

CVS Fife News

New Staff to Lead Voluntary Sector Employability Initiative

CVS Fife's Engagement in Employability project is now underway. The project, funded through the Fairer Scotland Fund, aims to promote and strengthen Voluntary Sector contribution to building skills and confidence amongst client groups who experience disadvantage in the labour market and improve opportunities for collaboration and influence around this area of work.

Marri Welsh, the project's Development Officer, and Sarah Lawson, Key Worker (both pictured) have been out and about meeting a range of organisations and key contacts since coming into post at the end of February, and already a number of organisations have been recruited for the pilot aspect of the project. Plans for a Voluntary Sector Employability Forum are also underway – the forum will be open to any organisation with an interest in this area of work, not just those with dedicated employment or training programmes.

From the initial visits Marri and Sarah have undertaken, it is clear that there is already a broad range of



Marri Welsh



Sarah Lawson

employability-related work going on in the Voluntary Sector, whether formal or informal. The project gives us an opportunity to gather information together and identify which organisations might be in a position to do more or enhance what they are already doing, as well as highlighting opportunities for joint work or new activities. We also intend to look at some of the barriers to participation as well as sharing intelligence about what is working well.

If you're interested in learning more about the project or becoming involved in the forum (either as a full or associate member) please contact Marri Welsh at CVS Fife.

And It's Goodbye From Him

Staff and Board members of CVS Fife along with representatives from partner and voluntary agencies gathered together on Thursday 26 March to mark the retirement of Ian Cowie, CVS Fife's Learning Services Co-ordinator. Ian joined CVS Fife in 2001, and has played a key role in promoting a learning and development culture in the Voluntary Sector in Fife.

The strength of the partnership between Adam Smith College and CVS Fife and the benefits this has brought to the Voluntary Sector in Fife were recognised at the first ever national Third Force News Annual Charity Awards in 2008, when the project won the Partnership Award. Ian was instrumental in securing this award through his dedication to genuine partnership working.

We want to thank Ian for all his efforts - we will all miss him.



Ian Cowie

Training Project - Leading the Learning Agenda

CVS Fife is pleased to report that Sandra Bruce has been promoted to the post of Learning Services Co-ordinator. Sandra has been part of the training team at CVS Fife since 2002, and has worked closely with Ian to ensure the effective delivery of training and learning opportunities to the Voluntary Sector in Fife. The current Skills for Scotland project, which brings accreditation opportunities focussed around the "Progressing through Employment" agenda, provides a great opportunity for Sandra to build on the good work to date and plan for the future, ensuring that learning and skills development stay high on the agenda for the Voluntary Sector.



Sandra Bruce

Sandra said: "I am delighted with my appointment and I am looking forward to working with our partners, Adam Smith College, Volunteer Centre Fife and Fife Council on building

on the success of this award winning project. I also wish Ian all the best for the future."

You should already have received information about the Training Development Event taking place in the Johnston Suite at Adam Smith College on Thursday 30 April between 5pm and 7:30pm, where Sandra will be on hand along with College and Volunteer Centre Fife staff who will provide information on how you and/or your staff can gain qualifications in Leadership and Management, ICT & Computing, Customer Service, Volunteer Management and Training.

If you haven't already booked your place, please get in touch.

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Fife's Single Outcome Agreement: Planning for the Future

In 2008, Fife's first Single Outcome Agreement was submitted as a Fife Partnership SOA. The SOA was compiled mainly from existing partnership action plans (e.g. the Joint Health Improvement Plan, the Children's Services Plan, the Community Safety Action Plan, etc.) and scope for discussion and engagement with partners was limited due to tight timescales.

In November 2008, partners were invited to become involved in the process of revising the Single Outcome Agreement for 2009/10, including CVS Fife in its role of representing the interests of the Voluntary or Third Sector. CVS Fife was keen to ensure that the contribution the sector makes to Fife is captured within the SOA. The key points we raised were:

- ★ Thematic contribution of the Voluntary or Third Sector
 - ★ Third Sector involved in multi-agency groups driving work in thematic areas, e.g. Children's Services, Health & Wellbeing, Community Safety
 - ★ Voluntary Sector forums have developed around these themes to support/develop participation
 - ★ This involvement means a familiarity/buy-in to the action plans, e.g. Children's Services Plan, Joint Health Improvement Plan
 - ★ However, some gaps exist re: Third Sector participation in multi-agency forums – e.g. the Economic Partnership, so Third Sector contribution to this thematic area is less well understood
- ★ Holistic/cross-cutting contribution of the Voluntary or Third Sector
 - ★ Outcomes which all Third Sector organisations contribute to, e.g. community cohesion, local voluntary action, tackling inequalities
 - ★ Difficulty in identifying measures to evidence these things – "softer" outcomes

As a result of our discussions, the Stronger Communities and Tackling Inequalities sections of the SOA have been strengthened to better reflect the impact of the Third Sector as a whole. It has also been agreed that, following the submission of the 2009 revision, we will begin to look at whether we can use existing resources in Fife such as the People's Panel and the KnowFife dataset to work up outcomes and measures around the softer outcomes highlighted above. It may be that work which is going on at a national level in this area will also assist us in this process.

Fundraising Boost for Local Groups

CVS Fife has begun taking bookings for its new Thrift Shop facility in Leven.



The Thrift Shop, which was formerly situated in premises in Manse Place in Leven, will be operating from the back of the former St Peter's Church in Durie Street in Leven from Monday 4 May. The first group to operate the shop in its new location will be Methilhill Gala. We very much hope that the shop will enjoy the same support as it did previously, and are grateful to Linksfield Construction for offering us an alternative venue.

To book the Thrift Shop, contact Elizabeth Kirk at CVS Fife.

Volunteers' Week Celebrates 25th Anniversary

Volunteers' Week is the UK's annual celebration of volunteers and volunteering, which takes place from 1st to 7th June. This year Volunteer Centre Fife is planning to mark the event's 25th anniversary by celebrating twenty-five years of voluntary activity here in Fife.

If your organisation has a story to tell about the part volunteering has played in its development, Volunteer Centre Fife would like to hear from you. An event is being planned and display material is required, along with speakers who may be prepared to give a short talk.

Volunteer Centre Fife would particularly like to know:

- ★ If your organisation, or a branch of it, was established in Fife during the past twenty-five years
- ★ If there have been any special developments/milestones over the past twenty-five years
- ★ If you have any volunteers reaching a special anniversary with the organisation this year, e.g. 25, 10, or 5 years of volunteering

- ★ Any other volunteering-related achievements you wish to highlight

If your organisation is interested in taking part in the celebrations around twenty-five years of volunteering in Fife, please contact Cerys Thomas at Volunteer Centre Fife's Dunfermline office:

01383 732136 or email
cerys.thomas@volunteeringfife.org



Tackling Tendering Issues

In November's newsletter, we gave an update on the work we had been undertaking as a Council for Voluntary Service to raise awareness with Fife Council regarding the potential impact of a move to retendering of services and activities previously delivered by Voluntary Sector organisations via Service Level Agreements. We also highlighted the introductory training opportunities led by representatives from Fife Council's Procurement Service which have been delivered via our Training Project. These sessions have been well-attended and Sandra Bruce, CVS Fife's newly-appointed Learning Services Co-ordinator, will be meeting with representatives of the Procurement Service to discuss follow-up training requirements.

Disappointingly, the contract to provide advocacy services for people with mental health issues has been awarded by Fife Council to a Warwickshire-based organisation, Circles Network. The two Fife Voluntary Organisations who bid for the contract, Fife Advocacy and the Today Group, now face either closure or significant scaling down of their operations. In a Briefing Paper for Elected Members prepared last October, just prior to the decision being made to put Advocacy Services out to tender, CVS Fife argued that the added value the local Voluntary Sector brings to service delivery in terms of community links (via volunteering opportunities and Management Committees made up of locally accountable people), flexibility of approach (ability to anticipate and adapt to changing local contexts) and

unique understanding of clients needs can be lost if there is a sudden shift to tendering. The Scottish Government, in its "Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan", recognises the role of the Voluntary Sector in delivering services to the most vulnerable and the most disadvantaged, and states that the public sector should purchase services intelligently, "which includes involving the third sector in service design, assessing bids on quality and using community benefit clauses where appropriate".

Fife Council's Policy Forum has now considered a report presented by the Head of Policy & Organisational Support (POS) which contains a position statement from Council Services with regard to Procurement and the Voluntary Sector. This report also covers a range of other issues

relating to the relationship between the Council and the Voluntary Sector. As a result, it has been agreed that the Monitoring & Evaluation Framework will continue to be updated to include a section on Contracts, including a set of principles outlining when a contract approach is appropriate and when the grants approach should be taken. This section will go to the Policy, Finance & Asset Management Committee of the Council for sign-off and should be helpful in clarifying the Council's approach. We are continuing to research community benefit clauses and how they have been used in other parts of Scotland – we plan to update our website soon with a range of information relating to tendering and contracting. In the meantime, please contact us if you wish to discuss any of the issues raised in this article.

Access to Awards for All Improved

Awards for All, the Big Lottery Fund's popular small grants programme, was relaunched on April 1 with a number of changes which will make the programme easier to access.

The scheme will continue to award grants of between £500 and £10,000 to projects that improve opportunities for people to take part in the arts, sport or community activities, but applicants will now be able to email their application directly. Previously, all applications had to be accompanied by a range of documents including a copy of a Constitution, bank statements, annual accounts and a bank mandate form. However, now only successful applicants will be

asked to submit these documents once the bid has been assessed.

This year, a number of Fife organisations have been successful with Awards for All bids, including Kirkcaldy Gymnastics Club, Rosyth Park Development Group and Methil Community Education Centre. For more details on Awards for All, visit: www.awardsforall.org.uk, or come along to one of the Funding Roadshow events.

Dates for Your Diary: Funding Roadshows

Do you have an idea for a project or initiative in your local community? Are you an established organisation looking to branch out into new activities? Are you looking for information or advice about applying for project funding?

If you've answered Yes to any of the questions above, then the Funding Roadshows could be for you. The roadshows will be taking place across a range of dates and locations in Fife from May through to September and will be staffed by representatives from Fife Council's Funding & Monitoring Team, the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, Fife Environmental Trust and the Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS Fife and VONEF).

The dates/locations are as follows:

- ★ Tuesday 12 May 2009, Oakley Community Centre, 6:30pm – 8:30pm
- ★ Thursday 14 May, The Rio, Newport-on-Tay, 2pm – 4pm
- ★ Tuesday 2 June, The Centre, Leven, 6:30pm – 8:30pm
- ★ Wednesday 5 August, Volunteer Centre Fife, Kirkcaldy, 4pm – 6pm
- ★ Wednesday 2 September, Rothes halls, Glenrothes, 2pm – 4pm

Sessions will be run on a drop-in basis; however, to give us an idea of numbers, please contact CVS Fife or VONEF if you're planning to attend. A reply slip is available on our website: cvsfife.org/news or give us a ring on **01592 567001**.

Are You Thinking of Doing a Survey?

Yes

No

Don't Know

In the past year we carried out a few surveys that were distributed via our e-Bulletins, allowing recipients to join in by completing the online questionnaires. We used a service called Survey Monkey and if you are considering running a survey of your own you may want to read on.

Survey Monkey

This is an online tool that you sign up to which will allow you to create surveys easily. You don't need to be experienced in survey design as there are 50 templates covering typical surveys that you can customise.



Once your survey is built and tested, you can distribute it by placing a link in an email for distribution or by adding the link to your web site.

You can check the status of your survey online and analyse it at any time. Survey data can also be downloaded and manipulated in Excel.

Free Version

If your survey has less than 10 questions and you don't need more than 100 responses, you can sign up for the free version. There are some other limitations – fewer templates, lack of customisation – check the website for comparisons.

Pay Version

This comes in at \$20 per month or \$200 for a year's subscription and you can have unlimited surveys, unlimited responses and a wider range of questions and templates. This version also allows you to customise the surveys and include your logo.

surveymonkey.com

Tip: When sending an email to a number of recipients, you should put your own email address in the "To" field and put all the other recipients into the Blind Carbon Copy "BCC" field. This ensures that each recipient can't see the email addresses of the other recipients.

Disclosure Changes Cause Concern

CVS Fife has been contacted by a number of Voluntary Organisations in recent weeks regarding changes to eligibility criteria for accessing Disclosure Checks on staff and volunteers working with Vulnerable Adults. The Central Registered Body for Scotland (CRBS), which processes disclosure checks for the voluntary sector including free checks on volunteers, has been in discussion with Disclosure Scotland and the Scottish Government and has now written to organisations advising that there are changes to organisational eligibility criteria in relation to accessing Standard and Enhanced Disclosure checks.



CRBS has produced guidelines outlining the new policy which can be found on its website: www.crbs.org.uk

However, CRBS staff members are keen to stress that any organisation with concerns about accessing checks for staff and volunteers should contact them directly to discuss the situation – organisations may be eligible to access checks even if an initial reading of the guidelines would appear to indicate otherwise.

In the meantime, representations are being made to the Scottish Government by SCVO and others over the

implications of this policy change. The concern is that Voluntary Organisations may become stuck in the middle between the Scottish Government stating that organisations are unnecessarily accessing too much background information on staff and volunteers and Local Authorities and other funders/contracting authorities who often insist on Disclosure Checks being in place as a condition of funding or contracts. CVS Fife will continue to monitor the progress of this issue – if your organisation is experiencing difficulties as a result of this policy change, please let us know.

CVS Fife News & Events On The Move

Many of you have taken advantage of the News & Events section of our website to advertise your **events, job vacancies, training events, volunteering opportunities** and so on. Later this month we hope to introduce a new, regular e-Bulletin for subscribers that will list what's in the News & Events section and link back to the articles. If you are not already a subscriber to the e-Bulletins, visit our site and sign up.

Remember that it is **FREE** to advertise your vacancies, news, etc. on our site. www.cvsfife.org/news

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23-27 Randolph Street
Buckhaven KY8 1AT
T: 01592 567001
F: 01592 567009
E: cvsfife@cvsfife.org
W: www.cvsfife.org

