

Chief Officers Group in the Third Sector (COGITS)

Note of meeting

19 August 2021

Attendance: David Barr (Aberlour), John Dougan (Relationship Scotland), Phil Stewart (Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service), Roland Chaplain (Glenkens Business Association), Pamela Deans (Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy Service), Peter Duncan (Dumfries Historic Buildings Trust), Sharee Rennie (Care Training Consortium), Mark Smith (River of Life Church), Innes McMinn (Independent Living Support), Clair McFarlan (Solway Firth Partnership).

Present: Norma Austin Hart (TSDG), David Vickers (TSDG Associate)

Apologies: Andy Zieleniec, (Include Us), Carolyn Kennedy (Better Lives Partnership), Heather Hall (Usual Place), Kerry Riddell (LGBT Youth Scotland), Alex Dickson (DG Befriending Project), Kim Dams (ORG), Kalpana Ratnam-Roarty (UCI) and Kim Dams (DG Voice).

Norma welcomed everyone to the fifth meeting of COGITS and apologies were noted. Attendees gave a brief introduction of themselves and their organisations.

Notes of last meeting and matters arising

- ***Engagement of Third Sector with elected representatives***

The meeting discussed the engagement of Third Sector organisations with local and national politicians. Local politicians were seen as more receptive to particular local and organisational issues. The broader strategic agenda of national politicians meant that single-issue engagement tended to be less. Organisations need to ensure they communicate the wider benefits of what their organisation was able to offer in the delivery of the wider strategic context. Many of the larger organisations appear to have processes in place for targeted engagement and smaller organisations less so. Norma Austin Hart suggested an event where politicians could meet with members of the Third Sector. This was agreed as a good way forward.

It was agreed that political engagement should be conducted in three ways

1. Organisations continue to engage with politicians as they do now.
2. Norma Austin Hart is due to meet with politicians one to one to discuss the wider context and offerings of Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway.

3. TSDG Board agenda item to consider an event where politicians can engage with the Third Sector. This will then return to COGITS for a more focused discussion.

- ***Voice of the sector***

An academic, Jane Cullingworth, had been engaged by TSDG to conduct research into the area of Third Sector representation. On the supply side there will be a package of support and training and on the demand side an orientation pack will be developed to assist with understanding. Initially Norma and TSDG staff will hold meetings with Chairs of committees and separately with Third Sector representatives to develop the model. In particular, TSDG will work with the supply side of current Third Sector representatives to determine what additional support would help them to strengthen the voice of the Third Sector.

Norma Austin Hart said that she would present a framework at the next COGITS meeting on progress with The Voice programme.

Regional Economic Strategy

Norma Austin Hart discussed the South of Scotland Draft Regional Economic Strategy (June 2021) from the Regional Economic Partnership (REP) – South of Scotland. Some COGITS members said they had received consultation information but a minority of those present were aware of the consultation taking place.

The draft RES has proposed KPI's for measurement, but Norma has suggested a move to outcome measurement as this would consider the wider social impact as well as the economic impact of the strategy. This will reveal more of the third sector input to the RES objectives.

The next step in this process is the development of a detailed three-year action plan by the REP.

TSDG mentoring Scheme- update

David Vickers gave an update on the TSDG mentoring scheme being developed by the short life COGITS sub-group.

The pilot scheme is set to begin in late September/early October with training dates currently being agreed with mentors and mentees. The Evaluation Support Scotland model has been used to determine outcomes for the project, indicators of success (or otherwise), measures and methods to test those outcomes have been achieved. This will be used to guide the pilot project and to test it in the research report at the conclusion.

The sub-group (Kim Dams (DG Voice), John Dougan (Relationship Scotland), Phil Stewart (D&D Citizens Advice Service), Norma Austin Hart and David Vickers) has developed the following paperwork/processes:

- Ethics and principles of the scheme,
- Mentor role descriptor,
- Selection process

- Matching process for mentors and mentees
- 3-way contract (mentor-mentee-mentoring coordinator),
- Training package for mentors and mentees

Norma Austin Hart advised that Jane Stanistreet of TSDG will be the mentoring coordinator and asked if COGITS members could identify mentees and notify her if there was anyone who might take part in the pilot scheme.

David Vickers said that research will be conducted throughout the pilot and a report will be produced for the COGITS short life group and outcomes would then be report back to the main COGITS meeting.

Format, focus of the group

The meeting concluded that the COGITS meetings were a valuable process and should continue. It was agreed that a mix of two zoom and two face to face meetings per year would be adopted. Zoom enables a wider geographic reach and removes the need for travel, whereas as face-to-face enabled additional networking and innovation to take place.

There was a general feeling that members had found meetings informative and had learned something new and picked up information that they might otherwise have missed.

It was also agreed that the meeting would have a mixed agenda of items but that a specific theme might be explored each time as the key item.

Dates for future meetings

It was agreed that the next meeting should have a social element to it and be face-to- face given that it was near to Christmas. Then the first meeting in the New Year would be back on Zoom.

AOB

There were no items of Any Other Business

Next meeting

The next meeting of COGITS will take place on 9th December 2021.

Actions arising			
Date	Action	Who is responsible	Deadline
18/08/21	TSDG Board agenda item – event for Third Sector organisations to meet with local and national politicians	NAH	28/10/21
18/08/21	COGITS Agenda item to plan event for Third Sector organisations to meet with local and national politicians	NAH	9/12/21

18/08/21	Presentation of a framework on the supply and demand sides of Third Sector representatives on groups.	NAH	09/12/21
18/08/21	Mentoring pilot update	NAH	1 st mtg 2022