



Newsletter and update No 12 – 4 September 2020

Message from Cath Witherington - Chief Officer



Well I hope everyone has had a chance to recharge their batteries and have been able to take a break over the summer! It feels like the coming months are going to be busy. There is a lot happening at Voluntary Action Doncaster. I'm delighted to say that several new volunteers have already signed up on our Volunteer Hub. We are now processing those applications. We have also had some expressions of interest for our Trustee Vacancies - which is great. We do of course need more so please do check out the details on our website. Email us at info@voluntaryactiondoncaster.org.uk to ask for an application pack. Send nominations to the same email

no later than 5pm Friday 25th September 2020.

We had an insightful and useful Open Talk discussion on Zoom this week. This was the first of weekly discussions throughout September. It was great for me to hear such frank and passionate messages about what you want from us. So thank you to all who took part. For me the 5 headline messages for us all to work on are that:

1. We must make sure that we can provide a consistent and sustainable hub which the sector can rely upon.
2. The sector needs to value and trust us. This can only happen if the sector helps to shape our development. And we are proactive in reaching out to ensure we focus on the right things.
3. There is a need to connect the dots. Getting a clear picture of the system. To underpin the development of a cohesive plan of action that the sector shapes and is happy to play its part.

4. Cooperation and collaboration needs to be at the heart of what we do and the way we work. With everyone supporting each other. Time and advice from others can be as helpful as funding.
5. Big organisations by their nature are corporate and can stifle innovation and creativity. That is where the Voluntary Community and Faith sector can add real value.

Everyone who came along enjoyed the conversation and also enjoyed meeting new people! Please join us next week - **5pm on 8th of September**. We will be looking at how our Fairshares Model approach will help us create the Doncaster you want to be part of. Please join us on Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4556476397>

Meeting ID: 455 647 6397

Health and Wellbeing Fund

Voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations can apply for funding to run projects focused on starting well in life. This new multi-million pound fund will give people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) or poorer backgrounds the best chance at a healthy start in life. The fund will help community projects improve learning and development, perinatal mental health and prevent obesity.

Applications are invited now to bid for a share of a £3.3 million fund to support community projects in England aimed at tackling obesity, reducing smoking and improving learning among mothers and young babies. This will pay for 3-year projects run by voluntary and community social enterprises (VCSEs) to help level up deprived communities and give children the best possible start in life.

The fund is open to applications from charity-run projects aimed at:

- improving perinatal mental health
- reducing the percentage of babies born with low birthweight
- increasing babies being breastfed
- obesity prevention and support
- reducing smoking or encouraging smoke-free homes
- improving learning, speech and language development

- improving immunisation rates and reducing rates of preventable disease

Applicants have until Friday 30 October 2020 at midday to apply with the successful projects to be announced in December.

For more information please take a look at the Government's website: [Health and Wellbeing Fund](#)

Disabled Peoples Organisations Covid Emergency Fund - new UK funding programme

Disability Sheffield is pleased to announce that they are partnering with Inclusion London and ROFA to distribute funding to support grassroots Disabled Peoples' Organisations (DPOs) across Yorkshire and Humberside to respond to the covid-19 needs of Disabled people.

There is some information about the application process here. Applications will need to be submitted by 5th October 2020. For more information contact: info@rofa.org.uk

The Doncaster Movement

It's not too late to make a start if you have a community project idea which needs some funding! Pledges of up to £5,000 per project are available through the [#DoncasterMovement](#) so what are you waiting for?

To make it super easy, follow our [Quick Start Guide to](#) pitch to the fund and submit your project for verification before the 9th of September. Whilst all projects are welcome, for this round there is a particular focus on projects responding to the corona virus crisis.

The crisis has placed huge strain on our communities but also an opportunity to re-imagine the way we use shared space and build on people's stronger sense of connectedness to do things differently. For more information take a look at the spacehive [website](#).

Please see the below email from more information on the programme or complete a simple [expression of interest form](#) so we know you are interested and can provide you with more information and support.

Digital Exclusion

The Coronavirus Pandemic put a spotlight on digital skills for everyone. There is growing evidence showing that a lack of digital skills and/or a lack of access to the digital world, can have a huge negative impact on a person's life. This leads to:

- poorer health outcomes and a lower life expectancy,
- increased loneliness and social isolation,
- less access to jobs and education.

Many shopping and other services are moving towards online delivery. This means digitally excluded people can end up paying more for essentials and face financial exclusion. They also often lack a voice and visibility in the modern world.

Does or can your organisation help disadvantaged people transform their lives by helping to build digital capability? Why not think about becoming an Online Centre? Take a look at the Online Centre Network [website](#) to find out more and to sign up.

FreeTech Project

The FreeTech Project is offering free online technology workshops that we are running for [Doncaster residents](#). There are also workshops available specifically for residents of [Greater Bentley](#), Find out more about these workshops on the FreeTech Project [website](#).

Small Charity, Big Impacts

The Covid-19 global pandemic may be having a negative impact on some charities, but Doncaster-based, The Sleep Charity, has been meeting the challenge head on to continue having a big impact in South Yorkshire.

Over the past five months, the award-winning charity has developed a new e-learning platform so it could continue to support children and their parents who desperately needed sleep support, especially in these difficult and stressful times.

“Our work, up to date, has been carried out through delivery services, workshops and drop-in sessions all across the country,” said Vicki Dawson, CEO of The Sleep Charity and TEDx speaker. “And while Covid-19 has had some of adverse effects – stopping us delivering our training in person – we have risen to that challenge and very quickly adapted our training to an online experience.”

It has also been awarded funding from the Coronavirus Community Support Fund, distributed by The National Lottery Community Fund to deliver teen sleep support in South Yorkshire. Training starts in September for community professionals in Doncaster as well as Rotherham, Barnsley and Sheffield as well as providing a resource to support the young people they work with.

Since it started in 2012, the charity has gone from strength to strength, supporting 30,000 families a year through the charity and its trained practitioners with its behavioural approach to sleep issues. It has contracts with local NHS clinical commissioning groups and has also won a host of accolades including the recent Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service (the highest accolade a community organisation in the UK can get), FSI Small Charity, Big Impact Award and the GSK Impact Award and Third Sector Award.

In July 2020, the charity also acquired long-term working partners, The Sleep Council, as part of a strategic move to be one stronger voice.

Added Vicki: “We are committed to our mission that sleep is taken seriously across all age groups and we will never stop striving to achieve that – even a global pandemic will not stop us!”

Press contact: For more information contact Lisa Artis at The Sleep Charity on lisa@thesleepcharity.org.uk or call 07889 541837.

Can You Help?

We really do need to improve the look and feel of the Voluntary Action Doncaster website. So if you have any photographs of your organisation in action that you would be willing to share with us so that we can use on our website - please do send them to

us at info@voluntaryactiondoncaster.org.uk please include your consent for us to use the material in your covering email.

I'm also keen to find out if there is anyone of our readers who is qualified/experienced in website development? If so and you are willing to give up some of your spare time to help us revamp the Voluntary Action Doncaster - please do get in touch