

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD			
Report Title	Health and Social Care Integration: Co-ordinating the Voluntary and Community Sector Response		
Contributors	Mark Drinkwater, Voluntary Action Lewisham Tony Nickson, Voluntary Action Lewisham	Item No.	6
Class	Part 1 / Part 2	Date: 25.3.14	
Strategic Context	VAL will discuss its role in co-ordinating a Voluntary and Community Sector response to health and social care integration.		

1. Purpose

1.1 This report presents ways in which the Lewisham's Voluntary and Community Sector contributes to integrated health and social care in the borough. It highlights the challenges of co-ordinating such a diverse and disparate set of organisations in this task, and asks how partners could focus further collaboration to enable wider co-ordination of the work of voluntary and community organisations towards integrated health and social care and the delivery of Lewisham's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

2. Recommendation/s

Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are recommended to:

- Consider recent developments in practice in integrated and collaborative working, and to explore where new or different ways could be identified to enhance our collective effort to co-ordinate the contributions of the Voluntary and Community Sector towards providing better integrated health and social care to Lewisham residents.

3. Policy Context

3.1 The activity of the Health and Wellbeing Board is focused on delivering the strategic vision for Lewisham as established in Shaping our future – Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy and in Lewisham's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

3.2 The Health and Social Care Act 2012 requires the Health and Wellbeing Board to encourage persons who arrange for the provision of any health or social services in the area to work in an integrated manner, for the purpose of advancing the health and wellbeing of the area.

3.3 Lewisham's Voluntary and Community Sector has been an active contributor to the development of Lewisham's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The strategy recognises that:

*"Voluntary and Community organisations and groups across the Borough provide extensive depth and reach into our communities and through their work provide intelligence on community needs, have knowledge about issues that affect health and wellbeing and represent the voice of our communities"**

The strategy acknowledges that

"This sector is uniquely placed to complement statutory services and plays a vital role in providing expertise and input into service design and delivery"

Sector organisations contributed to the strategy and identified a number of issues and barriers including

"Some of the key barriers to improving health and wellbeing: lack of organisational join up, a lack of continuity between services, knowing what opportunities are available and having the time and space to consider which opportunities to access"

**All quotes from Lewisham's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.*

4. Background

4.1 The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) is a diverse sector. In Lewisham, there are approximately 800 VCS organisations. The majority of these organisations are working to promote better health and wellbeing. Broadly speaking these organisations are charities. Some will be small organisations run by a handful of volunteers but others will be larger, regional charities with a professional workforce.

4.2 The capacity of some sections of the public sector to deliver direct services is reducing, and at the same time there is increasing expectation both locally and nationally that the Voluntary and Community Sector will step in to fill the gaps.

5. Co-ordination of the VCS response to Health and Social Care integration

5.1 Voluntary Action Lewisham (VAL) has become increasingly involved in co-ordinating health and social care work since the changes arising from the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Examples include:

- Community Connections project – a consortium of Voluntary Sector partners that now delivers a preventative community development programme.
- Safeguarding – VAL is a member of the Safeguarding Adults Board, and co-ordinates the Communications and Engagement subgroup
- Healthwatch – VAL is the delivery body for Healthwatch Lewisham

- Health and Social Care Forum - Co-ordination of borough-wide forum of Voluntary and Community Organisations involved in Health and Social Care,

6. Collaborative working in responses to changes in health and social care

6.1 One of the most exciting initiatives that VAL is involved in is the Community Connections project. This is a preventative community development programme that started last year and is funded by Lewisham Council until 2015. The project targets individuals with support needs. These individuals are supported to access local community resources that help them maintain their independence and live fulfilling lives.

6.2 Community Connections is delivered by organisations involved in a voluntary sector consortium. The five organisations are: VAL, Carers Lewisham, Age UK Lewisham and Southwark, Sage Educational Trust and Lewisham Disability Coalition. Volunteer Centre Lewisham also promotes volunteer opportunities as part of Community Connections. The bid for the Community Connections project was written by VAL and the project is now led by Age UK, with staff employed at three of the consortium members and supported by VAL and Carers Lewisham.

7. Challenges and opportunities

7.1 The Voluntary and Community Sector in Lewisham is not a single organisation, but is made up of hundreds of independent - and independently-minded organisations. The sector does not have the same kinds of infrastructure around communications channels or accountability that a large public body has. Co-ordinating the efforts of this large and diverse collection of organisations presents challenges in capacity, communication, and, collaborative working.

While organisations in the Voluntary and Community Sector are often well placed to innovate and respond more rapidly and flexibly to local need, many are experiencing increasing demand from individual service users, and at the same time experiencing increasing pressure on resources as a result of scarcer funding. Pressure just to keep going can be a severe limit to the capacity of many groups to adapt and engage creatively in a co-ordinated or collaborative effort towards integrated working.

The Health and Social Care Forum, convened and supported by VAL, is one way that the Voluntary and Community Sector can come together to understand and engage in co-ordinated action towards strategic goals. Partners from the Health and Wellbeing Board have contributed to this Forum, and the Forum was a key point of contact with community groups in consulting on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This Forum and other focused engagement methods will be increasingly important in ensuring both

effective co-ordination of the work of Voluntary and Community Sector groups, and how we, collectively, are able to demonstrate the impact of this work in improving the health and wellbeing of Lewisham residents

Community Connections is a new collaboration led by Voluntary and Community organisations in Lewisham. It aims to build stronger and more co-ordinated local links between people in the community, local public and voluntary sector, and informal voluntary activity. This kind of collaborative effort supports the preventative focus of the Health and Wellbeing strategy. Collaborative working like this is intensive and demanding on time from partners, especially in the early stages of consortium development, and can present considerable challenges to groups with limited or reducing resources. This style of collaboration will be an important method in co-ordinating an integrated approach to health and social care, but will not suit every group.

These are just two examples of the approaches the Voluntary and Community Sector is taking towards co-ordinating activity towards strategic goals - each approach bringing its challenges to capacity, communication, and, collaborative working for Voluntary and Community Sector organisations.

All partners at the Health and Wellbeing Board have staff working towards community engagement, and these activities are beginning to join up in a meaningful way (Healthwatch and CCG community engagement activity for example). Are there new or different ways we can find to enhance partners' efforts in community engagement and development that would help achieve a wider co-ordination of the contributions the Voluntary and Community Sector towards providing better integrated health and social care to Lewisham residents? The Board is invited to consider this question.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report or its recommendations.

9. Legal implications

9.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report or its recommendations

10. Crime and Disorder Implications

10.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report or its recommendations

11. Equalities Implications

11.1 There are no specific equalities implications arising from this report or its recommendations.

12. Environmental Implications

12.1 There are no specific environmental implications arising from this report or its recommendations.

13. Conclusion

13.1 The activities of Lewisham's Voluntary and Community Sector is a key element in Lewisham's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and Sector organisations have made significant contributions to the consultation and development of this Strategy. This paper outlines some of the challenges and opportunities facing Voluntary and Community organisations in contributing to strategic goals, in particular the integration of Health and Social Care services. These include pressures on capacity, and the challenges of communication and co-ordination of a large and disparate set of independent organisations. All members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are committed to community engagement in one way or another. This paper invites discussion on how we might collaborate in new ways to enhance our collective efforts co-ordinate the essential contributions of the Voluntary and Community Sector to achieve our shared aim of improving the health and wellbeing of Lewisham residents.

If there are any queries on this report, please contact Mark Drinkwater, Health Inequalities and Social Care Officer at Voluntary Action Lewisham on 020 8314 9841.