

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you to all who were able to attend the **Preparing and Planning for Better Health and Wellbeing** event at the Rothes Halls on Wednesday 16th April.

The event was attended by over 70 representatives from voluntary sector organisations involved in improving health and wellbeing throughout Fife, as well as representatives from NHS Fife and Fife Council.

Professor James McGoldrick, Chair of NHS Fife, opened the meeting by taking the opportunity to thank the voluntary sector for its contribution to health improvement in Fife. He went on to outline the current health challenges facing Fife, discuss what he thinks the voluntary sector brings to improving health and how NHS Fife and the voluntary sector can best work together to improve health and wellbeing.



Following Professor McGoldrick, Bryan Poole, Manager of CVS Fife, set the scene for the day as an opportunity to discuss how the voluntary sector can maximise its contribution to the Health Agenda. He began by summarising the activities of the past three years, explaining that three local Voluntary Sector Health and Wellbeing Forums had been developed in Fife in 2005 to mirror the three newly-formed Community Health Partnerships (CHPs). Each Forum has its own democratically elected representative who attends CHP meetings on behalf of the voluntary sector and reports back to the Forum.

He went on to outline the successes of the Forums, which initially had a high level of participation and saw competitive elections for representatives to the CHPs. The establishment of the Forums and their facilitation of voluntary sector representation on the CHPs provided a setting for health issues, such as the Joint Health Improvement Plan (JHIP), to be discussed by the sector, and saw the voluntary sector being regarded as a participant in the health agenda by other partners.

Bryan then explained that the experience of those involved in the Forums had led to the conclusion that the breadth and often high level of business discussed at the CHPs was not always relevant to the voluntary sector. In addition, many organisations provide services across more than one CHP area, or are based in one area but provide services that are the responsibility of another CHP. This led to a lack of focused discussion at the Forums and made it difficult for representatives to know what to report on, which in turn led to a significant decrease in attendance and a need to re-examine the form and function of the forums.

Reflection on the Forums at a meeting of the Chairs and Representatives of the current forums, along with the emergence, in response to demand, of a Voluntary Sector Mental Health Forum and the success of the Voluntary Sector Children's Forum resulted in a proposal to restructure the Voluntary sector Health and Wellbeing Forums on a thematic, rather than geographical, basis. This would

enable groups with more common interests to come together and discuss issues which are relevant to them, leading to improved networking, communication and information-sharing and more effective representation, as well as providing a resource for thematic consultation and participation in policy and decision-making processes. (See CVS fife presentation for diagram)



Bryan introduced Lyndsay Macadam, Development/Capacity Building Officer at CVS fife, who explained that it is proposed to restructure the Voluntary Sector Health and Wellbeing forums and operate five, Fife-wide, thematic forums around the themes of Mental Health, Children and Young People, Drug & Alcohol Services, Older People's Services and Disability. A Fife-wide Voluntary Sector Health and Wellbeing Coordinating Group would act as a central hub for coordinating information exchange, providing support for representatives from the thematic forums and representatives on the CHPs and ensuring effective communication and participation between the voluntary sector forums and partnership groupings. (See CVS fife presentation for diagram)

Participants were then split into workshops to consider the following questions:

1. What do you think about the proposal to move to thematic groupings?
2. Have we identified the right thematic groupings?
3. How will the Fife-Wide Voluntary Sector Health & Wellbeing Coordination Group work?

Feedback from the workshops can be found later in the document.

Following the workshops, Vivienne Brown, Fife Health & Wellbeing Alliance Partnership Co-ordinator, gave an update on the Joint Health Improvement Plan (JHIP), which is now at the stage of holding a series of workshops focused on making connections between lead partners and service deliverers in order to translate the focus areas of the JHIP into action. She reminded attendees that the members of the existing Health and Wellbeing had been actively involved in the development of the JHIP and encouraged them to ensure that the new Forums focus on reducing health inequalities in the community and continue to influence health and wellbeing agenda in Fife. Contact details for Vivienne can be found at the end of her presentation.



Fife Health & Wellbeing Alliance...Strengthening Fife's Future

The morning was brought to a close with a presentation from Lynsay Anderson, Keep Well Project Manager. Keep Well is an anticipatory care project aimed at reducing health inequalities by inviting 45-64 year olds in the most deprived areas to attend a 45 health check which will cover a range of health and lifestyle issues. The voluntary sector has an important role to play in the Keep Well project, as it is anticipated that referrals will be made to voluntary sector

organisations, particularly in the fields of mental health, drug and alcohol services, welfare advice and employability. Lynsay will be holding a series of meetings in the near future to discuss voluntary sector participation with organisations that provide those services. Contact details for Lynsay can be found at the end of her presentation.



Feedback from Workshops

Overall there was a general acceptance of the proposal to move towards thematic forums.

People felt that the thematic forums would:

- Be simpler
- Be more relevant to those attending
- Represent an opportunity to focus on specific issues
- Be more likely to have an effective influence on policy
- Represent an opportunity to participate in the development of partnership groupings such as CHPs, MHPs, etc.
- Provide an opportunity for effective networking
- Raise the profile of the groups involved
- Offer maximum effect for minimum input
- Be a platform for raising awareness of the role of the voluntary sector
- Be a more efficient use of time
- Reduce isolation
- Be more effective at identifying issues
- Be more natural as Fife-wide
- Breathe new life in to the forums
- Lead to better attendance

There was some concern that people would have to attend more meetings, as their interests would cross more than one theme, but this is already the case with the local forums.

There were also fears that some organisations may not fit in to any of the suggested themes. A balance has to be found between having enough forums to cover most themes, but not so many as to be unmanageable. It is intended to tie in with as many existing forums as possible, and thought will have to be given as to how to avoid any possible exclusion and incorporate organisations that do not fall into a broad theme.

There were also fears that the thematic approach might lead to a loss of cross-fertilisation between groups from different backgrounds. While it is true that the local area forums provided an opportunity for organisations from a variety of different backgrounds to come together, low levels of attendance at these forums meant that in reality this was not taking place. It is proposed, occasionally, to bring one or more of the thematic forums together in response to cross-cutting issues when applicable which, along with the role of the coordinating group and

CVS Fife website as hubs for information exchange, should contribute to tackling this issue.

It was envisaged that the Coordinating Group would be populated by representatives from the thematic forums, along with the voluntary sector representatives to the CHPs and other partnership groupings.

The function of the group would be:

- To support the role of the CHP and other Voluntary Sector representatives in representing the interests of the sector
- To act as a hub for information flow between forums and partnerships groupings

Next Steps

The Chairs and Representatives from the three existing Health & Wellbeing Forums, along with representatives from CVS Fife, will be meeting with the Chairs and Managers of the three Community Health Partnerships (CHPs) on 9th May in order to discuss how the Voluntary Sector and the CHPs can best work together to improve health and wellbeing in Fife.

Members of staff from CVS Fife are also meeting with representatives from existing forums to discuss the work that is already being done in these areas and explore possible structures for developing the voluntary sector forums.

Once these meetings have been completed, a plan of action will be drawn up and we will report back to you with suggestions as to how the new forums might proceed.

In the meantime, we would encourage you to keep visiting the health section of the CVS Fife website, where minutes and papers from various meetings, as well as relevant documents and consultations are posted regularly for your information.

Thanks

CVS Fife would like to thank Professor McGoldrick (NHS Fife), Vivienne Brown (FHWA) and Lynsay Anderson (Keep Well) for their presentations, which are available on the CVS Fife website, and Chrissie Woods (CVS Clackmannanshire), Gary Guichan (Fife Advocacy), Helen Glass (The Fife Cottage) and Helen Rorrison (VONEF) for their valuable contribution as workshop facilitators.