

Local Care Partnership Development

Third Sector Representatives Review Paper - December 2020

Context

This paper provides a reflective summary of Third Sector involvement within the Local Care Partnerships (LCPs) up to the date of writing. Content of the paper draws together conversations which have taken place within the Forum Central, Third Sector LCP Rep group and broader Third Sector engagement work. The Forum Central, Third Sector LCP rep group consists of:

- A senior figure from a citywide third sector organisation
- A senior figure from a local Third Sector organisation
- The Local Care Partnership Development Officer, based at Forum Central
- The Local Care Partnership, strategic development lead, based at Forum Central

While opinions expressed in this paper cannot reflect the diverse views of the Third Sector in Leeds, we are confident that content is grounded in an understanding of the core experiences of Third Sector organisations engaged and seeking to engage in the LCPs.

Reflections on Third Sector Involvement in the LCPs

In July of 2019 Forum Central facilitated a discussion at the Third Sector Health and Care Leaders Network focussed around questions including; 'What will good Third Sector engagement with Local Care Partnerships look like?' and 'What communication and sharing information mechanisms will support this?' This discussion was followed up at the Third Sector Leeds (TSL) Forum in February of 2020, with a discussion around the experiences of organisations engaged with the Local Care Partnerships. Within these discussions, there was a recognition of the inequity between Third Sector partners and other parts of the Health and Care System, (most tangibly in terms of capacity and resources, but also in regard to distribution of power).

Following the aforementioned meetings, recommendations and pledges were made by facilitators, which included:

- Enhancement of information around the LCPs covering:
 - structures, aims and objectives and decision making capabilities;
 - how to get involved
 - sharing stories from Third Sector organisations involved in the LCPs.
- Development of communication mechanisms to ensure information is proportionate, fair and inclusive.
- Promotion of inclusive cultures and working practices within the LCPs, to ensure Third Sector partners are welcomed and their contributions valued

- Delivery of activities which build trust and relationships between Third Sector organisations and broader LCP membership.

While these discussions and the development of recommendations took place within different conditions, and pre-dated recruitment to the LCP Development Officer at Forum Central; they still feel relevant today, and these continue to underpin activities delivered by the LCP Development team within Forum Central.

Actions Taken

Acting on the aforementioned recommendations and pledges, a breadth of activities have been delivered through the Forum Central team in collaboration with the broader LCP development team. These include:

- Recruitment of two Third Sector LCP Reps
- Proactive and strategic outreach and engagement work with the diverse Third Sector including developing links to key Third Sector structures
- Development of simple, inclusive and accessible information made available through the Forum Central website.
- Development of an LCP Theory of Change (see Appendix 1).
- Development and delivery of an Introduction to the LCP workshop and networking session (delivered to two cohorts of HPoC grant holders and one broader third sector group).
- Piloting of the 'Getting to Know You', relationship building exercise in Beeston & Middleton
- Piloting of LCP Facebook & WhatsApp groups

Signs of Progress: Every LCP area has a different make-up, culture, focus, and stage of development, but there is a shared understanding, within the rep group, that significant progress has been made in the ongoing development of the LCPs over the period of the Covid pandemic.

Areas of progress which have been highlighted include:

- **Improvement in Third Sector engagement and involvement** – With a notable increase in Third Sector membership, presentation at meetings and active involvement in workstreams.
- **Increasing examples of Third Sector leadership** (both strategically and operationally), through delivery of talks and workshops, chairing of meetings and coordination of activities.
- **Successful funding bids** led by Third Sector organisations
- **Enhanced connection and communications** with Third Sector structures and networks including links to the Communities of Interest Network, People's Voices Group, Learning Disability Network, Mental Health Network & Equality Hubs.

Example 1: Winter Planning

The recent winter planning sessions provide a strong example of how rapidly the Third Sector can mobilise and be active force when there is a high challenge. The Third Sector was well represented across all 12 of the Winter Planning Workshops, providing valuable insight into the experiences and challenges of diverse communities during the winter season, but also offering practical solutions to meet some of the emerging challenges of delivering winter relief work during the Covid-19 pandemic.



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The LCP Vision

Third Sector LCP reps felt positive about the Local Care Partnerships as a concept and viewed the health and care systems vision of a model of 'joined-up working to deliver local care for local people; working in and with local communities' and a commitment to the Third Sector's role in achieving this vision (see Box 1) as an encouraging shift in health and care planning and delivery in Leeds.

"We think that the development of LCPs in Leeds is really exciting, and we agree with Leeds health and social care system partners that the voluntary sector can play a huge part – and indeed we have already done so."

Box 1: [Health Inequalities: Our Framework for Action](#)

We know that partnerships with the local third sector are crucial in reaching vulnerable and marginalised groups, who may be very small, hidden and will be hard to reach. We are reliant on a sustainable third sector if we want to reach these groups and address the health inequalities that they experience. Where there is evidence that partnering with third sector organisations will have an impact on reducing health inequalities, we will strengthen our contracting arrangements ensuring that these organisations are able to sustain their vital, work with specific groups.



Referencing the significant diversity within the local Third Sector, there was a recognition that Local Care Partnerships needed to adopt a strength-based approach, within which diversity is viewed as an asset. This approach was seen as a key foundation, for developing an inclusive partnership culture within which diverse perspectives offered rich and innovative solutions to challenges within communities.

We are a diverse sector, and we have loads of strengths and reach – we love the fact that we are clearly valued and supported as a sector, as equal partners. We want to continue working in a solution-focused manner, co-productively, within the system.

Ongoing Challenges

Reps identified a number of challenges, for Third Sector organisations seeking to engage and participate in the Local Care Partnerships. These vary for different types of organisation and each of the different LCPs.

Capacity was deemed to be a significant barrier to Third Sector engagement and involvement, particularly within the context of the covid-19 pandemic; the lack of infrastructural resourcing was deemed to be a key challenge.

We are a stretched sector with most organisations having very little infrastructure (i.e. no administrators, or spare management capacity, or staff not involved in delivering front line support hour by hour). Proper engagement with an LCP takes a significant proportion of our time.

There was a recognition that **communications** around the LCPs did not currently enable organisations from across the Third Sector, and broader assets from across communities to connect and participate in the Local Care Partnerships. This was identified as a particular issue for citywide organisations.

It can be unclear which LCP(s) to focus efforts on if a city-wide organisation or working with a community spread right across the geography – where is it most helpful for us to be, and where are the likely opportunities for our service users/organisations?

Reps talked about the challenges around **Agenda Setting** and influencing LCP priorities. Referencing recent priorities around frailty and winter planning, reps questioned how these priorities were determined and what the process was to set future priorities.

While there are a number of examples of LCPs developing more inclusive cultures, reps acknowledge that more work needs to be done to ensure **power is more equitably distributed** across the LCPs and Third Sector organisations feel able to influence and contribute to the work within the LCPs.

Key Support Needs

Reps expressed appreciation for the support of the **LCP Development Team** and the need to sustain the level of support to the LCPs

We think that investment in the LCP Development Team and Forum Central has been absolutely instrumental in helping us overcoming some of the barriers. The Development Team and Forum Central have proactively engaged VCSE partners and supported our involvement, drawing out where we can make a contribution and guiding us on where to focus our effort.

The lack of **Real Time Communications** was deemed to be a key deficit of the current LCP offer, and a barrier to engagement and meaningful involvement in the partnerships. Reps suggested a number of improvements to the current support offer including cloud based, managed documents relaying up to date and accessible information on LCP priorities and activities.

This goes alongside a lack of real time information about the focus of each LCP at the click of a mouse. Having this information readily available would be very helpful to inform decisions about whether or not to attend meetings/ contribute in other ways. Can we have a Google docs spreadsheet updated in real time? A shared system would underpin greater and wider collaboration still.

Training and peer support activities were also identified as an important means of raising awareness of the LCP model, where the Third Sector fits within the model and how it can generate greater involvement.

Recommendations

Drawing upon discussions in the Third Sector LCP reps group and broader learning about the Local Care Partnerships, we have produced the following recommendations.

- Maintain investment in support of the delivery of LCP operations, with enhanced support for assets within the system who experience barriers to engagement.
- Promote a shared commitment to the LCPs from across the Health and Care system, underpinned by shared understanding of the vision, model, evidence of worth and lived experiences of partners involved in the work.
- Produce communications which all parts of the health and care system can understand and engage with.
- Ensure that Third Sector organisations within LCPs have the ‘tools’¹ at hand to achieve the strategic vision, mindful of how these tools can be accessed and used by Third Sector partners involved/seeking to be involved in the LCPs.
- Support the development of people and organisations working within the LCPs, particularly those who are under-represented in positions of leadership and decision making.

¹ ‘Tools’ include knowledge and understanding, information and intelligence, communication and collaboration systems.

Appendix 1: Third Sector LCP Development – Theory of Change

