



Let's Co-operate

6 December 2011, 9.45am - 12.00
The Gallery, Oldham

Supported by



Introduction

The aims of this event which brought together 31 local voluntary organisations and 9 commissioners from Oldham Council and NHS Oldham were:

- ✓ Understand Oldham Council and NHS Oldham's current operating framework and commissioning intentions.
- ✓ Launch Oldham's new voluntary sector consortium – 'Society Works'.
- ✓ Create the opportunity for dialogue between VCS providers and commissioners to enable shared outcomes to be met.

Presentations

1. Welcome – Liz Windsor-Welsh, Voluntary Action Oldham

Presentation: Introductory presentation (appendix 1)

2. Commissioner presentations

- Maggie Kufeldt – Commissioning in context
- Ed Francis – Children's Services
- Kathryn Wyne-Jones – NHS and Public Health
- Zaiem Khan -District Commissioning
- Michelle Bradley – Adult Services
- Michelle Carr – Economy and Enterprise

Presentations: Commissioners slides (appendix 2)

3. Society Works - Oldham's new VCS consortium

Steph Gill, Kashaff Feroze and Tim Mitchel introduced a new consortium of local voluntary organisations.

Presentation: Society Works 3 (appendix 3)



Themed discussions

Following the presentation, themed discussions provided an opportunity for informal dialogue between VCS providers and commissioners. The notes from each discussion are presented below.

Economy and Enterprise

The group recognised that there is a need to improve skills and create opportunities for employment but felt that maintaining motivation and building confidence was a key issue for individuals.

Agencies/providers need to provide a linked continuous pathway or programme of short projects that are tailored and individualised to the individuals needs that includes a named long term mentor and ongoing support.

Highways to Opportunities (H2O) and Positive Steps database keeps track of NEETS but it seems to be a more aggressive environment for older “NEETS” (payment by results – outcome based) and this can have a demoralising effect of individuals.

Volunteering opportunities can lead to additional and transferable skills and Society Works can demonstrate how the volunteering journey works.

The group understood that the term work placements/experience used by the Work Programme contractors means the same as volunteers/volunteering and that there needs to be a dialogue between Work Programme contractors and Society Works.

Children Services

Funding arrangements

- Some dialogue and concerns raised about only able to negotiate annual contracts. This makes it difficult to plan and develop the services.
- Not all organisations are capable of being successful in a formal bidding process. To give longer term contracts as there needs to be strict processes. Shorter term grant arrangements are sometimes better as they are more accessible to smaller organisations. A benefit of being in the consortium is it would help the smaller organisations bid for larger contracts. There was recognition from all that it's about getting the balance right when formal processes are required and that these are proportionate.
- The commissioner emphasised how important dialogue is between providers and commissioners. This can help to ensure there is ongoing and greater accountability.
- Family services may be a service that needs reviewing in terms of how it is designed / tendered.

District Partnerships

- Greater dialogue and interaction with District Partnerships has been achieved to some degree through the Alliance. Can this be built on to ensure DP's take into account the recognised gaps in children's services? As such small amounts are available from DPs

(they vary from £8 - £40k), the best models would be about co-delivery not competitive process.

- The group was interested to understand the timescale when mainstream provisions will go to districts. Services are being delivered at a district level e.g. youth services but this service is not commissioned by the District – it's still centrally coordinated and commissioned. It may take 2-3 years for District Partnership to get geared up for this.

Schools

Schools are starting to commission services. These are based on results of needs assessment (including OFSTED information and the needs assessment work done by District Partnerships). There are two commissioning levels:

- Collaborative level which is at District level
- Cluster level are ward based and operate very differently e.g. Failsworth School Trust model (primary / secondary schools are working together)

Q: How do we unlock the money schools now get?

A: Sell the potential to bring in more money with schools e.g. looking at the wider picture / issues e.g. mental health and parents. Debbie Holland is a key contact for more information.

Other questions:

Q: How does OMBC currently involve the VCS in the designing of children's services?

A: Via the Integrated commissioning group. Evidence-based approaches are important.

Public Health and Adult services

Investing in prevention services

Recognition from all that early intervention is critical. Commissioners recognise that we now have a much better evidence base that prevention (invest to save) works.

- Commissioners are actively looking to take money from 'acute' services to invest in prevention. It's recognised that to do this decommissioning will need to take place.
- Providers need / want ongoing dialogue so joint reviewing can take place and decommissioning and service re-design can be done in cooperation.
- Need a common understanding of the evidence base amongst commissioners and providers - sharing knowledge about what works and what doesn't. It's important not to assume commissioners have all these answers.
- Clinical leadership of NHS may be more likely to take risks to fund preventative services.



On-going dialogue and engagement routes

VCS organisations wish to develop routes to more effectively engage with GPs. What's the arena for this?

- Public Health (PH) team will inform VAO if there are provider events around tendering opportunities e.g. diabetes contract.

- How can we promote our offer regarding referrals/ range of prevention service already available? Do this through Kathryn's PH teams and cluster meetings. **Action:** Liz / Kathryn set up opportunities to meet clusters and inform them about Society Works and range of services delivered by the sector.
- If we need the endorsement of CCG this can be done through their monthly meetings. – **Action:** Liz to make links with Jill Stott to understand the mechanisms for this.
- From the commissioners' point of view, having a 'single' route to reach providers in the consortium will improve engagement in commissioning process and quality services redesign. It was also recognised that better dialogue will also help VCS organisations to bid for external monies when OMBC / NHS commitment is required.
- Different levels (district, Oldham, AGMA and North West) need to understand routes in and how information feeds up and to. **Action:** Liz will contact Michelle Bradley for a copy of the different structures and how they relate to each other.

Neighbourhoods

Zaiem Khan District Coordinator for West Oldham gave an overview of Oldham Council's new neighbourhood working arrangements.

The Council is devolving more power to District Partnerships and is seeking to deliver more services at district level and create community hubs. The Council feel that if services are devolved from Oldham town centre then this will create more of a local feel producing better dialogue and engagement between service providers and communities.

With respect to organisations that have a role to work borough-wide, with limited staffing capacity, to engage in all the 6 District Partnerships. The question was asked: How will the district partnership model accommodate the building of relationships and facilitate ongoing dialogue with the small and medium organisations with respect to localism, collaboration and cooperative borough model? Is there one specific mechanism that will accommodate such organisations?



There isn't a single mechanism at the moment as each DP will have its own set of priorities and will want to work in a way that suits the citizens and partners in that district. Whilst it does mean that some organisations may not be equally involved in all districts, it is the case that each District will be working towards its own identified priorities. It is also important to remember that the budgets within the districts will only accounts for a small part of the district offer; much of the emphasis will be on working together in a more effective manner.

Could districts pool their resources for the purpose of responding to borough wide issues by possibly top slicing funding from each District, as Partners then could be asked to match these funds with district funds, with each DP using the funds to meet the specific needs, therefore maximising resources available to districts?

The purpose of devolution to districts is to create more autonomy and have the ability to flexibly respond to local needs. When commissions are being developed for borough wide services they will reflect the needs of the districts and how the commissioned service may differ in each district – such as DAAT, Children’s Centre. Oldham Council will be utilising the integrated commissioning hub for borough wide work and also for some cross district and district specific commissions.

Summary of Evaluations

17 people completed the evaluation forms and expressed that they found the event beneficial.

What will you take away with you?

- Corporate commissioning direction (Maggie), CYP presentation re policy context and next step.
- Knowledge about the Society Works consortium
- Better understanding and commissions properties.
- Working together both with voluntary and statutory sectors with transparency.
- New contacts made - need to join up services.
- Changes to structure at Oldham Council.
- More information re process for the future.
- A better understanding of the plans.
- Succinct understanding of council practices.
- Improved knowledge of current operating framework and commissioning.
- Contacts.
- That the LA needs to have a clear idea of financial future and their political targets.

Suggestions for how we can improve the event:

- Different venue, a bit more interactive for the main body of the event. Different room (not just the cold temp!).
- More time for speaks (starting earlier).
- None.
- More time.
- A little longer for group discussions?
- A print off with all the presentations as presenters where rushed.
- A bit more time for presentation and discussions.
- More time for the presentation would have been very beneficial and would of helped to provoke more discussions with groups.
- Very informative.
- Less being talked to more discussion required.
- Allow more time for speakers.
- A little more time for presentations.
- We need to see the bottom line before we can plan future.
- More time for discussions different venue more time

How would you rate the following:

	Excellent 😊😊	Good 😊	Adequate 😐	Poor 😞	Comments
The format of the event	5	11	2		Need more time
The presentations	5	11	2		Rushed
The venue		10	5	3	Cold x 9

Everyone said they would attend a similar event again. The following comments were made about how best to continue the discussions from today:

- Please provide copies of today's presentation and let me know how we can join the consortium thanks Lisa Michie.
- As we progress in dialogue, to keep up to date with council direction – develop relationships- disentangle some of our potential sticky points what may arise in new arrangements – so more detailed workshop in future.
- A longer time for commissioners questions/answers possible quarterly meetings.
- Group discussion times.
- The format was perfect-just enough.
- More time for the discussions on the subjects raised today
- It would be good to know how different areas of local authority (Galley Oldham) can engage with Society Works and work in partnership with them.
- This is the start of the process – not sure but it is developing

Other comments:

- Thank you
- A really good start!
- Useful to get all commissioners together in one place.