

The Strengthening Engagement Transition Project – Aberdeen Collaborative Community Justice Event

Beach Ballroom, Aberdeen, Friday 17th February

The Strengthening Engagement project hosted a half day collaborative workshop event on 17th February at the Beach Ballroom, Aberdeen. The event was well attended with those attending coming from a range of statutory and third sector organisations. Feedback for the day was highly positive and a majority of participants said that, following the event, they knew more about local community justice arrangements in Aberdeen and knew more about building successful relationships between the statutory and third sector.

The day began with an exploration of the national and legislative context of community justice in Scotland, as well as the previous work and findings of the Strengthening Engagement Project, by Chris McCully of the [Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Forum](#). Following an update from the CJ Coordinator (Val Vertigans), statutory partners were given an opportunity to engage with third sector attendees by discussing their role in the new community justice arrangements and the links that they have already established with third sector organisations. Those presenting included Lesley Simpson of Criminal Justice Social Work, Neil Carnegie of Communities and Housing, David Bernard of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Penny Gillies representing the NHS, and George Peden from the Scottish Prison Service. This opportunity to hear from statutory partners as to their role and their ongoing commitment to working with the third sector was welcomed by all those attending as was considered a valuable opportunity further the general understanding of the community justice transition.



Awareness/knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure partners know the services that are available – Statutory and third sector organisations need to make sure that they inform one another of the services they provide • Share best practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database of SPOC to collate and share information
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and prioritise relationships • Ensure the use of different ways to share stories – newsletters, elected members, talking heads, video clips • Community engagement – sharing good news stories, using media to inform of services etc. • Advertising – posters, bus stops etc. Key areas where people meet. Social media 	
Intermediary Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure capacity • Diversity vs focus • Resolve competing priorities • Keep up to date with information from partners • Ensure realistic expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain continuity

While the above is far from exhaustive and many issues were discussed throughout the session, two key themes captured during the course of the day focused around:

- The importance of awareness around service provision and being able to know which services are available and where. One potential suggestion to this problem was a database to catalogue the available statutory and third sector services; it was, however, pointed out that this may be impractical and could require considerable resourcing to maintain. An alternative suggestion was that the TSI and the community justice partners in particular should work hard to communicate and advertise the services available to ensure the broadest possible awareness of what is on offer.
- The opportunities provided by the third sector justice network in Aberdeen and the work done by the TSI to support that network across arrange of different areas. Whilst this work was viable for the current transition period, financing and resources would have to be found in future to ensure that both the network and the TSI's work can be sustainable.

Many other thoughts and observations were explored throughout the day and it is hoped that participants will build upon these discussions, as well as the considerable networking opportunities provided by the day.

The Strengthening Engagement Project has now finished its work for 2016/17 and is currently planning its work for the 2017/18 year. A full report on all its activities for the year, including the event conducted in Aberdeen, will be published in the coming months.

For further information on the activities of the project in 2016/17 or to learn more about the project's planned work for 2017/18, please contact the Strengthening Engagement Transition Project lead, Chris McCully, on chris.mccully@ccpscotland.org or 01314752676.