



## Table Discussion Notes

### Criminal Justice Forum 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017

#### 1) How can the voluntary sector support vulnerable people?

Early intervention and prevention will reduce the number of vulnerable people in the first place. Voluntary Sector makes them less vulnerable by existing and supporting them. The majority of work with vulnerable people is carried out by the VCS with what little resources we have.

We can help by listening and believing what they say, providing advocacy and drop in hubs with incentives like tea. We can also help by providing a 'psychologically informed environment' (PIE). We can become informed and knowledgeable about trauma. Through multi- agency working – helping by getting into prisons to meet people before they are released to help them with their transport, clothing, housing.

Campaigning, raising awareness of vulnerability. Vulnerable people don't know who we are. It can be difficult to get vulnerable people to engage. They don't know what they are looking for. What about (VS) being in pubs, medical centres, with leaflets/navigators, advertising on the side of milk bottles. Ensuring organisations carry out Equality Impact Assessments it will also help to identify vulnerable people.

Working together in partnership will help to reach a larger audience. Group collaboration and partnership working will also enable us to go after bigger pots of money. The future is partnership working.

#### 2) Is there a particular area of vulnerability that you feel is under-resourced?

- Homelessness - homeless people with mental health issues, Ex-offenders – coming out of prison homeless
- Older people. Especially older LGBT and elderly people with learning difficulties. Older people in the care system/hospital. We are able to offer advocacy but we don't get referrals and it seems Care Act Assessments are not being offered.
- Children, Prevention – infants – helping them at a young age to prevent problems later on in life i.e. homelessness, troubled families. Sure start has gone. Had good links with lots of services and it's gone. School bullying – all forms including cyber, Child sexual abuse
- Vulnerable women – complex safeguarding issues
- Alcohol-dependent adults
- Rural issues which raises issues about lack of transport

There is not enough support to reach everyone so resources must be pooled to meet needs.

### **3) Apart from funding, what more could statutory organisations do to support you in your work?**

Share resources – training, mentoring, IT, resources, PAYE advice, volunteer to be trustees. Raise the profile of the VCS. Take the views of the sector to the House of Lords using PCC hat.

Talk to us, listen to us, share information, give us constructive feedback, take a joint approach, give us named of link people, stop box-ticking, offer joint funding, allow us to do our job. The Dorset Criminal Justice Board is the only one without a VCS rep or Voluntary Sector voice.

Data sharing, we get referrals about people we don't know anything about. Community Rehabilitation Companies are very good but National Probation Service 'it's a battle to get information from them'. We don't get information about people who are still in prison. People who are in prison are supposed to have a meeting with the Job Centre/Universal Credit 6 weeks before release – it doesn't happen. People are released with no clothes/possessions or home to go to.

Comply with their own statutory requirements e.g. equality impact assessments. Work together to coordinate their services: Health, Police, Local Authority, Housing. In Plymouth a very good co-commissioning model has been developed.

### **4) How can the voluntary sector get better at working together in co-commissioned services in joint bids?**

Try to trust each other, not to be so protective of their sectors. Be better prepared in advance e.g. Local Government reorganisation will bring new commissioning opportunities. Find a way to make your reach greater, doing co-bids together – enhance bid so that you broaden the approach of your bid. Help one another with project management and mentoring.

What is the role of VCS organisations e.g. the Community Foundation that commission services? Communication is important. More forums, more meetings but – it's another meeting to go to! Share good practice, talk to each other, Central Hub for service – some form of coordination, information sharing - like the Register of Contacts (that constantly needs to be updated).

We all want to do it but are hindered by statutory services, the bureaucracy stops us doing things. Services have been broken down and down. If people don't meet the criteria they don't get help.

Working together is much more work. We lack time and energy. One organisation has to take the lead. This often has to be done on loss leading basis. There are issues of risk and obligation to consider. Working with other charities doesn't work if funding needs sharing and brings problems i.e. pensions, competitiveness.

### **5) Are our current practices based on evidence that they work and how can we show that they are working?**

Organisations have targets to work with x number of people a year – this is measurable. We record information about new users of our services i.e. area, age, gender etc. We gather data by monitoring e.g. school attendance. We record who is using advocacy services. We record who accesses our support but not what the support is for. Some service users don't want their data recorded. It can be done anonymously.

We measure outcomes longitudinally every four weeks. What works for one person may not work for another. We have 7 different pathways when we develop care plans which are monitored on an individual basis. We get feedback from service users. We know that our practice works as less than 5% reoffend (data). We look at the outcomes of the trials where victims are supported e.g. 90% of verdicts are given as 'guilty.'

Evaluations are hard to gather without the support to do. Extra resources are required e.g. BU researchers / students could help. Quantitative and qualitative outcomes are hard. We can't be numbers driven and must have flexibility. There needs to be flexibility around evidence and evaluations. Grant applications are often written by volunteers sometimes without much experience of monitoring and evaluation.

As funders we give one year funding and review to ensure the programme is working and achieving its outcomes before granting further funding. Evidence is required at the application stage.

If what is being sought is value for money then an evidence data base showing the cost of various interventions is required before comparison can be made. However money spent by one statutory agency can result in a saving to another so this needs to work on a joint agency basis. It is also important to measure social value.

Our practices are often based on what has been seen to work elsewhere. We take existing good practice and improve on it. It is shaped by local demand, crisis and need.

What we are doing feeds into the national agenda. We should be more proactive about demonstrating results. We should work with BCS and feed into policies e.g. the Pan-Dorset Domestic Abuse Strategy.