

**Communities of Interest Virtual Session Notes**  
**Thursday 20 August 2020**  
**2-3.30pm**

**Attendees**

- **Ali Spaul** – Forum Central
- **Amber Wilson** – Basis
- **Amy Rebane**, Outreach Development Manager, NIHR Leeds Biomedical Research Centre
- **Anna Chippindale** – Healthwatch Leeds
- **Charis Green** – Leeds Society for Deaf and Blind People
- **Emily Turner** – Women’s Lives Leeds
- **Francesca Wood** – Healthy Holidays
- **Iona Lyons** – Voluntary Action Leeds (chair)
- **Jez Coram** – Forum Central
- **Karen Fenton** – Forum Central
- **Karl Witty** – Forum Central
- **Owen Walker** – Leeds Autism AIM
- **Pip Goff** – Forum Central

**Introductions/check ins**

- **Amber (sex workers):**
  - Still working predominantly social distancing/online – assessing how much/what can happen in doors. Priority will be outreach and probably include making adaptations to the van
  - Young person’s service is socially distancing 1:1
  - Peer Mentoring – to support more informal questions – particularly for new members
  - Staff meeting still all online
  - Food Parcel service is not sustainable and slowly reducing that and referring to other services
  - Online access is still difficult for some – particularly therapeutic services
  - Language – looking at work developed by LCC and Migration
- **Amy (research)**
  - At the beginning of Covid-19 outbreak there was a flurry of research- a lot of it is slowing down. Numbers in hospital is reducing so reliable sample numbers are dwindling
  - Some good success from drugs test to support treatment are positive
  - Nursing pathways to develop appropriate training – lots of PTSD emerging and such staff need training to support that need
  - Paused intervention is picking up again

- All staff need to be kitted up – which is a challenging in terms of patient support, e.g. hearing through full suits with fans
- **Anna (young people)**
  - Some really relishing the opportunity to get out and other pushed further back into isolation
  - YP – first YouthWatch meeting taking place next week since lockdown. Updates will come from that
- **Charis (Deaf/Blind community)**
  - Returning to activity – no one booked as hoped but people did turn up. Don't want to encourage people to gather on mass but do recognise a need to bring people together again.
  - Staff's main feedback from coming together for staff meeting felt mentally much better for having reconnected in person.
  - Cycling/Street café rules to enable cafes to put facilities outside. Huge challenges around sensory issues for people coming together.
- **Emily (women)**
  - Two groups – people who want to go out and others who are apprehensive. Those who are keen to go out are not socially distancing well which pushes the apprehensive back
  - Mental health – revisit video
  - Return to normal/return to work? Juggling so much currently and real anxiety about near future expectations
  - Concerns about future generations, from young age to older worried about missed education
  - Long term effects of Covid – 19 what health issues?
  - Unemployment – examples of being asked to extend maternity. Women have kids in backgrounds but men not appearing to have that. Women not going for promotions because a feeling of lack of productivity in last few months compared to male counterparts. Gender inequality has stepped back and much input to
    - Emily to talk through report at future Zoom with dedicated slot
- **Francesca (Healthy Holidays):**
  - HHs been widely adapted this year to ensure young people are fed and remain connected so that they can start school effectively in Sept. Demand for places really high with kids and families desperate for things to do.
  - Activity run for the community by the community so really positive, want to ensure that continues.
  - Potential for funding in Autumn for ongoing input.
  - Please visit Uniform exchange website –supported by Zero Waste Leeds campaign average spend on uniform £350/year
- **Iona:**
  - **BME hub**

- The vaccine trials are still on ongoing concern and worries over disproportionate effect on BME communities from COVID 19, worries of a spike in the winter.
  - Families want children back in school in September - the stress is getting to parents, and particularly mothers seem to be affected the worst but still worried about a spike in the winter.
  - Now that lockdown is being eased, community groups who have been providing food parcels have found that the level of poverty in some BAME communities means they have had to continue.
  - Ensuring the issues raised through Black Live Matter do not get brushed under the carpet in a year's time and all is forgotten.
  - Communities feeling the impact of social distancing during religious celebrations.
  - The impact of deaths in communities and cultural norms being changed had affected lots of communities.
  - Will BAME led organisations survive the aftermath of the pandemic and be able to continue to deliver vital services the communities need.
  - Navigating through all the changes in information as the lockdown eases.
- **Young Lives Leeds**
    - For a number of organisations the summer playschemes are taking place, lots of planning has gone in to these sessions, however attendee numbers will be low as invitations were sent to families whose children are known to providers and who had a low level of need to reduce the number of staff/volunteers working with the child.
    - More organisations are increasing the number of staff being office based or incorporating a mix of home/office working, they are also looking at the possibility of starting group sessions in their centres.
    - All are expecting an increase in demand on their staff as schools return and have encouraged them to look after their own wellbeing and to take their holiday in this quieter period.
    - Families know that schools return in September but there is still apprehension about how this will be managed.
    - Most organisations are expecting an increase in demand for mental health services in September and wondering how this will be managed as access to services was taking a long time pre lockdown.
    - As lockdown eases and organisations return to "normal" there may also be an increase in the number of Safeguarding

issues that are uncovered as face to face contact with families restarts.

- **Karen**

- **Mental Health network:**

- Exacerbation of existing MH needs with Covid and lockdown
    - Lull has passed and crisis support access has increased.
    - New presentation of MH needs is later to increased complexity
    - Young people – boredom picked up, police involvement and increased tension.
    - Staff well-being, Leeds MHWB services increasing provision and therapy for staff.

- **PSI network:**

- Reluctant to go back out – transport and wider elements play into that.
    - Fear that they will lose what positive has been implemented – digital connection
    - Increased use of pavements as people encouraged to walk and café's move outside makes it difficult for people with sensory issues

- **Karl (Local Care Partnerships)**

- Risks to staff and how to manage risks to staff as an organisation. Some slight conversation around litigation.
  - Substance misuse – alcohol referrals are picking up as services are opening up a bit.
  - Lots of work around digitalisation – data sharing with wider organisations, how to access and collect together in order to get a more integrated and intelligent system.
  - Need to keep conversations about diversity going. How are organisations refocusing to address disproportionate health effects
  - Need to recognise that winter and flu season is coming.

- **Jez (learning disability)**

- Fear about outbreaks and specifically if effects support workers' continued input
  - Understanding face masks and when must wear them
  - Working through relationships outside of Zoom when informal conversations not happening as would in office
  - Couple of places have reopened their cafes – others waiting for risk assessment sign offs. Lots of other businesses within the area closed down so considering increased take up.
  - Still people falling through the gaps, e.g. not on GP register, not qualified within categories – need to keep seeking out the hidden individuals in need of support.
  - Looking ahead to Winter – flu vacs etc wanting to ensure that happens

- **Owen (people with a learning disability and/or Autism):**
  - Challenges from AIM and External Organisations
    - Mental health services are really needed. Feedback has been that new referrals are not being accepted or put on extremely long waiting lists
    - Carers lack of digital inclusion means lots of people are not receiving any support. A real need to look beyond digital inclusion and to use traditional methods of inclusion/engagement
    - Carers needing extra support
    - Lots of people being frustrated or shutting off entirely from outside their bubble
    - Travel training or resources needed to help people feel more confident on public transport again
    - One to one outreach support is experiencing a high demand but there is little or reduced provision to meet this demand
    - Parents/carers not letting people out of the house!
    - Reopening paid for services is being done on a priority basis so some people will not receive support for significant amounts of time.
    - Online support requiring lots of effort and at capacity. Engagement is high in some services but this requires lots of pre and post support.
    - Social Workers are even more overwhelmed and passing on caseloads to orgs that cannot meet this demand.
    - Demand for online groups for autistic teenagers is not being met.
  - Asks of decision makers
    - More provision for non-digital inclusion with emergency funding attached
    - More provision for online groups for young people
    - Autism specific social workers who understand the needs of clients
    - Use of local authority funding (direct payments etc) for activities to be temporarily increased so that those services who have capacity to take on more people either face to face or remotely can do so quickly
    - Recognition that providing remote support has put increased pressure on services and that this will have an impact on services returning to normal as there will be a crossover of provision of face to face/remote provision

*Examples and learning for getting together face-to-face – fed back during the roundup:*

- Befriending services are an idea people are exploring– linking people in order to support social interaction... without services having to get involved would be a great solution but that's not necessarily an easy thing to facilitate.
- Staff's main feedback from coming together for staff meeting - felt mentally much better for having reconnected in person and keen to build up face to face interactions.
- Using technology such as Planning Apps, and resources available online to develop contingency plans when people are going out, e.g. mitigating and supporting public transport worries
- Implemented a booking system to manage numbers for a social gathering. Not many (if any) booked but people did show up.

### **Vaccine Research – Amy Rebane**

100,000 nationally signed up to vaccine research study, 3,000 from Leeds which was the highest representation.

Those disproportionately affected by Covid-19 are least likely to take part in the research study.

Vaccine hesitancy is complex and want to understand what is going on for communities and how can we break down barriers to access. How can communications be improved, what information do people need in order to make an informed decision about taking part in the research?

- Asking what do you want to know about vaccine research?
- What changes can we make to ensure the research is inclusive?
- Must be underpinned by meaningful relationships
- Open agendas to cultivate conversation and connection
- Tailor the offer and have a flexible way of working
- This would help accessing underrepresented people such as older people, women, BAME
- Flu vaccines might affect timings when you can do the other vaccine.
  
- Backing from public health report including the weight to address health inequalities.
- Looking likely that the Imperial vaccine will come into trial in Autumn.
- Looking for facilities to deliver the work – Universities being explored to host research – raised that community sites in the heart of communities should be considered
- What does a vaccine trial look like?
  - Not knowing would be a barrier.

- Learning disability perspective – would be a difficult job to go through the process of what a vaccine is, and what signing up a trial would mean. Invited Amy to a members meet up
- Amber – scepticism and conspiracy theories are being heard. Uptake really positive when it's in the trusted venue with trusted people.
- Invitations from others to join networks to speak directly with organisations who are connected to communities.
- Flexibility is key – obvious that one thing doesn't work for all but complex thing to implement.

Forum Central to share emails to enable follow up.

### **Digital Inclusion (Anna & Karl)**

People's Voices Group noticed that services with digitalising really quickly – timely moment to have a "before and after" snap shot. Also wider range of options on offer to evaluate.

Digital inclusion meeting happening fortnightly currently. Partnership working has been really strong.

Want to create a strong mechanism to feed into that from the CoI network, want to feed into the monthly report.

Potential to adapt/add specific questions around digital inclusion to the fortnightly prompt – we need to spell out the connections between digital and community needs – call out areas of concern.

### **Other Updates (Pip)**

42% people don't know how to get testing form recent survey. Need to keep messages going out that people can and should get tested. Fearnville and Kirkstall have had big rates of people going for tests – Kirkstall lots travelling and Fearnville high numbers accessing that centre are from Harehills. Community response has been really positive and decision makers grateful. Good proactive example includes Bilal Mosque and connecting with those who have trusted relationships and connections.

People presenting with greater need due to delayed presentation so health and wellbeing needs more complex.

Laptops still available to loan from Forum Central – get in touch with [daisy.morgan@forumcentral.org.uk](mailto:daisy.morgan@forumcentral.org.uk) for more information.

School Uniform Exchange on Facebook - set up by Zero Waste Leeds with LCF & LCC funding. Encourages people to reuse uniform as individuals or as groups.

Has really taken off - not surprising, with average uniform spend per child at £350 a year! <https://www.zerowasteleeds.org.uk/tips/leeds-school-uniform-exchange/>

Demand for HH places has been v high - kids desperate for things to do (primary & secondary). They've been a useful stepping stone for preparing kids for socially distanced school. Francesca is very keen to understand communities of interest gaps in provision - who aren't we reaching? What are the priorities?

Also shared these links:

- 15 second video of Team Creative, Chapeltown, to make you smile: [https://www.instagram.com/p/CD3SWOyF lc/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/CD3SWOyF lc/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)
- Team Creative interview: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=597679267561492>