



VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS FORUM

Tuesday 9 June 2020, 10.30am – 12.00pm
Online meeting via Zoom

Chair: Angela Spence (AS), ADKC
Minutes taken by: Zina Serageldin (ZS), KCSC

Item	Notes	Action
	Minutes of meeting on 18 May and any matters arising	
	Minutes from the previous meeting circulated by e-mail prior to the meeting.	
1	Welcome and Introduction - Angela Spence, KCSC CEO	
	Angela Spence (AS) welcomed everyone to the Voluntary Organisations Forum and shared the Agenda and Zoom call guidelines. Agenda	
2	The Impact of Coronavirus: The challenges facing charities and their leadership – Dan Francis, Lead Consultant, NCVO	
	<p>Presentation: The Impact of Coronavirus: The challenges facing charities and their leadership</p> <p>Dan Francis (DF), Governance consultant with NVCO, introduced himself and outlined the subject he would be sharing. DF said that many in the group would be very familiar with some of the challenges, and that he would give a sense of sector wide trends, and share tools and resources in terms of supporting organisations.</p> <p>Three key challenges have been identified relating to service delivery and front-line organisations. These are common and shared challenges wherever you sit in the sector.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial Challenge. Joint sector research estimated that the charity sector would lose about £4 billion over the next 12 weeks. The government did set up a dedicated fund for charities, £750 million split into two pots. There is a very big difference between the research recommendations and the amount from government. The longer distancing measures continue, restrictions remain in place and fundraising events are suspended, the longer the financial challenges will last. There are very few organisations that are not focused on their cash flow and forecasts. 2. Increase in demand. Not always obvious or direct, and can be the result of social distancing. 3. Pressure to think about purpose and mission. For some this might include closure of a service. <p>Feedback on impact: There was concern about returning to work and how impactful this work would be; Funders had been flexible which was positive. NVCO as an example lost 40% of income overnight from training, consultancy and</p>	

room hire. They initially thought that a return to normality would be viable in September but now this has been pushed back to January 2021. Many organisations seem to be going through similar processes. More work needs to be done around legal responsibilities and duties of Boards, and the impact of lockdown among staff and volunteers.

Board leadership:

Issues around board dynamics and operating remotely and making decisions has added complexity. There is legislation being passed through Parliament changing rules about members meetings so AGMs can take place online. The focus has been on crisis management; some Boards now need to focus on the longer term.

Board response:

Boards are dealing with this differently; showing understanding will be hugely valuable to staff. Dialogue about the level of Board involvement is important – e.g. how often should the board be meeting during the crisis? Even in a crisis the fundamentals of running an organisation cannot be forgotten. Looking at partnerships and mergers can be beneficial.

Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity (VUCA):

A planning tool for thinking about change and how your organisation should respond. VCOs can take a systematic approach to how they are operating and the responses they make in this situation.

Support from NCVO: Resources and Guidance on the NCVO website is now available to access for free for non-members.

[Scenario planning](#)

NCVO - Revised guidance on scenario planning

Coronavirus guidance:

- [Protecting your staff, volunteers and beneficiaries](#)
- [Contingency planning and financial implications](#)
- [Involving volunteers Webinar recordings](#)
- Webinars: [Board leadership in a pandemic](#)
[Governance during a pandemic](#)
- [Blogs and updates](#)

Questions from attendees

- *Brexit*: the impact of Brexit was raised as a potential fourth challenge to the sector. Responses from the sector have been reactive and will continue to be that way. The full implication of Brexit on this sector and the public and private sector cannot be fully understood. Any assistance in helping with forward thinking and planning to mitigate this impact would be helpful.

Following the meeting DF sent the following link (any reference to withdrawal agreement is now redundant):

[Brexit related guidance](#)

- *Legal guidance*: in reference to legal responsibilities for organisations, clarification was requested on what organisations can and can't do, as Public Health guidance is not always clear. DF confirmed that organisations are concerned around exposure and liability, particularly in relation to bringing

	<p>employees back to work and working with volunteers. NCVO will aim to keep the sector updated on such matters via their communications and website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Partnerships & Mergers</i>: in terms of organisations needing to think about partnerships and mergers: what do organisations need to be looking at?. DF stated two main triggers were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial difficulty. Cash flow issues over the next few months for example could lead to a managed closure or merger. - Shifts in the type of work now needing to be delivered. This could be easier to deliver in partnership or by joining expertise. The world around us has changed. <p>NVCO website has information on mergers and triggers. Following the meeting DF sent the following link:</p> <p>Merger support page</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management: the voluntary sector exists to provide person to person services. This becomes more and more difficult the longer the current situation continues. People may take risks when working with others in order for services to be provided. An enquiry about insurance provisions was made. <p>DF will speak to policy colleagues to see if this is something that has been explored at this time. There is unlikely to be any cover for actions which contravene government advice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Facing future challenges</i>: the NCVO national survey was completed by organisations of all sizes. An enquiry was made about how the sector is coping and what challenges they are facing based on different themes or size of organisation. Is there any intention to break that down? <p>NCVO are currently trying to be responsive and to influence through the work they are doing. They are building up a picture for the government as to implications. This does not feel like the work they would normally do in terms of research but case studies are being collected that they are hoping might be shared perhaps later in the year. This is currently driven by the need to influence but they will try to do some subsector themes as well. NCVO have a section on website for case studies and they would like to hear from organisations to help inform their work. Visit the website and feel free to contribute thoughts or a case study.</p> <p>Following the meeting DF sent the following links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice for your organisation • Tell us your experience <p>E-mail: Dan.francis@ncvo.org.uk @mynameisdanfran LinkedIn</p>	
3	<p>Emerging Organisational Needs – Jenny Greenfield, Deputy CEO, KCSC</p>	
	<p>Jenny Greenfield (JG), Deputy CEO explained KCSC is looking at emerging needs in the context of the services and support that they could offer.</p> <p>Tom Richards, Brenda Nambooze and Nada Sallam are currently working with organisations who have approached the Organisational Development team about funding needs. KCSC are now trying to look ahead at what they should provide over the coming months.</p> <p>A survey has been sent out asking about the effect that the response to Covid-19 has had on organisations and any support needs they may have. The more</p>	

feedback we can get the better including things that haven't been thought of before or that organisations would like to get people's views on.

Responses so far feature need for funding; need for support; how to make services work with social distancing and staff; capacity in premises; merging and collaboration and working in partnerships.

Other than a traditional one to one service with the Organisation Development team, more frequent online seminars for people with common issues are being considered. We are also looking at offering an online meeting room facility.

KCSC are thinking about the amount of information that is out there; is there a need to filter information or share with organisations the information? Thinking about innovation will online continue longer term or do you have to look at the next step in innovation?

Jess Millwood (JM) - Age UK have delivered as much online as possible but are thinking about digital exclusion across the borough and across generations. Open Age and other organisations have also raised this concern regarding the heightened impact for people who are digitally excluded and how we can collectively campaign or find a way to get to grips with this within the borough. Age UK have seen the significant affects to people in relation to access to food, information and communication. Those being supported who are digitally excluded are reporting higher levels of anxiety, isolation, boredom, low mood and loneliness.

Lucy Knight (LK) – Looking for clarity around the guidance at the moment. Public Health England (PHE) seem to be really keen for organisations to get back into working especially with vulnerable groups but on the other hand community centres can't open. Youth are out and about and no longer distancing, there is no containment or support available other than some outreach from some organisations like Harrow Club. Need to collectively lobby for clarity around those issues.

AS mentioned that KCSC are trying to organise a meeting with PHE around that question. PHE have produced FAQ's but if there are specific questions that organisations have KCSC can facilitate the gathering of these and set up a meeting to discuss them.

William Roberts (WR) - Unlocking is more complex than locking down. Now useful to start putting together what we are trying to achieve and push the positive rather than focusing on what we can't do. Guidance is difficult to navigate and contradicts itself. Looking at what others are trying to do is also helpful e.g. Hackney and their work on play services.

In terms of support from KCSC WR suggested that those that have venues could come together with a vision of what they want venues to be able to do. There will be different clusters of services sharing issues - the big one for everyone is getting people back on premises; can we start doing things outside?

Ann Goodger (AG) – there is concern about insurance and seeing what they are liable for if someone does become ill through engaging with them, at the foodbank for instance. Have any other organisations investigated this? What are the obligations there and is there any guidance?

Portia Thaxter (PT): How do you access the most vulnerable? What is the experience of over 65s who cannot access services, those who are self-isolating or those with disabilities?

	<p>JM provided an update on the emergency response from Age UK for those over 65. They Had nearly 900 referrals through NHS, Adult Social Care, RBKC Covid Hub, Mutual Aid, Councillors, community organisations and individuals worried about a neighbour. Contact has been made with about 500 people that they had not be in contact with before. JM encouraged attendees to signpost people to Age UK.</p> <p>Joe Batty (JB) mentioned attempts are being made to contact Residents' Associations as they know their neighbours and will be aware of any need for the service.⁹</p>	
4	<p>Post Covid Challenges for the Council – Tunde Olayinka, Director of Communities, RBKC</p>	
	<p>Tunde Olayinka (TO) introduced himself. He has been in the role for six weeks having started during Covid.</p> <p>How Covid has impacted on the Council: Central Government has provided some money to help but that was only to cover additional costs in relation to responding to Covid-19. The Council estimates a £40 million loss in revenue this financial year. They are not sure what easing will look like for local economy. Planning work for recovery has started. The Council pledged to involve communities earlier this year. Recovery will be based around national guideline workstreams of economy, environment, health and wellbeing and communities and civic. Communities and Civic falls under TO's remit. This is to ensure communities who are involved understand what is going on participate and drive decision making removing barriers to participation.</p> <p>Three goals are likely to be pursued but this is still at planning stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community dialogue – continuing to strengthen engagement. Interested in residents and housing associations. - VCS asset partnerships – looking at all of the relationships with VCS organisations and their role in supporting the recovery. - Communities – currently in a scoping faze. Started with a survey will continue with discursive engagement. <p>Future work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Looking to work better within the council to be more strategic. - Looking at funding envelope and ensuring that it aligns with community priorities. - Working better/more collaboratively with other funders. <p>TO also mentioned strengthening the relationship with the Community Resilience Group to ensure that co-design continues.</p> <p><u>Questions/feedback</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samia Badani (SB) – It is about building relationships. This local authority doesn't have an engagement strategy as it doesn't know the community it is engaging with. What will you do differently to make sure the relationship is more balanced? Need to see an effort to build a relationship. How do you attempt to approach that? <p>TO has not been able to visit as many organisations as he would have wished to. The priority in recent weeks had to be the vulnerable and those that were shielding.</p> <p>TO has three aims as the newly appointed Director of Communities. * How do we improve all the voices of our residents?</p>	

<p>* Removing barriers * Reaching out to harder to reach communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The topic of online meeting provision for communities to engage at this time was raised. <p>TO replied that part of the recovery work being done is how to have more discussions in social distancing environments. They have been speaking to different online providers to find solutions. Security issues have been encountered with Zoom, Teams works but not well. Citizens Lab is encouraging. TO would value feedback on any meetings where the online facility did not work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sonia Timlett (ST) from Equal People Mencap asked about the council's role with people with learning disabilities in North Kensington, how we can come together to have more opportunities to combat isolation and also how to prioritise people who are struggling? People with learning disabilities people can speak and want to be heard and involved. <p>This would fall under adult social care at the council but TO noted that removing barriers to participation would be a factor and the Communities team would support adult social care in this area.</p> <p>James from West London Zone talked about food support. Normally working in schools but now supporting vulnerable families, a key area they have found is around getting food. Finding the right access to food for families during holiday periods has been a really difficult thing to do. This has periodically been dependent on whether there is government support available at the time. Heading into the summer holidays, what has the council put in place to ensure there is the right amount of food provided, and access and clear guidance which was not previously present? This relates to the free school meals voucher system, and food banks when that is not in place. TO was not be able to speak about the school voucher scheme.</p> <p>AS highlighted the evaluation form for this meeting with a request to provide feedback for informing future meetings.</p>	<p>AS to follow up on vouchers</p>
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ATTENDANCE LIST

		Organisation
1	Abbas Dadou	Lancaster West Estate Residents Association
2	Angela During	
3	Angela Spence	KCSC
4	Ann Goodger	The Dalgarno Trust
5	Clare Richards	The ClementJames Centre
6	Dhanveer Dhanoa	KCSC
7	E Cohen	

8	Everine	
10	Folasade	Abundance Arts
11	Hayley Turner	KCSC
12	Isabella Niven	ACAVA Arts
13	James	West London Zone
14	Jenny Greenfield	RBKC
15	Jess Millwood	Age UK Kensington and Chelsea
16	Joe Batty	KCSC
17	Judith Blakeman	RBKC Councillor
18	Kalwant Sahota	WLCCG
19	Karima	Home Start
20	Lucy Knight	HD and LCAT
21	Nada Salam	KCSC
22	Nicola Butler	Young K&C
23	Noureddine	Grenfell Tower Trust
24	Portia Thaxter	
25	Samia Badani	SPACE Health and Wellbeing Hub
26	Sarah Sutton	Checkpoint
27	Sonia Benitez	Carers Network
28	Vesna	Pro Art & Co
29	Vittoria De Meo	FOR WOMEN
30	Zina Serageldin	KCSC
31	Zohra Davis	Al Hasaniya

The information above will appear in minutes for this meeting which will be made available to all the attendees and published on KCSC's website.