

20 March 2019

REPORT OF COALFIELD AREA VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR NETWORK

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report provides an update with regard to the Coalfield Area Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Network

2. Background

- 2.1 To develop the capacity and influence of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) across the City, Area Networks have been established and delegates represent the Networks at Area Committee taking forward issues on behalf of the whole VCS in the area, reporting on area priority delivery by the VCS, and reporting back, providing a two-way flow of communication.
- 2.2 Coalfield Area Network delegates will present a report to each Area Committee meeting informing Members of activity, progress, issues and concerns of the sector.

3. Coalfield Voluntary and Community Sector Network (VCSN) Progress Report

The Coalfield VCSN has met three times since the last Area Committee in November 2018.

3.1 November 2018

Councillor Peter Walker was introduced to the group. Councillor Walker is visiting all Networks across the City to see how the VCS Networks operate and feed into the area working across the City.

Path to Excellence

Patrick Garner introduced phase 2 of the Path to Excellence - working together to improve hospital services in Sunderland and South Tyneside.

Care Home Life, Healthwatch

Wendy Hadlington and Audrey Thompson from Healthwatch were in attendance to give a presentation about the work they had carried out in all care homes across the City. They have gathered feedback from care home residents, relatives, friends and staff who have told them what it's like to live in the care home. Reports on each care home in the city are available on their website. This is a tool to support residents in decision making should they have the need to look for a care home for themselves, family or friends.

<http://www.healthwatchesunderland.com/care-home-life-what-its-really-like>

ShARP

David Snowdon raised awareness about the services ShARP offer regarding benefits and debt advice. The Advice on Prescription project is delivered from GP surgeries in the Coalfield and has now been in operation for almost 3 years. The project has cost £140,000 and has recovered £1.8m in unclaimed benefits back into the pockets of local people.

3.2 January 2019

Front Door Project – AGE UK

Melanie Dunn gave a presentation about the Front Door Project. The aims of the project are:

- Encouraging individuals to understand their conditions
- Providing information/signposting (including assisted) to activities and clubs within the community
- Promoting education (referrals to cardiac rehab, professionals etc.)
- Supporting individuals through the process of planned lifestyle change towards self-care
- Person centred Planning (using Star Outcome tool, PAM & activation plans)
- A holistic approach to addressing needs

- Supporting decision making regarding health & wellbeing
- Providing the link between community services, health & social care

Recovery College

Kim Dobson, Sunderland Care and Support, gave an overview of Recovery College which supports people who have lived experience of mental health problems to learn new skills and abilities in a friendly and supportive environment. It is designed and led by service users and their carers and offers a range of free recovery focused educational courses over three terms during the year. Local information and coffee mornings are held at Bramble Hollow, Hetton and Houghton Primary Care Centre. Kim showed a DVD which had been made by students and gave a first hand account of the support they had received from Recovery College.

3.3 February 2019

Citizens Advice Sunderland

Hannah Finney gave a presentation about Citizens Advice Sunderland, the UK's largest independent advice service. It is independent, impartial, confidential and free. There are two offices (Waterloo Place and The Galleries) which provide advice on benefit and debt issues, housing, employment and consumer issues. Drop in or appointment based support is available.

Period Dignity Project

The group discussed the provision of sanitary-ware in community buildings and projects across the Coalfield area. Members of the group were keen to support the initiative being developed by Councillors, and offered support including making up packs and distributing/collecting sanitary products. The group also discussed period poverty and the provision of sanitary-ware at food banks etc...

VCS Network meetings continue to be well attended and are seen as the recognised route for local organisations to receive and share information with Sunderland City Council, statutory and voluntary sector partners and each other. Area Priorities are discussed and information provided is used to inform area priorities via the Place and People Boards. On average 30 – 35 people attend the meetings and over 100 are on the mailing list. All local organisations are encouraged to engage with the Network and take part in activities and meetings.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Members are requested

- To note the contents of the report
- To continue to support the Sector when developing and implementing actions against local priorities
- To use information gathered from Network meetings to inform current and future priorities

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