Wirral	Chris Allen	Make it Happen
Alex Fisher	Community Voice	Greg Epton	Gateway Church Wirral
Dominic Griffiths	Energy People Plus	Natalie Young-Calvert	Primary Care Wirral
James Hennessey	Wirral Youth for Christ	Peter Wright	Community Voice
Sonia Holdsworth	One Wirral CIC	Kevin Sutton	Eastham Delamere Centre
Sam and Jonathon Hamilton	Salvation Army	Alison Dean	Koala NW
Lucy Holmes	Primary Care Wirral	Alison Hill	Capacity Lab
Lauren Leeman	WEB Wirral	Zel Rodgers	Community Action Wirral
Keelan Early	Cradle to Career	Richard Roberts	Wirral Foodbank
Jan Brown	Age UK	Sharon Nicholson	Wirral Mencap
Sarah Taylor	Capacity Lab	Lee Pennington	Open Door Centre
Sally Yeoman	Halton and St Helens VCA	Warren Escadale	NAVCA
Clint Aghard	Wirral Change	Louise Harland-Davies	Wirral Council
Christine Phelan	Wirral Mencap		





## CONFERENCE AGENDA

Time	Lead	Title
14.30	<b>Paul Satoor</b> Chief Executive, Wirral Council	Welcome and introduction
14.35	<b>Julie Webster</b> Director of Health and Wellbeing, <i>Wirral Council</i>	Introduction to the Day
14.40	<b>Examples of working together- Humanitarian Cell</b> Mark Camborne- Assistant Director Neighbourhoods, Safety & Transport, Wirral Council. Carol Johnson Eyre- Chief Executive Citizen Advice Wirral	Partnership working
14.50	<b>Feedback from the sector</b> Bev Morgan-Chair, Chief Executive Group Clint Agard- Wirral Change Lewis McDonald- Delamere Centre Ben Gilchrist- Caritass	State of the Sector- Understanding the impact of covid.
15.04	<b>Nikki Jones-</b> Public Health, Wirral Council	Introduction to breakout Session
15.05	<b>Breakout Session 1</b>	Sector led themes- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Volunteering</li> <li>- Development – support, sustainability and resourcing</li> <li>- Collaboration and social action</li> </ul>
15.35	<b>Sector led feedback from Breakout session 1</b> Ben Gilchrist - Caritass	Key reflections from each group
<b>15.45 BREAK</b>		
15.55	<b>Cllr Nolan</b> Chair of Health and Wellbeing Board, <i>Wirral Council</i>	Health and Wellbeing Board Strategic Priorities.
16.00	<b>Julie Webster</b> Director of Health and Wellbeing (DPH) <i>Wirral Council</i>	Wirral Council Strategic Landscape
16.10	<b>VS6</b> Sally Yeoman, Halton and St Helens VCA	Regional Policy and Good Practice
16.20	<b>Nikki Jones- Senior Public Health Manager</b>	Introduction to Breakout session 2
16.20	<b>Breakout Session 2</b>	Sector led themes- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategic influence and voice of the sector</li> <li>- Tackling inequalities together</li> <li>- Collaboration and equal partnerships</li> </ul>
16.45	<b>Sector led feedback from Breakout session 2</b> Ben Gilchrist - Caritass	Key reflections from each group
16.55	<b>Julie Webster</b> Director of Health and Wellbeing (DPH) <i>Wirral Council</i>	Closing remarks and next steps

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Julie Webster- Director of Public Health, Wirral Council	<a href="http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD1308&amp;ID=1308&amp;RPID=518945640">http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD1308&amp;ID=1308&amp;RPID=518945640</a>
Mark Camborne- Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods, Safety and Transport, Wirral Council.	
Bev Morgan- Chief Executive Koala NW	
Lewis Macdonald, Eastham Delamere Centre	
Sally Yeoman, Halton and St Helens VCA	
Warren Escadale, NAVCA	