

No.

## **VOLUNTARY SECTOR JOINT LIAISON COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a remote meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2021.

The Committee agenda is available [here](#).

The Meeting recording is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor Ms. R.M. Birch (Chairman), Councillor Mrs. J.M. Norman (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Mrs. C.A. Cave, Miss. A.M. Collins, K.F. McCaffer and R.O. Rowlands.

Also present: Councillor O. Griffiths.

Representatives of the Voluntary Sector: Ms. L. Newton (Cardiff and the Vale Action for Mental Health) and Mrs. A. Barnaby (Town and Community Councils Representative).

### 158 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Chairman read the following statement: “May I remind everyone present that the meeting will be live streamed as well as recorded via the internet and this recording archived for future viewing.”

### 159 APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY VICE-CHAIRMAN –

AGREED – T H A T that the item be deferred until the next Committee meeting.

### 160 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Councillor R. Crowley.

### 161 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2021 be approved as a correct record.

### 162 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Councillor Mrs. C.A. Cave declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item 5. The nature of the interest was that she was a mental health professional.

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### 163 PRESENTATION – SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS IN RESPONSE TO COVID FROM VALE MENTAL HEALTH FORUM MEMBERS –

The Representative for Cardiff and Vale Action for Mental Health (CAVAMH) Gave a presentation which provided Committee with an update from members of the Mental Health Forum regarding service developments which had taken place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Mental Health Forum had been considering the Third Sector's role in implementing Welsh Government's Social Services and Wellbeing Act and Together for Mental Health Action Plan, and the Representative highlighted that services needed to be co-produced, person centred, holistic and community focused, and that the key to achieving this was wider partnership working.

The Mental Health Forum had been developing its Action Plan for the year and had identified common challenges and opportunities in the areas of:

- Inequalities
- Inclusion of individuals and communities
- Improving Digital Inclusion, information and access
- Issues regarding the length of waiting lists and individuals not seeking support, and how to assist people in crisis.
- Providing holistic help and a range of services
- Co-production
- Prevention
- The impact of COVID-19.

The Representative appraised Committee of some of the services offered by some of the members of the Mental Health Forum, including a range of new services which had been developed since the new year. The Representative invited Ms. T. Owen to present information to Members regarding CUBE, a social firm which had been set up during the pandemic and offered support for and worked restoratively with families and individuals who were living with domestic violence, mental health difficulties and addiction. CUBE were opening a needs-led one stop centre at a premises in Barry, and Ms. Owen advised that a launch event would be taking place in September which Members would be welcome to attend.

The Representative for CAVAMH continued by advising of new Social Prescribing and Signposting schemes which had been introduced throughout the Vale, and updated Members regarding developments in Housing Support and Counselling Services, noting that there had been a huge rise in demand for Counselling services, many of which had moved to online or over the phone provision. Ms. S. Biddy of the Alzheimer's Society provided an update regarding support provided during the pandemic, and advised Members of a new bereavement counselling service that was being delivered alongside Cruse Bereavement Care.

To conclude the presentation, Members were given a summary of the services and resources available for carers, the elderly, younger people and minority ethnic and diverse communities.

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The Chairman and Committee Members subsequently thanked the Representative for the comprehensive presentation provided and in particular expressed interest in CUBE and its launch event, with the Chairman and Councillor Ms. Collins wanting to ensure that Councillors were made aware of the launch event in order that they could attend and see the work of the group. Ms. Owens advised that CUBE would be open on Monday and Friday evenings to accommodate people in need of support who could not attend during regular working hours.

In response to queries from Members, the representatives of Third Sector organisations advised of the following:

- Information had not been gathered in a way which clearly demonstrated whether there had been an increase in requests for mental health support from a specific age group. However, some groups had seen a notable impact, for instance:
  - There had been a significant increase UK-wide (90%+) in demand for support with eating disorders over the course of the pandemic;
  - Older people, particularly those needing to access a Memory Clinic had not been able to access services when needed, and this in turn had had an impact on the mental health of Carers;
  - CUBE had seen an increase of referrals for parents who were concerned for their children, for example regarding anxiety around the return to school following COVID-19 lockdowns, or children being hyper-stimulated or repressed in their emotions. Their youngest referral had been aged three.
- As support workers would begin to work out in the community again with the easing of restrictions, CUBE anticipated another increase in referrals. During the pandemic individuals had been accessing support directly, and CUBE were looking to find ways of encouraging this to continue.
- In terms of equality and co-production, the Mental Health Forum were hoping to link in with work being undertaken by the Local Authority as much as possible.
- Both CUBE and the Mental Health Forum were in contact and working with the Vale Youth Service.
- CUBE had collated a video project called 'Walk With Me' which featured individuals speaking about their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the aim of capturing people's stories while also encouraging those who had been shielded, isolating or apprehensive about going back out into their communities.

Councillor Mrs. Norman advised that Llantwit Major Town Council had recently released a book which, similarly, collated stories and poems from local people regarding their experiences of the pandemic.

There being no further queries Members, it was subsequently

AGREED –

(1) T H A T the contents of the presentation be noted.

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(2) T H A T the Committee Chairman liaise with the Chairman of the Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee regarding adding the presentation as an item for consideration on the Committee's next available agenda.

(3) T H A T the link to the recording of the meeting and relevant time stamps for information regarding CUBE be circulated to all Elected Members.

Reasons for decisions

(1) Having regard to the contents of the presentation and discussions at the meeting.

(2) In order that the contents of the presentation be given due consideration by the relevant Scrutiny Committee.

(3) In order that the work of CUBE be brought to Members' attention ahead of their launch event in September 2021.