

**West Dunbartonshire Community Health
Partnership a Voluntary Sector Briefing
Paper:**

**The value of the Voluntary Sector to
the West Dunbartonshire Community
Health Partnership (CHP)**

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1.0 The Voluntary Sector in the West Dunbartonshire; Painting the Picture

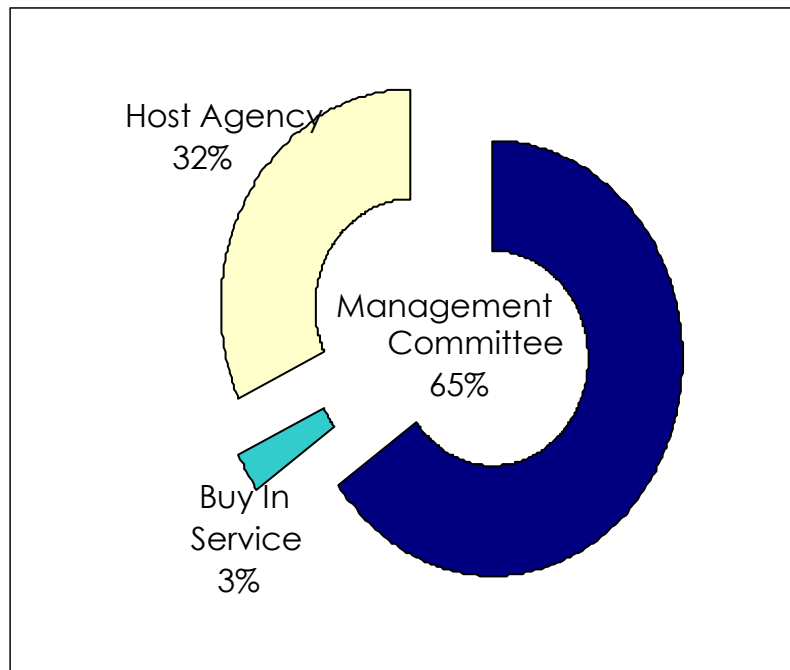
- 1.1 In 2002-2003 CVS West Dunbartonshire under the auspices of its first audit of the voluntary sector in West Dunbartonshire concluded that the economic and social importance of the sector to the community was strong. With a minimum of 900 voluntary and community based organisations, ranging from sewing bees to million pound local Housing providers, debt advice organisations to after school care providers, Healthy Living organisations to befriending organisations, social care organisations and much, much more.
- 1.2 The social impact of these organisations and the activity they undertake is surprising. Organisations surveyed were asked to highlight the client groups with whom they worked, the categories chosen were those as highlighted in the Active Communities document produced by the Scottish Executive.
- 1.3 It is important to note that activity is taking place locally under each heading; analysis of the evidence shows that around 64% of all groups claimed to work with three or more target client groups. Less than 10% of small organisations and less than 5% of large organisations worked with a single client group.

Target Groups:

Animal Welfare/Concern	Anti—poverty work	Arts (music/drama/crafts)	Carers	Children
Crime/Safety	Disaster/Emergencies	Drug/Alcohol Issues	Learning/Literacy	Elderly
Environmental	Ethnic Minorities	Families	Gender/sexuality	Health
Hospitals/Hospices/Homes	Homeless/Housing	Civil Rights/Justice	Learning disabilities	Men's Issues
Mental health	Museums/Heritage	Offenders/ExOffenders	Overseas aid	
Physical Disability	Refugees/Asylum Seekers	Regeneration	Religious Faith	Sensory Impairment
Sport/Leisure	Tackling Unemployment	Womens Groups	Young People	

- 1.4 With such a broad spectrum of activity the voluntary sector in West Dunbartonshire contributes to local social cohesion, community development, health education, in addition to health care provision, confidence building, tackling unemployment and economic development.
- 1.5 Economically, the impact of the sector is immense, employing over 700 in fulltime and part-time positions, and adding over £37,000.000 to the local economy with the majority delivered via local West Dunbartonshire based organisations. The capabilities of the local sector to deliver services are underpinned by the fact that the vast majority of the organisations over two thirds are managed by their own management committees, local people delivering local services, to meet local need;

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- 1.6 As well as paid staff, the voluntary sector contributes an immense amount of free time and free / reduced cost service provision. This has tangible health benefits in relation to service delivery across West Dunbartonshire i.e. care provision, healthy eating, counselling, and mental health representation but to name a few.
- 1.7 The 2003 audit identified 4665 regular active volunteers working across West Dunbartonshire (1838 male, 2839 female), giving a collective total of 25,670 hours per week to the local community. The majority of people, 51%, gave between 1 and 4 hours per week, whilst 8% of volunteers gave more than 8 hours per week. Of the total amount of volunteers a minimum of 33% were involved in direct service provision.

2.0 Why involve the Voluntary Sector in the CHP?

2.1 Several notable issues arose via the voluntary sector audit, which show;

- Scale of work being undertaken by the sector over a broad range of themes
- Scale of volunteering time given over to the local community
- Scale of fiscal impact upon the local economy
- Capability of local organisations to deliver services
- Existing voluntary sector framework is well balanced
- Need for a strategic approach to growth from the Voluntary Sector
- Need for a more informed approach to partnership from the Voluntary Sector, Public Sector and were appropriate the business Sector

2.2 The audit underpins the strategic role played by the sector in delivering services. Strategic level interaction between partners would bring about a more cohesive approach to service delivery across West Dunbartonshire as a whole, leading to a reduction in duplication of services, appropriate sign posting to service users, more effective use of resources, and improvements in the principle of best value.

2.3 The involvement of the Voluntary Sector will also underpin and improve communication across a plethora of issues affecting both Health Boards. This will allow for a greater understanding of the impact of services delivery from a Voluntary Sector perspective and enable decision making to be made with fuller and more cohesive evidence in relation to Voluntary Sector activity.

3.0 Capabilities, Differentiation, and the Social Economy

- 3.1 In general, the sector as well as partners should be aware of the capabilities of the sector in relation to capacity; i.e. the levels of ability, and a clear need to re-focus on strategic issues at a sector level.
- 3.2 To clarify; the traditional voluntary sector, e.g. small Parent Toddler organisations etc may find that their needs as organisations would be best addressed through the Public Partnership Forum (PPF) as they are more likely to be considered service users, whereas, larger organisations would be seen as service providers.
- 3.3 Nevertheless, differentiation should be made between smaller traditional organisations and larger social economy organisations. Social economy organisations play a direct role in implementing health improvement within our community via a wide range of local services;
- Housing provision
 - Social care
 - Children's Services
 - Mental Health provision
 - Advice agencies
 - Employment services
- 3.4 The distinctive working practises and ethos of larger social economy organisations gives them close proximity to their clients and service users. This in turn, show's them to be a group whose insight, knowledge and dedication would provide added value and enhance the capacity of the CHP to design well targeted services. Improved design would be based on an extended pool of knowledge from which the CHP can gain information.

4.0 What role for the Council for Voluntary Services?

- 4.1 To ensure the development of strategic thinking within the local sector means facilitating engagement, and providing networking opportunities in all areas including the voluntary health sector. In relation to the CHP, a need for a neutral organisation with a defined remit to communicate, understand and represent the interests of the sector across West Dunbartonshire is pivotal to working towards improvements in health; this is highlighted in section 72 of the statutory guidance. The corporate approach as underpinned by section 72 is a role the CVS is well placed to deliver. The guidance states;

*"In deciding who should be a member of the CHP committee or sub committee, it is recommended that the Health Board should discuss and agree with the relevant professions/groups and partner organisations an appropriate way of choosing that person. Each member will have a responsibility to work corporately to achieve the objectives of the CHP. They should also be able to put forward any views that their profession or group has on how to improve health and services."*¹

This is further highlighted by sections 139 to 141 where the guidance calls for close "partnership" with the voluntary sector and states that;

*"The voluntary sector has an increasing and vital role to play in planning and delivering services for local people. As key service providers they are well placed to understand the needs and aspirations of those they care for and to share local knowledge of the range of services and information available for local people."*²

And again;

*"In developing CHPs, Health Boards will be expected to discuss and agree with their local Council of Voluntary Services and other appropriate key networks..."*³

- 4.2 The CVS locally represented by CVS West Dunbartonshire, has an existing local network infrastructure which can be expanded, experience in facilitating forums, delivering capacity building to the sector, and liaising with partner agencies. It would seem a practical mechanism to ensure voluntary sector input to the CHP, section 68 of the guidance underlines this;

*"The role and responsibility of the CHP committee or sub committee will be to drive service improvement locally and to ensure the effective delivery of the functions devolved to the CHP as described in the scheme of establishment. In line with the aspirations of Partnership for Care, members of each CHP committee or sub committee shall include frontline staff and a wide range of key stakeholders who are best placed to understand the health and care requirements of local communities and to develop/deliver services that meet identified need."*⁴

¹ Scottish Executive, *Community Health Partnership Statutory Guidance*, HMSO Edinburgh 2004 p25

² Scottish Executive, *Community Health Partnership Statutory Guidance*, HMSO Edinburgh 2004 p43

³ Scottish Executive, *Community Health Partnership Statutory Guidance*, HMSO Edinburgh 2004 p44

⁴ Scottish Executive, *Community Health Partnership Statutory Guidance*, HMSO Edinburgh 2004 p24

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- 4.2 The guidance underpins the pivotal role played by the sector, via its ability to deliver services at a local level, including a positive approach to innovative local service delivery, flexibility and adaptability in addition to understanding local communities in relation to health service delivery. The CVS has the capability to represent the entire sector with its myriad of gradations i.e. social economy and traditional organisations. In addition, the CVS can act as an umbrella to voluntary sector health providers rather than individual sector providers who may have a one-sided perspective of the sector.
- 4.3 This view would enable the sector to offer a broader perspective on the value of health care provision strategically aimed at implementing the *"Improving Health in Scotland: The Challenge"*, which underpins the necessity to deliver changes in health on the main themes of early years, youth transition, workplace, older people, and communities etc. This is further highlighted by the proposed local framework of the Joint Health Improvement Plan for West Dunbartonshire, which concentrates on these themes.
- 4.4 Differentiation with community representation is important to highlight; the CVS would propose that the majority of the sector should be viewed as providers of services rather than as individual consumers of health care services. Therefore, there is a clear need for either direct CHP board representation or another avenue for vocalising issues as stated in the guidance. This could be facilitated by the CVS via its existing networks, as stated in 4.1
- 4.5 To conclude; an appropriate and effective vehicle for Voluntary Sector input to the CHP could come about via a Voluntary Sector Network facilitated and initially represented by the CVS.

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