

Scottish Third Sector Research Forum meeting

Tuesday 11th December 2019: 12.30am-3.30pm

Scottish Government office, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw Glasgow G2 8LU

Minutes

In attendance:

Steven Marwick (ESS), Jane Marryat (ESS), Katrina Macapagal (ESS), Liz Ravalde (SG), Sarah Weakley (Policy Scotland), Lucy Mulvagh (ALLIANCE), Cassy Rutherford (TRT), Jane Cullingworth (VSSN), Mark Meiklejohn (SG), Matthew Linning (Volunteer Scotland), Ruth McKenna (Waverley Care), Allison Mathews (NLCF), Shubhanna Hussain-Ahmed (Coalition of Carers), Kyle Taggart (University of Glasgow), Rebecca McGregor (Inclusion Scotland), Ilse McKinnon (SCVO), Laura Robertson (Poverty Alliance), Cathy Bulley (Queen Margaret University)

Apologies:

Andy Dey (ACOSVO), Karen McArdle (University of Aberdeen), Amy Calder (Youthlink Scotland), Kiren Zubairi (VHS), Gemma Jackson (Volunteer Scotland), Alasdair Rutherford (University of Stirling), Louise Meikleham (OSCR), Dinah Aitken (SMC), Kerry Musselbrook (Iriss)

Welcome and introductions

1. Steven welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Katrina (Kat) as the new staff member of ESS.

Minutes and matters arising

2. The minutes of the previous meeting (Tuesday 3rd September 2019) was approved. Actions were completed or taken forward.
3. Kat will design the new TSRF logo.
4. **Action: Kat** to upload Minutes of September 2019 meeting to TSRF webpages.

Debrief – Collaborating for impact conference 9th Oct 2019

5. Jane Marryat thanked all TSRF members who supported the conference by attending and especially those who took active roles: On the panel – Louise, Cassy, Lucy, Jane; lightning session and workshops – Amy, Allison and Karen; Room chaperones – Steven, Dinah, Ilse; General – Laura.
6. Jane talked through the conference report circulated for the meeting.
7. In discussion TSRF members agreed that the conference had been successful and well organised. They felt there has been a good range of topics and a variety of ways to connect with people. The atmosphere was friendly with great networking. Lightning talks went down particularly well.

8. Members discussed ideas about addressing the problem of attendance, particularly academics. The ratio of attendance compared to previous years, was much the same but there had been significant drop out by academics when the joining instructions were sent out three weeks before. Many members agreed that October/November period is a really busy time for academics, and a February/March conference may be better.
9. Another challenge was presenters leaving after their presentations rather than staying for the whole conference which meant that, with hindsight, we could have invited more people from the waiting list (there was still a substantial third sector waiting list).
10. Options to consider for the future suggested by members:
 - Two half days rather than one
 - A full day but with two discrete halves so that people could come to either the morning or the afternoon
 - Even more targeted advertising to academics that are likely to commit
 - Reconsider whether we want or need a large attendance by academics
11. The group agreed that the full report can be published except for last section that breaks down the attendance.
Action: Jane to remove the last page and publish report on TSRF webpage and disseminate in newsletter.

Feedback from participatory research session (Allison Mathews)

12. Allison shared her learning from the conference lightning session on participatory research during the conference, run with Amy Calder from YouthLink Scotland. The idea was to do a user map about participatory research gathered from the delegates. As the session was only 15 minutes there wasn't enough time to do in-depth discussion except to get participants to put ideas on the wall.

Cassy Rutherford joined the meeting

13. Allison said participants were very engaged. People were mostly concerned about the start and end of participatory research to ensure genuine co-production. People were also concerned about the 'power dynamics' of research. Others also cited issues of training, budgeting, and keeping involvement all the way through the research collaboration.
14. Allison tabled a handout that summarised views gathered at the session and TSRF members agreed that this should be disseminated along with the conference report and ask for case studies and feedback about what should happen next.
Action: Kat to upload participatory research lightning talk write up on webpage and put link in conference report.
15. TSRF members agreed that while it was tempting to produce a "how to" guide, other such guides are available and it might be better for the TSRF to

signpost to existing guides and showcase examples (case studies) to illustrate the how and why of participative research. The subgroup will consider further at the next TSRF meeting.

Forum review

16. Sarah Weakley from Policy Scotland talked about the opportunity for the TSRF to work in partnership with the Knowledge Exchange group at the University of Glasgow. They want to run events with the third sector. Funding is available and she invited the group to propose potential topics or events that the KE group can do in collaboration with the Forum.
17. There are no set plans. It can be an event or a series of events, perhaps 3-4 events in 2020. The events do not have to be held at the University of Glasgow.
18. Steven added that following on from previous TSRF discussions and themes emerging from the conference, there was scope for the TSRF to do some work around ethics and suggested this could be a subject within the event series. Kyle said his office is taking over the internal ethical procedure so there is an opportunity for the discussion to feed into their future work.
19. The forum split into groups to brainstorm: 1) potential knowledge exchange topics and events, and 2) ideas around ethics as a topic the Forum can build an event around.
20. In summary the groups fed back the following points:
 - There could be an event on different kinds of methodologies and the third sector could share innovative research methods with academics including how to share research findings.
 - The written agreement between Poverty Alliance and Glasgow Caledonian could be an interesting case study for an event on research collaborations.
 - Research challenges or constraints faced by smaller organisations could be a topic.
 - In relation to ethics, one key issue is the range of different existing initiatives on ethical approval for non-academic research. The Social Research Association has an ethics committee which can be a useful way of getting things checked for non-academics. Waverley Care and DRILL have developed their own approaches. New Zealand has a model where there is one single source for ethical approval for community projects. It could be useful to map different approaches being developed.
 - Another issue is principles behind ethics, reconciling the tension between protecting people while also recognising they are active social agents.
 - There is a gap around supporting the people with lived experience and the people who are doing the research – there could be an event around that.
21. On reflection TSRF members agreed that these are all process issues and process (methodology, ethics, sharing finding) could be a useful overarching theme for a series of events.

22. **Action: Jane** to arrange a meeting with **Sarah** to scope the event series in more detail.

Future Forum meetings

23. Jane M. suggested future meeting dates:

- a. 11 March 2020 – Mansfield Traquair Centre, Edinburgh
- b. 9 June 2020 – Matthew volunteered Volunteer Scotland offices in Stirling
- c. 9 Sept 2020 – The Alliance, Glasgow
- d. 1 December 2020, Edinburgh – Scottish Government

24. **Action: Matthew** will book room at Volunteer Scotland office for June 2020 meeting in Stirling

25. **Action: Mark** to book venue for December meeting at Victoria Quay

26. Jane M. tabled a paper relating to TSRF membership. The Forum now has 26 members. In summary her priority was to ensure a manageable number of active members, and also to get feedback so that the Forum continues to be relevant to members' needs.

27. In discussion the TSRF members agreed

- Jane's proposal that membership be renewed every March. Members would agree whether they wanted to continue and give brief feedback on the TSRF.
- Regular attendance could also be taken as demonstration of commitment to TSRF.
- Members should attend a minimum of two meetings a year.
- Organisations can field alternatives to attend meeting although that is not ideal for continuity of discussion (e.g. in subgroups)
- Members hosting meetings should provide teas and coffees but don't have to provide lunch unless they wish to.

28. It was noted that there used to be virtual membership category but that has been replaced by the newsletter mailing list and publishing the minutes. It was agreed to include an item in the newsletter asking for feedback or ideas from this wider stakeholder group.

Action: Kat to include this item in newsletter.

29. **Action: Jane** to check in with members who have not participated in Forum meetings this year and ask current members for more feedback on membership issues and future direction of Forum.

Sharing Learning

30. Shubhanna Hussain-Ahmed, Partnership Development Officer, Coalition of Carers (COC) introduced her organisation.

31. The Coalition of Carers is made up carers and carer organisations established in 1998. There are two members of staff including Shubhanna. Shubhanna

used to be in academia but decided she preferred the kind of research she does with COC.

32. The COC has members in every local authority in Scotland, and through them connect with carers. Their core belief is that carers' rights need to be at the heart of policy and practice development, and one of their visions is for carers to feel valued and supported and will be able to enjoy a life outside of their care roles. COC represents carers in various national working groups and conducts regular membership meetings throughout the year. They also coordinate a network for carer centre managers, as well as a remote and rural carers working group. COC also supports a network for BME carers in Scotland and network with carer representatives across health boards.
33. In terms of research, COC conducts a short annual survey about carers' awareness of their rights. Shubhanna reported that their survey last year received over a thousand responses. She shared that the free text box at the end of the survey which asked 'Is there anything else you can tell us' allowed carers to share their own stories. Shubhanna reflected on the privilege of hearing these stories and feels that one of the ethical challenges is to 'do justice' to these stories. COC surveys carer organisations that focus on policy implementation. COC relies on social media such as Twitter and Facebook since they are a small organisation and many of the service users are not able to attend focus groups due to their caring commitments. They use the research to influence development work. They have also developed visual material to help carers better understand where they can get support.
34. Their next steps are to hone their research priorities for carers, and what carers themselves would like to find out more about. There may also be points of intersection between what carers are interested in and what academics might be able to help with for future collaborative research.

Research updates

Jane C. (VSSN)

35. Last VSSN seminar was held in November in Cardiff. A link to the presentation will be made available.

Laura (Poverty Alliance):

36. Ongoing action research project with the Scottish Community Development Centre. They have recently launched a website called Knowledge is Power, which involves supporting and mentoring projects of 8 organisations. The work involves developing action research tools with the help of ESS.
37. Another research project is on the implementation of Universal Credit in Glasgow which is due to be published in February 2020.

Rebecca (Inclusion Scotland)

38. There are two remaining Scottish research projects for DRILL (Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning) which will complete in the next two months. Reports are planned to be published in January 2020 DRILL is due to finish up in August next year, and there will be a parliamentary reception in June 2020.

Jane (ESS)

39. Jane attended the New Network for Arts and Health and Wellbeing researchers in Scotland. The meeting was about how to set up a network of researchers in arts and health and wellbeing. There were 13 participants - mainly PhD students and Museums Galleries Scotland, National Portrait Gallery, The Teapot Trust and ESS (representing TSRF). The meeting produced the following potential themes to be explored by the network:
- Methodology to understand the arts
 - Advocacy for the arts – where are we making a case for the benefits of the arts
 - Can arts therapy make things worse?
 - Social prescribing
 - Evidence – value of different types of evidence
 - Collaborative research
40. The organisers want to find out what is wanted from a new network and will repeat the meeting in Glasgow and Perth, dates and venues to be confirmed.

Ilse (SCVO)

41. Report on third sector pay is out (published in TF news), and they will be producing more reports in the future. There will also be research published about sector funding.

Lucy (the ALLIANCE)

42. 'My Support My Choice' survey is still out, with a cut-off date on 14th February 2020. They have interviewed at least 90 people across 9 local authority areas. There will be more interviews as they are covering 11 local authority areas. They are also interviewing older members of the BME and LGBT community. They are aiming to have local reports for each of the local authority areas to share. They are planning a national survey that will be done between now and June 2020 when the funding ends. They are hoping to reach at least 500 people so any help promoting the survey is appreciated.

Action: Kat to promote survey in newsletter

Ruth (Waverley Care)

43. One project is on trans and non-binary people's experience of accessing sexual health services, this is a peer-led programme. In partnership with Scottish Trans Alliance. They are also looking at sexual health needs of people who inject drugs in city centres, this is a peer-led project and data gathering will start in the next year. Another research project for next year is looking at sexual health needs of gay and bisexual men in rural and remote areas. Most research projects are focused on prevention, with some in collaboration with different NHS boards, some in partnership with GCU and other third sector organisations

Cassy (The Robertson Trust)

44. We recently published some research that we commissioned to explore what works, what doesn't work and why in non-clinical maternal mental health interventions that are delivered by the third sector. It focuses specifically on three areas of practice: parenting support, peer support, and

counselling/psychological support. Please find the link to our webpage [here](#) where you will find the full report and a summary document of the findings. We will be using this research as a conversation starter both internally and with other organisations working in this area.

Action: Kat to put link to maternal mental health research report in newsletter

45. Not for the newsletter – The Robertson Trust is undergoing a strategic review and doing internal research to find out from their data what they know about people affected by poverty and complex trauma. The Trust is also recruiting a new Knowledge and Learning Officer.

Matthew Linning (Volunteer Scotland)

46. Recent publications:

- **The contribution of volunteering to Scotland’s health and wellbeing (published 5 Nov 2019)** – this study examines the evidence on the health and wellbeing of Scotland’s population and considers the challenges, opportunities and priorities for volunteering over the period 2020-2040. <http://www.volunteerscotland.net/hwbvol/>
- **SHS Cross-sectional analysis 2016 (published 6 Dec 2019)** – a detailed quantitative study of the 2016 Scottish Household Survey (SHS) volunteering participation rates, cross-tabulated against eight fields including community engagement, health and wellbeing, caring responsibilities, sport, culture, etc. All fields are analysed by SIMD quintiles. <http://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/research-and-evaluation/publications/scottish-household-survey-cross-sectional-analysis/>

47. VS has a slot in The Gathering 2020, on 19th February 2020, 09:30 – 12. There will be a keynote speech on the topic ‘What comes first: Community or Volunteering?’ from Dr Toby Lowe, Newcastle Business School at Northumbria University.

48. **Action: Jane** to promote reports and event above in newsletter.

Liz (Scottish Government)

49. A PhD student intern starts in January 2020 for three research projects coming out of the Social Enterprise Action Plan: 1) Looking to better understand the landscape of the social enterprise market; 2) Looking at barriers to social entrepreneurship; 3) Understanding changing consumer attitudes towards social enterprises

Kyle (University of Glasgow)

50. They have a new community engagement colleague. Steven, Cassy and Ruth have agreed to join their external panel of assessors for their Impact Accelerator Account

AOCB

51. None raised.

52. **Next meeting:** 11 March 2020, Mansfield Traquair Centre, Edinburgh, 10:30 – 1pm. Please remember to **bring your lunch.**