Communities of Interest Q&A Forum Notes Wednesday 29th April 2020 10:00-11.30am

Attendees

- Ali Kaye Leeds Older People's Forum
- Annette Morris Voluntary Action Leeds
- Charis Green Leeds Society for Deaf & Blind People
- Charlotte James Leeds GATE
- Daisy Morgan Forum Central
- Damian Dawtry Feel Good Factor
- Dave Paterson Leeds Food Aid Network
- James Allen Beacon Leeds
- Jane Li Home-Start
- Jez Coram Forum Central
- Karen Fenton Forum Central
- Karl Witty Forum Central
- Luke Aylward Leeds Autism AIM
- Nik Peasgood Leeds Women's Aid
- Owen Walker Leeds Autism AIM
- Paula Gardner BARCA Leeds
- **Pip Goff** Forum Central
- Rachael Loftus Leeds City Council
- Sally Egan Women's Lives Leeds
- Sam Powell Leeds City Council's Communities Team, Migration
- Stuart Morrison Healthwatch
- Val Hewison Carers Leeds
- Wendy Cork Leeds Autism AIM/Advonet

Session aims - Pip

- Want to bring people together and explore the work we can do together, as well as how VAL and Forum Central can best support your organisations.
- Not just at the present time, but what opportunities are there to embrace and progress
 the equalities agenda so we take the best learnings that are emerging through to beyond
 Covid.
- Keen to understand everyone's views relating to their Community of Interest (CoI), but also explore opportunities for intersectional work.

An update on the Shielding group - Rachael

- 22,500 people in Leeds have been identified as extremely medically vulnerable based on estimates from Leeds Care Record. So far, the Government has sent 18,000 letters and only 11,000 of those people have confirmed receipt by registering on the National website. Those people that have registered have been contacted by, text, email or phone.
- There will be a higher proportion of people in the Communities of Interest who haven't received shielding advice. Note people are only being given the advice, they can choose what they do with it. But keen to hear how we can improve knowledge and understanding around what the letter means & the help available to enable people to shield safely.

- Concern that national messages around going out to exercise etc conflict with advice for shielding. If you are shielding you must seek medical advice as soon as you develop symptoms, which is a very different message from that given to the rest of the population who are told to stay at home and isolate.
- Seeking input from the group as to where information can be improved for people who
 have been advised to shield. Also any specific considerations from CoI in terms of how
 support can be best provided.
- Confirmed areas where less people have registered are generally those that are more
 deprived, but the relationship is not linear for example there is a higher number of
 people with these conditions living in these areas. Also, there is a lower number of
 people confirmed as registered in both the upper and very low age brackets.
- Need to get support for people who are shielding solid because we expect advice to shield will continue when lockdown ends for the general population; it's an important period now to reach out to people and make sure they understand the messages they're getting.
 - Annette There's confusion around the shielding message, particularly amongst BAME communities. The letter is complicated, and the process of registering not user friendly for certain groups.
- A very specific set of people have received letters people were identified through different waves and not everyone was informed at the same time, with some people still being informed now. It's hard to give people a definite 'no' that they shouldn't be shielding.
 - Note shielding is not to be undertaken lightly with no ability to go out, no halfway house, you have to follow the rules strictly as possible. It's all done through NHS records especially relevant to the migrant community. There will be people not included but who know they have these conditions we need to find a way of getting help to them. Sam to pick up with Rachael.
 - 'Routes to Support' document everyone should have this available when talking to people who are shielding/might need to shield. Includes info on how you can help them register, and support that's available. Rachael to share.
- Val family carers who live in the same household are worried about bringing the virus in, Rachael confirmed this is a concern & has been looking at models for getting PPE to people who are not professionals but might want to have some aspect of PPE when caring for family members. Val to pick up with Rachael.

Resources/communications - Pip/Karl

- A weekly email is being distributed by the Forum Central team; people agreed this is broadly useful and manageable.
 - Please continue to inform Forum Central what would work best for everyone, and how we can share and use information most effectively.
- Perspectives gathered in partnership with Healthwatch and Voluntary Action Leeds are being collated into a weekly overview report (led by Karl), which will be shared within weekly update emails.
 - We need people's support to identify the most pertinent issues across communities; a forum like this helps to tease out the priorities that cross cut across communities, whilst recognising that communities aren't homogeneous and there are complexities within each category. Feedback on the reports is much appreciated and will enable us to evolve it to make it the most effective in communicating with people who make decisions across the city.

- This is a key part of the Col work that people hear what the issues are and that something different happens because of that. The information is being used as a resource for central and locality hubs to enable them to respond well to different communities, but also for key decision makers. Demonstrated the value of flagging key issues for example the value of testing people in the third sector and communicating this information leading to people being tested.
 - Need to make sure all this work is an opportunity for health inequalities to be seen as a priority in the city and for how we reshape things coming out of this.
- A dedicated section on the Forum Central website is in progress to enable all information relating to Col to be accessed in one place.
- Also a small pot of funding is available if it would help organisations to support the Col
 work in terms of people being able to link with other organisations within their networks.
 Approx. £1,500 per organisation available to recognise that this work takes time, and this
 might make the work more possible.
- Aware there has been a drop in volunteer numbers let us know of any issues around volunteering.

Further points of discussion

- Rachael how can we understand how the compound of inequalities has caused people
 to suffer more, and what can we learn from that experience before we plan for recovery.
 Using massive learnings that we've gathered should be the overarching key message for
 the third sector.
- Wendy important to connect with people that are isolated from services/falling through gaps.
 - Ali this has been good for older people's services in terms of identifying people who have further needs e.g. mental/physical health issues, and getting them the right support. But this has led to increasing pressure on older people's organisations to meet a level of need they're not set up to do LOPF is looking into this in more detail.
- Ali issue around illiteracy; older people on their own might not be reading the letter or getting someone to read it for them.
 - Rachael Important to remember that it's the fault of the person writing the letter.
 Huge need has emerged around people who are hard of hearing, or have had
 increased difficulty hearing people who are wearing masks letters need to be
 more understandable. Comes back to how we can harvest these learnings how
 could this have been done differently, what's helpful for going forward.
 - Wendy everyone wants simple clear messages, we shouldn't have to ask for an easy read version.
 - Also important that support with understanding communication difficulties is part of volunteer training e.g. help people understand/read letters. Pip confirmed work is being done on this.
- Damian much concern around pressure cooker situations e.g. in some ethnic minorities where lots of people are living together; a rise in domestic violence (DV) for men as well as women, DV for men hotline gone through roof; Leeds Dads say people are reporting breakdown of relationships with children. Important to consider other generations affected besides older people. Looking to the future, what can we do around preparing for a recession during the last recession suicide rates shot up in men, with a huge link with unemployment rates.

- Damian a magazine has been produced for people in LS8 & LS9 including information and entertainment, particularly for people with limited technology, and some are leftover.
 Let Damian know if anyone distributing parcels etc in these areas would like some to give out.
- Jane agree with issues emerging around communication and language, and the need to go back to simple language across agencies. Important to do anything we can to support each other.
- Charis offer available for people to receive calls in BSL, and the blind community. Get
 in touch if you know of people who might need support. Charis can share details.
 Organisation is concerned that there's a group of individuals that aren't able to
 communicate without technology, so they're trying to encourage connection there, and
 also conscious of people for whom social groups have previously been a lifeline.