

Voluntary
Action
Scotland



COLLABORATION WORKS

PUTTING THE THIRD SECTOR AT
THE HEART OF COLLABORATION

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About VAS

Voluntary Action Scotland is the national network organisation that champions, connects and develops Scotland's Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) to support the third sector locally.

Our ambition is to see a Scotland based on fairness and equity with a thriving third sector at its heart. We believe that Scotland's local third sector infrastructure organisations have a crucial role to play in making this happen. VAS gives a national voice to the TSIs local impact. We advocate for the best possible environment in which the third sector locally can thrive and contribute to better and fairer outcomes for the people we serve.

About TSIs

TSIs are charged with the task of supporting and developing third sector activity locally in all its forms. There is one TSI in each of Scotland's 32 local authority areas. Like the third sector they serve Scotland's TSIs are diverse, reflecting local needs, priorities and heritage. They are all focussed on delivering four key functions which form the bedrock of their role:

- **Developing volunteering**
- **Supporting social enterprise**
- **Supporting and developing voluntary and community organisations**
- **Building the third sector relationship with community planning**

TSIs are also proud to promote youth volunteering and are supported by VAS and the Scottish Government to operate the Saltire Awards, celebrating the huge contribution of young volunteers in Scotland. Increasingly TSIs are building upon these roles to develop collaborations across sectors that can unlock the potential in communities to tackle inequalities and build a fairer Scotland.

Collaboration works

Across Scotland third sector interfaces are at the heart of collaboration in their local areas, each working in a way which targets the needs of the local community. From the numerous examples being led by TSIs in Scotland we have developed seven case studies to highlight how TSIs build collaborative approaches to tackling issues, building capacity and developing innovative services. The case studies cover a variety of topics from social transport to reducing re-offending, from helping young families to building community capacity, and involve a wide range of partners including the public sector, third sector and service users. In doing so we hope people will gain a better understanding of the transformative impact the third sector can have when it is well supported by TSIs to develop new ways of working.

Why collaboration matters

It has become increasingly clear in recent years that new ways of working are needed to reform public services in Scotland to achieve much greater social justice. The traditional public service delivery of one agency delivering a service in isolation is no longer appropriate as we move towards preventative approaches and person-centred services. An increased focus on delivering the most dynamic services to an individual and a community has meant that organisations are increasingly seeing the importance of working together and building collaboration. In doing so they can draw on a greater breadth of knowledge and experience and join up services so as to improve outcomes for service users. This can help tackle issues at their root and help prevent greater need for statutory sector involvement further down the line.

The role of TSIs in building collaborations

TSIs have a unique, and increasingly important, role to play in their local area: brokering relationships between the third sector, public sector and others in order to foster the environment for collaborative working, unlocking a wide range of voices, experience and knowledge. Without the TSI building these links between the public and third sector many of these collaborations simply would not happen. By acting as a champion for the local third sector the TSI can help to give the sector a strong voice and challenge public bodies to work in different, more facilitative ways.

And increasingly this is working: TSIs are building upon their established roles to build collaborations across sectors that innovate in service design and delivery and provide better outcomes for communities. They do so by building connections across sectors, facilitating new relationships and helping the third sector locally negotiate the complexity of public service reform. By connecting expertise with need old barriers are coming down and new ways of doing things are emerging that meet the needs of the communities we all work for.



The Social Transport Project

Aberdeen Council for Voluntary Organisations (ACVO)



“If it wasn't for the bus and support from friends I'd definitely be stuck at home.”

Background

As part of the Reshaping Care for Older People (RCOP) agenda ACVO – the TSI in Aberdeen – could see that one of the main challenges in Aberdeen was a lack of social transport. In some instances this meant that older people were unable to attend medical appointments or activities aimed at reducing social isolation. The Social Transport Project addresses this need.

Working in partnership

The project aims to develop a co-ordinated social transport infrastructure for Change Fund projects and associated activities across Aberdeen. The TSI knew that in order to achieve this the project would need to draw on the skills and experience of various cross-sector organisations. It was ideally placed to identify suitable partners and to facilitate the collaborative approach because of its detailed knowledge of the wider third sector and its position on various strategic partnerships.

The Project Steering Group and the Project Working Group both include a range of third and public sector organisations. ACVO has a central role on both groups:

Project Steering Group – Strategic level

- ACVO
- Robert Gordon University (RGU)
- Nestrans
- The Project Manager from the Health and Transport Action Plan for Grampian (HTAP)

The Social Transport Working Group – Operational level

- ACVO
- Buchan Dial a bus
- Aberdeen City Council
- Co-Wheels Car Club
- Royal Voluntary Service (RVS)
- Red Cross

The Social Transport Project has used data collected by Robert Gordon University to identify gaps in current service provision and to develop a more co-ordinated infrastructure for social transport. There is already evidence which shows the benefits this is having for individuals:

“I feel safer on the bus.”
“I would go hungry without transport to the shops.”

It is also helping a number of organisations which support older people.

When the MS Society’s bus was off the road the Stuart Resource Centre asked ACVO to identify a more affordable means of transport, instead of expensive taxis. This was so the clients could continue to attend the centre on a Wednesday. Through Buchan Dial a Bus clients received a safe and supportive transport service which resulted in savings of approximately £100 per week for the Stuart Resource Centre.

Collaborating to put older people first

Through collaboration the Social Transport Project has been able to adopt a more co-ordinated approach to service delivery and management. ACVO has been vital in developing this approach by identifying organisations and agencies with a range of skills and experience in this area and building good working relationships with each of them. The approach has already proven to be cost effective for local organisations as well as helping to build social capital in the community.



● For more information contact Jane Russell, Partnership Manager, ACVO TSI at Jane.Russell@acvo.org.uk or visit www.acvo.org.uk

Men's Shed

Volunteer Centre Borders



“The shed gets me out of the house. I suffer from depression and this helps me. My doctor thinks it’s great that I come here.”

Background

Men’s Sheds is a world-wide movement that helps to tackle problems such as social isolation amongst men and particularly older men by providing volunteering opportunities and the chance to share and learn new skills. Volunteer Centre Borders (VCB) – a partner in the TSI in the Scottish Borders – recognised the benefits a Men’s Shed could bring to the Borders and that it would be valued and worthwhile to the community.

In order to start the process VCB engaged with a number of third and public sector organisations, building a collaborative approach that had buy in from each of the partners. VCB recognised that by building these partnerships the project would have greater reach and provide better outcomes for those involved. The partners included representatives from:

- **NHS Borders Healthy Living Network;**
- **Age Scotland;**
- **Elder Voice; and**
- **Scottish Borders Council (Community Capacity Building Team)**
- **Volunteer Centre Borders.**

A public meeting was also held to ensure that the wider community was actively involved from the start.

Gala Men’s Shed

When the partners engaged with the community they found that the interest in developing a Men’s Shed was very high. Because of this VCB, along with a representative from NHS Borders Healthy Living Network, facilitated weekly meetings to support members of the community to create one themselves.

The success of the project has attracted a number of referral agencies including occupational health, social work, mental health, learning disability and criminal justice.

At the Shed the men undertake a range of activities including creating planters for community groups, making bird boxes and repairing bikes. But the real benefit is that it helps to reduce social isolation and provides appropriate support structures for those in need.



The achievement of this project is that it has evolved from individuals becoming more empowered. The VCB facilitation has been necessary to help the men through some of the administration in establishing the group but the real effort and positive energy has come from the men themselves. This was done by them, not to them.

A catalyst for collaboration

The Gala Men's Shed shows how an effective collaborative partnership approach can support communities and individuals to develop activities which meet their own needs. By drawing on the skills, resources and experiences of different partners it ensures that a wide and diverse range of interests, abilities and needs are catered for.

In this case no single agency or organisation has been dominating with a specific agenda but instead each one has provided relevant support and advice as required.

The TSI was an essential catalyst in making this project work. With its array of services to support volunteering, community development and social enterprise, alongside its knowledge of the wider third sector, it is well placed to draw on a range of expertise to support the development of the sheds.

- **For more information please contact Nigel Sargent, Volunteer Centre Borders, on 0845 602 3921**

Family Buddies

CVO East Ayrshire



“From the third meeting the Governance Group was thinking with one mind.”

Background

In East Ayrshire an innovative project is helping young families by providing them with the support they need to get on in life.

The Family Buddies public social partnership is led by CVO East Ayrshire – a partner in East Ayrshire’s TSI – and is based on an early intervention and preventative approach to supporting young families before they reach crisis point. It adopts a collaborative approach across a range of public and third sector organisations, including:

- NHS Ayrshire and Arran;
- East Ayrshire Council;
- South West Scotland Community Justice Authority;
- CVO East Ayrshire;
- The Zone Initiative;
- The SKY Project;
- The Breastfeeding Network; and
- The GRAFT Project.



Responding to individual needs

Referrals to Family Buddies are received from a range of sources, including Health Visitors, schools and third sector organisations. Once a referral is received the Project Co-ordinator completes an Initial Family Assessment and works with the family to develop a Family Plan, identifying their specific needs and their goals. From here individual family members are signposted to relevant organisations and activities to help them. Some of the activities include: money management; parenting skills; support for play activities; and basic life skills such as healthy eating, cooking and hygiene.

A young boy was referred to Family Buddies by his school in March 2014 as he had been excluded from a number of extra-curricular groups due to his challenging behaviour. During the initial assessment a number of other challenges presented themselves including the fact that he would often run away from difficult situations and had a strained relationship with his mum. The young boy identified cooking as one of his interests and so he was supported to attend a cooking group whilst also receiving one-to-one support so that he could develop effective coping strategies. The project workers heard that he had always wanted his own den and so, with support from the GRAFT project they found materials to renovate the old shed in the garden. Now when he runs away his mum knows where he is.

Family Buddies also worked with mum to support improved involvement with her children's activities. Work with the family is ongoing but significant progress has been made: only six months after the initial referral the young boy's behaviour had improved so much he was nominated to be a school prefect!

Cross-sector collaboration

From the outset the TSI has been a key driver in developing this collaborative approach and was even chosen to host the project co-ordinator who was seconded from the local authority. In doing so she got direct access to the knowledge, skills and expertise of the TSI which helped support the project delivery.

The partners agree that the positive, cross-sector collaboration they have developed is one of the main reasons for the success of this project as it means they can offer seamless support for those in need, avoiding duplication and gaps in activities.

- **For more information please contact Jackie White, Project Co-ordinator at Jackie.white@cvoea.co.uk**

Let's Get On With It Together (LGOWIT)



Highlands Third Sector Interface (HTSI)



“By sharing experiences, training, information and working together we have found we can achieve more for people living with long term conditions.”

Background

LGOWIT is a Partnership which supports people with a long-term condition to self-manage. It is currently funded through the Self-Management Impact Fund and includes representatives from a range of cross-sector organisations. These include: ·

- HTSI;
- Able Care;
- NHS Highland including representatives from Argyll and Bute;
- The Highland Council;
- Living it Up;
- Connecting Carers;
- Chest Heart & Stroke;
- The University of the Highlands and Islands;
- Arthritis Care;
- MS Society;
- An individual living with a long term condition.

By working in collaboration with each other and the individuals they support, the Partnership recognises that it will be better able to achieve its intended outcomes.



The role of the TSI

As well as being a member of the Partnership, HTSI was also invited to host the project. The other partners understood that this would help to strengthen the project because of the TSI's other work across a range of topics and strategic themes within Highland. This has enabled broader connections to be made than might otherwise have been possible.



“We believe that LGOWIT has benefitted greatly from being hosted by HTSI by:

- **Being part of something wider than LGOWIT or a small individual organisation, we have more opportunities to grow and a far wider reach**
- **Being part of a proactive organisation**
- **Linking in with the political agenda**
- **Being promoted by an organisation that is closely connected to supporting health improvement within communities**
- **Self-management is discussed and included in areas we couldn't reach and groups that wouldn't be part of our network**
- **Support from being part of a larger organisation**
- **Wider publicity for the work of LGOWIT.”**

Joanne McCoy – on behalf of the LGOWIT partnership

Collaborating for effective change

The collaborative approach of LGOWIT is recognised by the partners as one of its key strengths as the project is able to draw on a range of skills, experience and knowledge. This means that it is able to offer more effective, cross-sector support for those living with a long term condition as well as raising the profile of self-management within statutory and third sector organisations.

- **For more information please visit the website at <http://www.lgowit.org.uk/>**

The Community Capacity Building and Carer Support Programme

Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire



“The Community Capacity Building and Carer Support programme is an example of the hard work, innovation and, indeed, dedication of our third sector partners who are working together to make independent, positive living a reality to older people throughout the area.”

Background

Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire – the TSI in North Lanarkshire – has played a vital role in supporting collaboration and building capacity in the community for older people and their carers. This was done as part of the Reshaping Care for Older People (RCOP) agenda to ensure that older people in local communities took part in decisions about how the Change Fund was used to support them.

The project involved a range of partners which included representatives from:

- The local authority;
- The NHS;
- Small community groups;
- National charities such as Age Scotland;
- NHS Improvement workers; and
- The local community
- Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire.

Community capacity building

As part of this programme six Locality Consortia were developed. These brought operational staff from the local third sector and public sector organisations together with members of the community. The representatives then worked in partnership to co-produce local activity which would positively impact on the outcomes of older people and their carers.

Each consortium was also given a micro-grant of £15,000 per year to fund local projects using a co-commissioning method.

In order to ensure that each Locality was able to operate effectively, the TSI provided central co-ordination and support. This included enabling clear communication between the localities, working closely with the consortia to recruit and train volunteers and providing guidance and support for establishing new groups.

Information about third sector activity is also shared via a web-based tool, 'Locator.' This enables individuals and communities to see what is happening in their area. Although the TSI manages the tool, the Consortia partners are all involved in providing up-to-date information and help to promote the tool.

So far 40,000 older people and their carers have benefitted from this collaborative and joined up approach to service design and delivery.

Building infrastructure for collaboration

As well as identifying specific outcomes for service users, such as reducing isolation and enabling participation, this programme has also led to a number of system-related outcomes. These include improved capacity of the third sector to engage and perform effectively within partnership structures and improved communication within the third sector. By developing this infrastructure for collaboration the TSI and its partners have enabled more flexible initiatives to be developed which respond to a locally identified need.



- **For more information please contact Jill Madden, Project Manager, at Jill.Madden@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk**

Renfrew West

Engage Renfrewshire



“It’s starting to build up the interaction between different groups in the area, and that is extremely important. Groups which a few years ago, existed as separate units, now there’s interaction between them, it’s all starting to come together.”

Background

Through building collaboration across third, public and statutory sector organisations, Engage Renfrewshire – the TSI in Renfrewshire – has been able to support and develop improved sustainability of various third sector organisations in the area.

In 2012 the Big Lottery Fund confirmed funding to four local projects in Renfrew West as part of its ‘Our Place’ programme. Alongside this the TSI was awarded an additional grant to provide bespoke support and training to a range of community groups in the area. This allowed for a dedicated ‘Renfrew West Team.’ Support and advice was also provided by the core staff within the Community and Voluntary Action team at Engage Renfrewshire.

Capacity building and partnership working

One way that the TSI helped strengthen the projects’ capacity was to broker collaborations between the community groups and other cross-sector organisations. For example:

The community team at Sainsbury’s provided volunteering opportunities for its staff to donate time to the projects. This included helping to paint office space, serving food at a pensioners’ dinner and offering mock job interviews to Our Place Our Families, one of the main community groups in the Renfrew West ‘Our Place’ project.

West College Scotland provided training and information on Further Education opportunities for some of the project beneficiaries. In turn one of the organisations hosts student work placements through the Employability Fund and refers people to relevant college programmes.

Through its connections with a range of cross-sector organisations the TSI is ideally placed to facilitate and support the development of partnerships across Renfrewshire. Feedback from the project showed that this helped the groups to “link into the community” and to “bring different people together, breaking down barriers.”



The TSI also provided a number of training courses to meet the specific needs of each group. These ranged from procurement training to legally required training such as First Aid.

“Any training that was specific to our needs, Engage have been able to support and develop that for us.”

Support to collaborate

The TSI has played an integral role in facilitating formal and informal collaborations across different sectors and organisations. Not only has this helped to share learning and information between organisations but it has also led to the sharing of resources. By increasing the capacity of the organisations through collaboration the TSI has helped to develop stronger groups and a stronger sense of community cohesion across their activities.

Although the Big Lottery Funding has come to an end the TSI continues to support and connect the organisations where appropriate, ensuring that the community based activity does not end too.

- For more information please contact Joe Ferrie, Engage Renfrewshire, at JFerrie@engagerenfrewshire.com

Chance to Change

**Voluntary Action
South Lanarkshire**



“I would be in jail today if I had not found this project.”

Background

Chance to Change is a public social partnership which unites the efforts of public, private and third sector agencies in a new approach to reducing reoffending rates in South Lanarkshire. It is hosted by Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire – South Lanarkshire’s TSI – and draws on the skills, experience and resources of four core partners:

- **Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire;**
- **South Lanarkshire Council;**
- **Routes to Work South;**
- **South Lanarkshire Community Justice Authority.**

The TSI has also used its knowledge of the wider community to connect the project with other cross-sector organisations and individuals which can help to meet positive outcomes for the young people involved.

Sharing skills, knowledge and resources

Chance to Change is an employability programme which supports young people who want to change their lives. Referrals are taken from a range of organisations and agencies including homeless services, social work, Skills Development Scotland and voluntary groups.

The majority of those referred have multiple barriers holding them back including homelessness, mental health problems, substance misuse, poor family relationships and literacy issues. The TSI recognised the importance of working in collaboration with other organisations and agencies so that some of the root problems could be addressed.

For example, the TSI has developed partnerships with the food banks in South Lanarkshire and the Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership to ensure young people have access to co-ordinated and relevant support which meets their needs.

No single agency working alone could provide the variety and expertise needed to offer bespoke support and to achieve the positive outcomes.

Craig's journey:

Having been imprisoned for assault and banned from driving through alcohol misuse, Craig knew he needed a change in life but was unsure about how to progress. He needed support and direction.

The Chance to Change project meant he was supported by a volunteer mentor and other partners to complete his personal development training. It also gave him an opportunity to talk about his ambitions, interests, concerns and where he wants to go in life.

The project helped him to identify a love of gardening and with a range of support he found customers who were interested in getting their grass cut. Craig is now registered as self-employed, has opened a bank account and is working with Business Gateway to further develop his business plan.

Collaborating for positive outcomes

All of the young people have been repeat offenders but the reasons behind that behaviour are varying and complex. Because of this the TSI understood the need to develop a collaborative approach which would increase the skills, knowledge and resources that are available to support the young people. This means that the project can provide a bespoke, person-centred approach to supporting the beneficiaries and achieve more positive outcomes as a result.

- **For more information please contact Jenny Gemmell, Team Leader - Growth Development, Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire, at jenny.gemmell@vaslan.org.uk**

How do I find out more?

For more information on Voluntary Action Scotland check out our website at www.vasotland.org, drop us an email at info@vasotland.org or phone 0141 353 7318

To find your local TSI follow the links below or go to - www.vasotland.org/tsis/find-your-tsi

Your local TSI

Aberdeen	www.acvo.org.uk
Aberdeenshire	www.avashire.org.uk
Angus	www.voluntaryactionangus.org.uk
Argyll and Bute	www.argyllcommunities.org
Clackmannanshire	www.ctsi.org.uk
Dumfries and Galloway	www.thirdsectordumgal.org.uk
Dundee	www.voluntarygatewaydundee.org.uk
East Ayrshire	www.cvoea.co.uk
East Dunbartonshire	www.edva.org
East Lothian	www.strive.me.uk
East Renfrewshire	www.va-er.org.uk
Edinburgh	www.edinburghtsi.org.uk
Falkirk	www.cvsfalkirk.org.uk
Fife	www.fifevoluntaryaction.org.uk
Glasgow	www.g3sf.org/about/third-sector-interface
Highland	www.highlandtsi.org.uk
Inverclyde	www.vainverclyde.org.uk
Midlothian	www.midlothiantsi.org.uk
Moray	www.tsimoray.org.uk
North Ayrshire	www.tsinorthayrshire.org.uk
North Lanarkshire	www.voluntaryactionnorthlanarkshire.org.uk
Orkney	www.vaorkney.org.uk
Perth and Kinross	www.vaperthshire.org
Renfrewshire	www.engagerenfrewshire.com
Scottish Borders	www.onlineborders.org.uk/community/scobortsi
Shetland Islands	www.shetland-communities.org.uk/vas
South Ayrshire	www.voluntaryactionsouthayrshire.org.uk
South Lanarkshire	www.vaslan.org.uk
Stirling	www.sventerprise.org.uk
West Dunbartonshire	www.wdcvs.com
West Lothian	www.vsgwl.org
Western Isles	www.c-cig.org.uk



@VA_Scotland

Registered Office: Robertson House, 152 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 4TB
Company Limited by Guarantee in Scotland, No. SC361901
Scottish Charity No. SC042793

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