

COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE

17 March 2021

REPORT OF COALFIELD AREA VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR (VCS) NETWORK

The following report provides an update from Coalfield VCS Network for the Coalfield Area Committee from December 2020 to March 2021.

The Coalfields VCS Network have met on two occasions via Teams since the last Coalfield Area Committee.

28th January 2021

Presentations delivered:

Coalfield Community Hub – Pauline and Shaun updated VCS members about the work being delivered through the community hub. Easington Lane Community Access Point and Hub partners have continued to deliver support for residents, with shopping, befriending, prescription collection etc. The shopping bus is also being used. The group recognised that the befriending calls are taking longer as some residents are socially isolated and have been at home for almost a year with little contact with the ‘outside world’.

Support for young people/Coalfield Youth Project – Wendy updated the network with information about the play and youth services currently being delivered in the Coalfields area including Good Vibes, Safe Space Safe Place, Play work and Short breaks.

Additional items

Food bank discussion – the VCS partners discussed the food bank referral processes and the network discussed where food was available across the Coalfields. The distribution points noted were Penshaw Pantry, Loaves and Fishes, Space 4, St John’s Methodist Church and The Bethany Centre.

Elmore Consultation discussion – Pauline updated the group about Elmore Golf Course following the Let’s Talk consultation. Pauline shared the ideas which have come forward so far and asked VCS groups to encourage/support residents to complete the questionnaire.

25th February 2021

Presentations delivered:

Step Up Sunderland – Laura Bartlett introduced the Step Up Sunderland App to the group and shared with VCS organisations the benefits of using the app, rewards available, challenges, badges etc. As the app is used through a smart phone as a network, we discussed support for any residents who were struggling with ICT could be provided through Ken Lamb from Springboard, who is delivering the Coalfield Communities Connected project.

Social Prescribing – Dominic Harvey updated the network about the work of the Social Prescribing Team.

Lighthouse Therapy Group CIC – Mark Walsh updated the group about the project which was set up a couple of years ago and is based in Washington Village. The group deliver one to one, family therapy and try to keep it affordable to all. They also run Lighthouse Adventures for young people and have worked with Springboard Adventures to deliver this programme.

Additional item

Coalfields VCS video – the VCS partners have agreed it would be great to put together a small promotional clip showcasing some of the fantastic work being delivered across the network and to promote what is being delivered. Wendy offered to work with young people from the Flatts youth forum on this project.

All meetings have been well attended on Teams with 30+ organisations taking part. All meetings close with an information share and it is fantastic opportunity to hear about the delivery of services/activities for residents by VCS groups in these unprecedented times.

Sunderland City Council in its continued commitment to support a thriving VCS in the city seeks to bring additional capacity to the sector through the recruitment of 5 Community Support Workers.

Contact: Wendy Cook, Area Network Representative
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