



# Scottish Third Sector Research Forum meeting

Thursday March 15th 2018: 10.30-1pm

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

## Minutes

### In attendance:

Steven Marwick (ESS) (Chair), Louise Bowen (ESS), Jane Marryat (ESS) (Minutes), Mathew Linning (VS), Ilse MacKinnon (SCVO), Mark Meiklejohn (SG), Louise Meikleham (OSCR), Stephen Osborne (University of Edinburgh attending in a personal capacity), Jane Cullingworth (Voluntary Sector Studies Network, VSSN), Jacqueline Rae (SG), Fiona McHardy (Poverty Alliance), Allison Matthews (Big Lottery Fund), Lucy Mulvagh (The ALLIANCE).

### Apologies:

Andy Dey (ACOSVO), Claire Stevens (VHS), Duncan Thorp (SES), Kerry Musselbrook (Iriss), Ligia Teixeira (Crisis), Josie Isles (IS), Darah Zahran (Scottish Enterprise), Alasdair Rutherford (University of Stirling), Sophie Flemig (University of Edinburgh), Stuart Cable (University of Dundee), Gemma Jackson (Volunteer Scotland), Rosalind Tyler Greig (Inclusion Scotland), Linda Macdonald (TRT).

### Welcome and introductions

1. Steven welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### Minutes and matters arising

2. The Minute of the previous meeting (8 December 2017) was approved. There was one matter arising (Item 4).

**Action: Louise B.** will follow up Sarah Munro from the Equality and Human Rights Commission to confirm if their framework has been published, and circulate publication to the Forum by email.

**Action: Jane M.** to publish December meeting minutes on website.

### Debrief - Researching Together Feb 1<sup>st</sup> 2018

3. Louise B. talked about the Researching Together conference. She reminded the Forum that the Storify presentation was on the website that gives a snapshot of the day.

4. Overall the conference attended by 100 participants was successful. Feedback from Mentimeter (collected on the day) and follow up feedback (via SurveyMonkey) said:

- ☺ Participants liked that there was lots of discussion and interaction.
- ☺ Most valuable was space to network, learn from examples and disseminate.
- ☺ There was appetite for participants to want to explore co-production more.

5. Some criticisms were:

- ⊗ Had to choose between parallel sessions and couldn't attend all.
- ⊗ How to keep people involved – once a year or more events.
- ⊗ Poster exercise had mixed reactions – some loved it, some didn't.

6. We need to manage expectations – some people would have liked more formal sessions, some wanted more active sessions. In future we need to keep a balance.

### **Forum feedback**

7. Members were impressed by attendance numbers including participants who hadn't been to other Forum events. They had enjoyed parallel sessions and in particular practical learning about collaboration between academics and third sector.

"I found my tribe" was overheard at the conference.

8. Things that didn't work so well:

- ⊗ Some tables were not as mixed as could have been (due to some academics not turning up but who had been allocated to specific tables and others not conforming to table arrangements).
- ⊗ There were no Local Authority researchers although they may be difficult to get them to attend. Next time we should try through promoting conference through LARIA.
- ⊗ Poster exercise should have been simpler.

9. There were some golden nuggets that people took away with them. One was from Peter Matthews who talked about the co-productive cake metaphor – Ingredients might be the same but at the end of the process some might have a cake whilst others have a loaf of bread. Baking together is important.

### **Reflection on messages for the Forum**

10. The Forum broke into small groups to discuss the conference messages (in conference report) for the Forum and what should we do as a response.

- **Raising profile and events** – we should do this. There was some enthusiasm for doing smaller, light touch events showing collaborative work. Quality over quantity and not replicating what others are doing. One group thought that the Forum should have more of a distinct identity (through new logo, new newsletter design and website) and these formats should be used to signpost to members' work as well as the Forum's publications and to promote other people's events.
- **Brokering role** – there was a mixed response. Overall people thought that this was not the role of the Forum. Having an online database would be too resource intensive and not manageable but the Forum should engage with University Knowledge Exchange Officers. As universities are contemplating a new Research Excellence Framework this could be a good time to be in touch with universities. And we should sign post to brokers.
- **Funders** – is an important issue and the Forum should make more formal links to research councils. SCVO manage Funding Scotland – a database of

fundings. Ilse volunteered to speak to Sandra Hogg to ensure that research was a search term.

**Action: Ilse** to speak to Sandra Hogg re: search terms on Funding Scotland website.

- **Develop resources** – Compile what already exists and signpost/promote and scope resources for funding.
- **Lobbying** – there was a discussion about the use of the word “lobbying”. It was agreed that the Forum should make crystal clear that we do **not** lobby but we can make links with relevant people and institutions to showcase good case examples and good practice and draw attention to barriers and challenges in a constructive way.

11. **Conference report** – There was discussion about who the audience will be. The report was thought to be easy to read, good images used, good prompt to remind those at the conference what happened and informative for those who did not attend.

12. It was decided to reframe messages and put a disclaimer (that these came from participants of the conference) and include information about what the Forum is going to do. Post-event evaluation should also be added. Then publish the report and ensure that it is circulated widely to those who were there and other audiences especially those to which the messages address.

**Action: Louise B.** to revise, publish and circulate conference report.

### **Potential TSRF research conference 2018-19**

13. Stephen Osborne spoke to his paper and asked that the Forum consider whether to hold a research conference. Previously SCVO and University of Edinburgh held two events about third sector research. He suggested that CenSE could partner the Forum to organise an event for approx. 60 people. CenSe would organise rooms at no cost and manage registration. Delegates will be charged of £30-40 to cover refreshments costs. The conference should profile work of the Forum and programme made up of 4 sessions (with 1 to 4 themes). If this was an annual event other partners could be involved in the future.

14. The Forum agreed this should go ahead.

15. The Forum agreed that branding and promotion should most importantly meet CenSe’s requirements but that the Forum and VSSN would be co-sponsors.

16. It was decided that a small group would work together to bring a proposal for an event in February 2019 to the Forum meeting in June.

**Action: Stephen, Jane C. Ilse and Jacqueline** to bring proposal for research conference to June meeting.

### **Forum review**

17. Future venues were decided (minute reflects agreements with hosts):

20 June 2018 – Scottish Charity Regulator in Dundee

2 October 2018 – ALLIANCE, Glasgow

6 December 2018 – Scottish Government, Victoria Quay Edinburgh

13 March 2019 - to be confirmed **Action: Louise B.** to confirm.

18. Guest speakers: Two people have been in touch with Louise B. to volunteer to speak to the Forum:

- Gareth Morgan, Sheffield Hallam University who collaborates with Louise Crawford wants to speak about charity registration and accounting.
- Michael Roy, Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health / Glasgow School for Business and Society, Glasgow Caledonian University.

The Forum thought that charity accounting would not be of interest to all members and suggested that Gareth could speak to SCVO and OSCR.

**Action: Louise B.** to offer Gareth a conversation with Ilse and Louise and colleagues. To invite Michael to address the October meeting.

19. YouthLink Scotland want to join the Forum. Susan Hunter will come to the June meeting to talk about her organisation's research. YouthLink Scotland is secretariat for the Scottish Youth Work Research Steering Group Forum.

20. Membership was discussed. Louise will contact serial non-attenders and invite them to stand down. Current members should make suggestions of any gaps that could be usefully filled. LARIA is one suggestion.

**Action: Louise B.** to contact those who regularly do not attend and to investigate connecting to LARIA.

### **Other activities for the Forum**

21. It was decided that there will be two new subgroups:

- Funding for third sector research
- Research conference (as above)

22. Inclusive growth subgroup has nearly completed its work. The group created good discussions.

**Action: Ilse** will finish two page paper and circulate to subgroup

**Action: Inclusive Growth group** to present paper for sign off at June meeting.

**Action: Louise B. to** put on June agenda:

- Research conference subgroup
- Funding subgroup to scope out this work
- Discuss other subgroups themes/topics – one topic that emerged through the meeting was story-telling as a research method.
- Discussion about who does brokerage?

### **Evaluation of TSRF**

23. Forum members divided into pairs to discuss why they came to Forum meetings and what would keep them coming?

Summary of responses:

#### **Why come to the TSRF?**

- Network and make connections

- Learn from others and share ideas
- Keep up to date with general research
- Be energised by like-minded folk

### **What will keep me coming?**

- So long as the TSRF is relevant outside the room – benefiting the sector
  - connecting more broadly
  - providing opportunities for the wider sector to engage in learning from and about research (including events)
- So long as the TSRF is still producing useful stuff (from the subgroups).

### **Updates from Forum members**

#### **Ilse - SCVO**

24. We carried out our Public Trust research and OSCAR are currently in the middle of carrying out their own research - a bit of a hot topic given all the issues around Oxfam etc:

<https://scvo.org.uk/policy-research/evidence-library/2018-the-public-view-trust-confidence-and-support-of-charities-in-scotland-2018>

(Note: we've revamped our website and updated the link to the Evidence Library, although the old link re-directs)

25. The findings of our research also prompted us to launch our '**I Love Charity' campaign**, which "aims to inspire trust in charities by supporting good governance within organisations to ensure they are well run, open and transparent, and to encourage charities to work harder at promoting the positive impact of their work." So lots of scope for joint work around that!

<https://scvo.org.uk/projects-campaigns>

<https://scvo.org.uk/projects-campaigns/i-love-charity>

26. Finally, we launched a publication at the gathering aimed at young people interested in working and/or volunteering in the sector.

<https://scvo.org.uk/policy-research/evidence-library/2018-a-young-persons-guide-to-working-and-volunteering-in-scotlands-third-sector-2018>

#### **Allison – Big Lottery Fund**

27. Big Lottery Fund Scotland has a new Knowledge and Learning team to learn from what they fund and promote best practice, headed up by Allison. This team is recruiting now. The team will be fully in place by May 2018.

28. BLF has commissioned research into community assets and previous Investing in Communities Fund. Written and film Storytelling has been used as a method to gather and report findings.

**Action: Allison** to send links to Jane M. to put on TSRF website

**Action: Louise B.** put storytelling as research method on agenda for a potential Forum discussion.

## **Louise – Scottish Charity Regulator**

29. OSCRC's biennial survey research is underway. The public and charity surveys were launched on 14 February 2018 (2 days after the charity news coverage broke in February). As with previous years the surveys gather information on public trust in charities, concerns about charities, issues facing charities and feedback on OSCRC's services. This research will also include a greater focus on 'what do the public and TSOs expect of OSCRC as a regulator?' The survey is now closed for analysis. Results will be published in June but some messages are likely to be available before then.

30. Following the charity news coverage during February OSCRC contacted all charities to raise awareness of safeguarding and the notifiable events programme. This was introduced by OSCRC in 2016 and analysis of the first full year of notifiable events has been the subject of research by Alastair Rutherford and Diarmuid McDonnell. More information can be found in a blog written for NCVO: [Promoting charity accountability: understanding disclosure of serious incidents](#).

**Action: Louise M.** to send links to Jane M.

## **Fiona – Poverty Alliance**

31. Poverty Alliance has launched their formal partnership with Glasgow Caledonian University. The launch is fully booked but can be followed on Twitter.

**Action: Fiona** will share further details.

32. PA has a programme of upcoming events

**Action: Fiona** to share further details.

33. PA has been working with Joseph Rowntree Foundation about how to use evidence.

**Action: Fiona** to share findings.

## **Stephen Osborne –University of Edinburgh**

34. Recently published two working papers:

- Risk Governance and Public Services
- Contingency with coproduction of Older People

**Action: Forum members** – if you want copies get in touch with Stephen.

35. Horizon 20/20 large scale research covering 6 countries about co-creation of public service delivery research is ongoing.

**Action: Stephen O.** will feedback findings when available next year.

## **Jacqueline Rae – Scottish Government**

36. Currently has two pieces of work:

- Developing outcomes framework with SCVO and VS and network of researchers.
- Social Enterprise strategy action plan with Glasgow Caledonian YUNIS Centre.

37. Scottish Household Survey is in the field for cold testing. The volunteering questions have been tweaked and there are new questions about social investment. Jacqueline will want help to think about topic/themed reports later and will come discuss these with the Forum at a later date.

38. There are two reports to be published soon:

- Public society partnership in Scotland
- Business support report for third sector organisations and social enterprises.

**Action: Jacqueline** to share links when published.

### **Matthew – Volunteer Scotland**

39. **James Davies's PhD:** *"Young People and Volunteering: Attitudes and Experiences in Areas of Multiple Deprivation"*. His thesis has been submitted for examination in April 2018. A summary of the thesis is now available on the Volunteer Scotland website: [Thesis Summary](#)

40. **Youth Volunteering Conference:** *"Creating a More Inclusive Future for Youth Volunteering"*. This conference scheduled for 14 March 2018 was postponed due to industrial action by the Universities and Colleges Union. New date and venue still to be confirmed.

41. **OSCR Charities Survey 2016:** Analysis of volunteering data. Volunteer Scotland has analysed the data to draw out the [Key findings on volunteering](#). We have also worked with OSCR to inform the 2018 Charities Survey.

42. **Volunteering & Wellbeing:** our literature review (in progress) has highlighted the importance of the older age demographic in terms of mental health benefits. This links to the Scottish Government's consultation: *"A Connected Scotland"*, which we are responding to via the Scottish Volunteering Forum.

### **Lucy – The ALLIANCE**

43. The ALLIANCE are applying for a Q-step research student placement. This person will help refine and improve the mixed methods research into experience of people accessing self-directed support which was previously undertaken in 2016.

44. The ALLIANCE, Strathclyde University's Centre for Health Policy and NHS Health Scotland supported a participatory action research project into people's experiences of the right to health (people with lived experience of homelessness and female asylum seeking/refugees). The partners are working together to support a lived experience collective of peer researchers in order to generate evidence to change policy and practice using participatory action research

methodologies. The ALLIANCE hopes to host an event on participatory action research next year.

45. SG commissioned the ALLIANCE to carry out research with seldom heard/hard to reach groups around Scotland to inform solutions for the new Scottish security system.

**Action: Lucy** is happy to share more details of any of this work with TSRF groups.

**Action: Louise B.** put learning re: lived experience onto subgroup list for discussion next meeting. (Allison would be keen to be involved in this).

### **Jane Cullingworth – Voluntary Sector Studies Network**

#### **46. NCVO/VSSN – Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research Conference – Call for Papers**

<https://www.vssn.org.uk/events/2018-voluntary-sector-and-volunteering-research-conference-call-for-papers/>

#### Conference taking place September 6 and 7 in London

Public trust in charities, voluntary organisations and wider civil society is under threat from a perceived lack of transparency and accountability surrounding its work. From the Oxfam scandal, to the failure of Kids Company, and ongoing concerns about fundraising practices, the media gaze and political spotlight is increasingly falling on organisations' work. This raises some important questions for research on the voluntary sector and volunteering:

- How is the sector, and civil society more generally, affected by and responding to media and political challenges to become more transparent and accountable?
- How is public trust holding-up in light of recent events, for individual organisations and the sector as a whole?

Alongside this intensified public attention, the voluntary sector and wider civil society continues to deal with a complex series of challenges associated with rising inequality, material hardship, and multiple disadvantage, whilst campaigning and advocating on behalf of some of society's most seldom heard voices. This broader context presents, inevitably, opportunities and challenges for the voluntary sector and volunteering, and high quality research and analysis are needed more than ever to help understand these.

The Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research Conference – organised by NCVO and the Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN) – provides a unique opportunity for academics, policy makers and practitioners from the UK and further afield to come together to share and discuss research that addresses the conference theme and the broader issues facing the voluntary sector and volunteering at this time.

47. VSSN Day Seminar - May 9 in York

## **Developing innovative approaches to tackling complex social problems – opportunities and challenges**

<https://www.vssn.org.uk/events/vssn-day-conference/>

VSSN's next day conference will take place on 9th May 2018, hosted by York Business School, York Saint John University.

There are growing pressures on locally based community organisations and social enterprises to tackle increasingly complex social issues, but organisational actors are also active in developing different ways to address these challenges.

This day seminar aims to explore new and innovative approaches which are being put in place to tackle complex social problems, including enduring and increasing poverty and growing inequalities, and the forms and effectiveness of such new approaches.

The seminar will ask how organisations and communities are responding to prolonged public sector funding cuts, austerity and the upheavals caused by political uncertainties, including over BREXIT. It will explore a range of questions, for example:

- Do new initiatives represent an opportunity to innovate and work together to successfully tackle complex social problems?
- If so, what initiatives are emerging that present sustainable opportunities for the future?
- Which initiatives are proving successful and which are not, and why?
- What challenges do organisations face in developing new initiatives in the current environment?
- Can successful strategies be replicated in diverse communities and what problems are encountered in achieving this?

48. Jane is involved in co-production research Operation Modulus. Results should be available for June meeting. **Action: Jane C.** will circulate launch details.

### **“to publish or not?”**

49. Group discussion about publishing research results in peer reviewed journals took place. The following points were noted:

- Not many TSOs publish in academic journals (although Poverty Alliance is just about to). It is time consuming and not the way to reach their key stakeholders.
- Outputs are different for academics and TSOs. Main interest for TSOs is the data generated by research.
- Academics are interested in publishing.
- VSSN publishes Voluntary Sector Review (pub. By Policy Press). This journal bridges practice and research by publishing practice papers. Editorial team will work with TSOs to support their product.
- TSOs can't afford to have access to academic journals. So although there may be very interesting and appropriate information TSOs don't know about a lot of the research as they never see it.
- Journals are for academics – written by academics – using specific research language. It's a lot of effort, small reach and acceptance rate for

publications is low (8-10%) – TSOs need to ask what is the benefit to them publishing and think of other ways to disseminate which will have a wider impact.

- Be clear why you do it!

**Action Louise/Jane** to create an infographic from this discussion for the sector.

### **AOCB**

There was no other competent business.

**Next meeting: 1- 3.30pm (12.30pm lunch), Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June,  
Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), Dundee**