Better Together VCS Forum – 14 June 2022

# Action Notes

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| Agenda Item | Key Issues | Actions | Responsibility |
| **Welcome & introductions** | Jo Laverick welcomed everyone to Durham Community Action’s offices for the first in person meeting of the Better Together Forum for over two years. Introductions were made. 16 people participated. Apologies were received from Andrea Hobbs - Association of Teesdale Day Clubs; Carol Gaskarth - PCP; Grace Crawford – UTASS; Hannah Johnson - Alzheimer’s Society; Naomi Stevens - County Durham Community Foundation; Joanne Appleby - OASES (North East Environment Network); Lesley-Anne Kirk - Northern Rights; Debbie Deacon – DASH. |   |  |
| **The Police and Crime** **Commissioner’s Domestic Violence Victim Survivor Champion** | Chris Mackay, the Police and Crime Commissioner’s Domestic Violence Victim Survivor Champion, gave a [presentation](https://www.durhamcommunityaction.org.uk/public/dca/www/uploads/files/DA%20Victims%20presentation.pptx) about her role and purpose which is to meet the needs of those with lived experience of Domestic abuse.She outlined her approach, her work to date, and plans for the future.She would value contact from organisations and any intelligence on grass roots community groups supporting victims and survivors.Contact: Chris.Mackay@durham-pcc.gov.uk  |  |  |
| **Poverty Strategy Action Plan** | Mary Readman, Head of Transactional & Customer Services, gave a [presentation](https://www.durhamcommunityaction.org.uk/public/dca/www/uploads/files/Poverty%20Action%20Strategy%20and%20Action%20Plan%20consultation%20June%202022%20.pptx) about the [Poverty Strategy Action Plan](https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s153930/Poverty%20Action%20Strategy%20and%20Plan%20-%20Cabinet%20-%20April%202022.pdf) which is currently out for consultation. The Poverty Action Steering Group is keen to receive intelligence from the sector and to have VCS representation on the group and to hear from those with lived experience.Any comments can be fed back via: <https://online1.snapsurveys.com/Poverty>  or Email: povertyaction@durham.gov.ukThe finalised Poverty Strategy together with the Economic Strategy will be presented to Cabinet in November. | 1. Members encouraged to feedback comments by 26th August
 | All |
| **Mental Health Alliance** | Julie Cane, Alliance Manager for the [Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance](https://www.durhammentalwellbeingalliance.org/), gave a [presentation](https://www.durhamcommunityaction.org.uk/public/dca/www/uploads/files/Alliance%20presentation%20.pptx) outlining the background, formation, make up and governance of the Alliance.She described the single point of access where all Alliance enquiries and referrals will be processed by email: Referrals2DMWA@homegroup.org.uk  A new website <https://www.durhammentalwellbeingalliance.org/> has been developed giving a comprehensive overview of the service.A Service User Board is being set up to ensure that the voices of those with lived experience can be heard and co-production can take place.It was suggested that it would be beneficial for future links with the [AICD](http://adviceincountydurham.org.uk/) referral portal to be explored. | 1. Links with AICD to be explored
 | Julie Cane/ Edward Pickering |
| **Partnerships Update**  | * Safeguarding

Abby Thompson reminded members that she is the main VCS Safeguarding link to the two Safeguarding Boards [Safeguarding Adults](http://www.safeguardingdurhamadults.info/) [Safeguarding Children](https://durham-scp.org.uk/)She highlighted that the Safeguarding Adults Board have recently been discussing safeguarding cultures within organisations and have issued some guidance on Closed Cultures.There is also some up-to-date guidance from the Charity Commission [Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees)DCA are planning to produce a podcast about safeguarding and welcome anyone willing to share examples of good practice or lessons learned from experience.Contact: Abby.Thompson@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk The next DBS online workshop will take place on Wednesday 14th September 12.30pm – 3pm Click the link to book places: [Disclosure and Barring Service Workshop September 2022](https://dcacrm.uk/civicrm/event/info/?id=316&reset=1)Abby will explore reinstating a lunchtime sharing session before the Better Together Meetings to discuss safeguarding issues.* [County Durham Partnership](https://countydurhampartnership.co.uk/)

The Board met on 20th May items included: Humanitarian Support update; Thematic focus on the Environment and Climate Change Partnership; Poverty Action Plan.* Advice in County Durham

A networking event will take place on Wednesday 29th June at the Durham Centre, Belmont. To book a place contact: AdviceinCountyDurham@durham.gov.uk  |  |  |
| **Information Sharing** | Members were given the opportunity to share any information. |  |  |
| **Date of Next Meeting** | The next meeting is planned to take place on **Tuesday 6th September**. It was suggested that we hold a ‘show & tell’ session to celebrate a cross section of VCS organisations. Further details to follow. |  |  |