

Meeting of:	Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee
Date of Meeting:	Saturday, 19 October 2019
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	All Scrutiny Committees
Report Title:	Glamorgan Voluntary Services - Response to COVID 19
Purpose of Report:	To inform the Committee of the actions taken by GVS in response to the COVID 19 crisis
Report Owner:	Rachel Connor
Responsible Officer:	Rachel Connor
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	N/A
Policy Framework:	GVS represents the Third Sector on a range of VOGC Partnerships, Board and Joint Working Groups
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS) is the umbrella organisation for the third sector in the Vale of Glamorgan. We provide information, advice and support to the sector as well as ensuring the views of the sector are represented to government and policy makers. GVS also directly deliver projects that aim to improve the lives of people living in the Vale of Glamorgan. • In early March 2020 GVS began stepping up preparations for our response to COVID 19. We had started preparing for staff to work from home 17th March, and all staff had a laptop with remote access. This preparation meant that when the national lockdown was announced on the evening of the 23rd March, GVS was as prepared as it could be for working remotely. • The support services on offer by GVS continued throughout the crisis with most services seeing increased demand. This report specifically focuses on those activities supporting the COVID 19 response and covers activity for the period until the end of September 2020. 	

Recommendation

1. That the Committee receive the report for information

Reason for Recommendation

1. To inform the Committee of actions / steps taken by GVS during the COVID 19 crisis.

1. Background

- 1.1 GVS had and continues to have an important role in responding to COVID 19. GVS is a direct deliverer of support to individuals who need help but also a convener and fulcrum for other third sector organisations in the area. GVS helps to connect people to third sector organisations and third sector organisations to the wider public sector.
- 1.2 Throughout the COVID 19 pandemic GVS has
 - Provided direct support to individuals – GVS has supported people with access to food and medicine but have also supported and provided a range of activities that have supported people’s emotional wellbeing.
 - Provided support to the wider sector – GVS has continued to support the wider third sector with volunteers, information and guidance, direct funding and support to access wider pots of funding.
 - Coordinated support – GVS has helped coordinate support to individuals, but has also worked with the Vale of Glamorgan Council ensuring a coordinated response across the Vale of Glamorgan including being part of key Local Authority meetings.
- 1.3 This report helps to illustrate the role GVS played and continues to play during the pandemic.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

Volunteering

- 2.1 GVS’ volunteering service offers a one-stop resource for information, advice and guidance on all aspects of volunteering for both volunteers and recruiting organisations. We aim to link the skills, experiences, time and enthusiasm of local people looking to volunteer with organisations seeking to develop their services. This service is delivered through a number of venues across the Vale, as well as at our main office in Barry, to ensure that we are able to reach those across the county. The opening of our new centre in Llantwit Major, CF61, has provided GVS with opportunities to further develop our volunteering outreach work.
- 2.2 Volunteering offers valuable experience which could aid study, help someone decide if they are thinking about a change in career or simply give them the opportunity to put something back into their community.
- 2.3 The highlights of our Volunteering Development work in 2019/20:

For Volunteers Week in 2019, we held a number of events to publicly recognise the difference made by volunteers, to raise the profile of volunteering as well as encouraging others to get involved.

For Volunteers Week 2020 all activities were delivered on line due to the Covid lockdown. Through Social Media and other on-line resources GVS reached 14,222 people across the Vale, and engaged with 4,172.

Our Big Volunteer Fayre in January 2020 was a success that exceeded our expectations. A huge thank you must go out to all staff and volunteers who contributed to making the event not only a fantastic showcase for GVS, but also helped widen the opportunities for volunteering to both organisations and to the general public.

- 63 organisations attended
 - 264 people visited
 - 197 signed up to volunteer
- 2.4** In 2019/20 GVS also held 12 Mini Volunteer Events in Cowbridge, Llantwit Major and Penarth attended by 163 people with over 100 finding a volunteer placement.
- 2.5** Our Youth Work in 2019/20 engaged with 75 young people.
- 2.6** Our Youth Led Grant panel of young people worked together in 2019/20, to help local organisations provide more youth volunteering opportunities in the Vale of Glamorgan. We were pleased to present cheques to seven successful youth projects with a total of £7,129 distributed.
- 2.7** Our ReBUILD project is funded by the Big Lottery Fund to support people into volunteering to achieve wellbeing, and started in April 2019 based in our new centre in Llantwit Major, CF61.
- 2.8** The project is delivering a mental health volunteering project across the western part of the Vale of Glamorgan. With a focus on peer support and meaningful interaction the project has introduced people into volunteering and provided them with the support needed to succeed and improve their physical and mental health.
- 2.9** Our Track 2000 Community Fund complements the Re-Build project with a part time Volunteer Coordinator developing links with volunteering organisations.
- 2.10** Our General Activity in volunteering has met with success and huge thanks must go to our volunteering staff team, and the volunteers who support our great work.
- Volunteers Enquiries 2019/20 - 293
 - New Volunteering Opportunities Created 2019/20 – 217
- 2.11** Comparable figures to those above for the period during lockdown (March – August 2020) were:
- Volunteers Enquiries 1072
 - New Volunteering Opportunities Created 2019/20 – 952
- 2.12** GVS's partnership with the Vale Heroes initiative provided an opportunity for us to directly support 171 members of the public who required a range of support from shopping, medicine deliveries or befriending, delivered by volunteers.

- 2.13** The Connected Carers project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, is led by GVS and delivered in partnership with Touch Trust and Cardiff & Vale Parents Federation. Connected Carers support family carers of people with a life-long and / or life limiting condition.
- 2.14** Cardiff & Vale Parents Federation arrange social gatherings in venues across Cardiff and the Vale at a range of times which best suit the carers to juggle a meeting with their difficult and demanding caring role. They are able to discuss their problems with like-minded people, many of whom have experienced similar problems / issues, who completely understand that problem and can offer support and solutions. Touch Trust organise Time For Me days which give carers the opportunity to relax and unwind with a head, body or foot massage or to take part in a creative workshop.

General Response to COVID 19

2.15 In response to COVID 19 GVS has: -

- Identified, contacted and offered support to all Vale based COVID 19 support groups set up on Facebook in response to the coronavirus outbreak.
- Maintained contact with every community council to log available support measures in each area of the Vale.
- Developed and maintained a directory of support services available in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Regularly updated the list of COVID 19 specific funding that has been launched in response to the pandemic. : <https://www.gvs.wales/support-for-groups/gvs-covid-19-response/covid-19-funding>
- Provided telephone support for individuals aged under 65 seeking information on services available in their area.
- Developed an online survey to gauge the impact of the lockdown in terms of funding and services in the Vale of Glamorgan. A spreadsheet has been developed to capture this data, which is updated on a regular basis.
- Promoted third sector offers of help ensuring that statutory partners are aware of these offers.
- Managed 5 grants schemes with funding from the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Welsh Government, Comic Relief and Cardiff & Vale University Health Board.
- Completed a mapping of third sector services which support hospital discharge, as requested by the Health Board.
- Provided a detailed briefing for the Chair of Cardiff & Vale University Health Board

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

- 2.16** GVS supported the Carers Trust South East Wales to link with Elderfit, With Music in Mind, Motion Control Dance, Action for Elders and Race Equality First, so that they can work in partnership to support unpaid carers. Carers Trust South East Wales manage the Cardiff and Vale Carers Gateway - a one stop shop

for unpaid carers to get information and advice. They also manage a Carer Friendly Accreditation scheme which supports third sector organisations to gain acknowledgement of the ways in which they support unpaid carers.

- 2.17** GVS is working with specific third sector organisations to ensure their readiness for when a COVID 19 vaccine is available. This involves them identifying which of their staff and volunteers are essential frontline workers and developing their internal processes to support these staff and volunteers to access vaccination sessions when they are planned. This is being done in close liaison with the Cardiff and Vale public health team and with clear understanding that the vaccine could be some time away from being available.
- 2.18** GVS has been asked to have an input into the updating of the Cardiff and Vale Population Needs Assessment (PNA), in liaison with the Cardiff and Vale Integrated Health and Social Care Partnership. GVS has shared information with third sector organisations which work with older people and with carers, so that their expertise will ensure the PNA is focussed on current need and emerging need due to Covid-19.
- 2.19** GVS has provided the Cardiff and Vale Integrated Health and Social Care Partnership with a brief case study outlining the agreement between Vale of Glamorgan Council, Age Connects Cardiff and the Vale and GVS, developed in the early months of the lockdown. The case study was in response to a request from the Regional Partnership Board for partners to provide examples of good practice in partnership working. The process put in place in the Vale ensured that people over 65 were referred to Age Connects and those under 65 were referred to GVS, to make sure they had the support they needed. This worked very well and the partners continue to work closely together to support people in the Vale.
- 2.20** GVS' Community Liaison Officer continues to take referrals from health and social care staff. The Community Liaison Officer role is a one stop shop service, working closely with health and social care teams to meet the needs of people in the Vale of Glamorgan. It is an element of the GP Triage project funded by Transformation Funding.
- 2.21** The aim is to help people remain independent by helping them access community services. Support may be provided to address simple financial and benefit issues, loneliness, isolation, parenting support, access to advocacy, transport, condition specific issues, housing, support at home on discharge from hospital and information on social activities and other topics.
- 2.22** At the current time, during the COVID 19 crisis, the GVS Community Liaison Officer can support people to link to various community services, especially for people who do not have support from family, friends and carers.

PROVIDING DIRECT FUNDING TO THIRD SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

- 2.23** GVS has been successful in drawing down additional funding totalling to £274,000 to provide direct funding to the Third Sector by managing a the following Grant Schemes:
- i. Vale of Glamorgan Council COVID 19 small grants scheme (Total Fund £2K)
 - ii. Welsh Government Voluntary Sector Emergency Fund (Total Fund £25K)
 - iii. Comic Relief Emergency Fund (Total Fund £26K)
 - iv. Third Sector Capital Investment Fund - ICF (Total Fund £140K)

- v. Third Sector Preventative Interventions Fund - ICF (Total Fund £51K)
- vi. Cardiff & Vale Health Charity Third Sector Scheme (Total Fund £30K).

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** GVS aligns it works to the objectives of the Vale of Glamorgan Council

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** None

Employment

- 4.2** None

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.3** None

5. Background Papers