

Manchester Alliance for Community Care



**The work of the Voluntary, Community & Faith
Sector in Manchester & the Strategic Lead Role**
A report for the Manchester Children's Trust Board
October 2010

MACC
Swan Buildings,
20, Swan Street,
Manchester
M4 5JW
Tel: 0161 834 9823
www.macc.org.uk

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Safeguarding
 - a. Serious Case Review
 - b. Outreach
 - c. Prostitution Forum
 - d. Self Audit Tool
3. Common Assessment Framework
4. Think Family
5. Workforce Partners
6. Commissioning
7. New Opportunities
8. About MACC

Introduction

The voluntary, community and faith sector (also known as the Third Sector and now becoming known as “civil society”), is a diverse, active and passionate range of groups and individuals. Typically organisations in the sector have three common characteristics:

- They are non-governmental
- They are value driven
- They have a not-for-profit ethos and reinvest financial surpluses to further their charitable objectives

Throughout this paper we have chosen to use the term “voluntary, community and faith sector” as a narrower group than the “third sector”, being concerned specifically with organisations who fall broadly into the definition of “charity” under the Charities Act 2006. Importantly we take it to include faith-based organisations which represent a powerful community resource with a deep reach into communities, particularly to the most marginalised groups.

There has never been a full, detailed audit of the scale and impact of the voluntary, community and faith sector in Manchester, but it is reasonable to estimate that there are some 4000 voluntary, community and faith sector organisations active in the city: ranging from unincorporated associations through to large national charities. Local infrastructure organisations for the children, young people and families subsector, Manchester Alliance for Community Care (MACC) and Voluntary Youth Manchester (VYM) are currently in some form of contact with around 900 organisations between them and MACC’s estimate would be that there is probably somewhere around 1,500 voluntary, community and faith sector organisations whose primary focus is children, young people and families in Manchester, if not more. Despite the existence of various data sources there is currently no single place which holds a record of all the voluntary, community and faith sector organisations working Manchester, although an attempt is being made to establish a single online directory of groups.

The strategic lead role is designed to support the children and families sector and to take the strategic lead for the sector within Children’s Trust Arrangements. This involves the chairing of the Child and Family Support Forum, bringing together organisations from the sector to share best practice and disseminate information, representing the sector at a strategic level and coordinating representation at a district level. It also includes working with partners regarding the needs of the sector and working directly with voluntary, community and faith organisations that work with children and families around developing policies, procedures and practice.

Nicola Shanahan is the Strategic Lead at MACC and her contact details can be found at the end of this report.

Safeguarding

Serious Case Review

MACC, in partnership with Manchester Safeguarding Children's Board (MSCB) business unit established a working group of voluntary, community and faith sector representatives who had been involved in the serious case review process and who had sat on a serious case review panel. This group includes representation from domestic abuse services, drug and alcohol services, family support services, young carers' provision and fatherhood services.

This group was set up to address a number of gaps identified with voluntary sector involvement in serious case reviews including:

- Concern that voluntary sector organisations may be missed from providing information as lack of knowledge of their involvement
- How serious case review panels can be more representative
- How small voluntary sector groups can be supported through the serious case review process

This group can provide support to small voluntary, community and faith sector organisations that are required to complete Individual Management Report's (IMR's) also to support in quality assuring their reports. The strategic lead at MACC is now the point of contact for voluntary sector organisations when there has been a serious incident or death with one of their cases and who can then liaise with MSCB business unit.

Voluntary, community and faith sector involvement in serious case reviews has recently been highlighted as good practice nationally and this group is the first of its kind to begin to look at voluntary sector involvement in the serious case review process. A full report of this work will be out in January.

Safeguarding Outreach

Despite the current review of safeguarding processes being undertaken by the Coalition Government, the importance of safeguarding processes and procedures is still recognised and advocated. These processes and systems may become even more important if larger scale contracting out of services to the voluntary sector does take place. The strategic lead has worked with a number of groups in the sector to develop safeguarding policies and procedures. Working with Manchester's minimum standards in safeguarding this has involved outreach work to identify gaps in organisations policies and to develop organisations understanding of safeguarding within a Manchester and National context.

Prostitution Forum

Following a request to MSCB from the prostitution forum to provide support to voluntary sector groups that sit within the forum, the strategic lead held two workshops around safeguarding. These groups were involved in supporting both male and female sex workers throughout Manchester.

The workshops provided information on Manchester's safeguarding standard, the national picture, good practice guidance on safeguarding policies and procedures and safe recruitment also the opportunity for the groups to work more closely together to meet the needs of this vulnerable group. Follow up support included quality assuring each group's policies and procedures, identifying gaps and support to re-write and communicate to the staff teams within each organisation.

Self Audit Tool

Through the work with voluntary, community and faith sector organisations MACC have developed a self-audit tool for the VCFS. This toolkit will provide the basis for further support for developing organisations or those setting up. This will be launched January 2011 and will be used by infrastructure and business improvement services in the city.

This will be integral to the work around commissioning as voluntary sector organisations will have to have their safeguarding practices in line with MSCB standard but will need support to do this.

Common Assessment Framework

The common assessment framework (CAF) is a standardised approach to conducting assessments of children's additional needs and deciding how these should be met. It can be used by any practitioner that works with families. The common assessment framework is widely thought of within the sector as an exceptional early intervention tool which supports collaborative working. However, there are concerns within the sector that CAF is not embedded within the city. The removal of the CAF coordinator function from the six districts has only compounded this. Also with no central function analysing the CAF data how can we work together to ensure that those areas where CAFs are not being progressed or even initiated we can target support?

The sector is encouraged by CAF being accountable through the district structures but feel more needs to be done to embed the use of CAF and to ensure that the data we have around CAF is used effectively.

MACC is recruiting CAF champions from within the sector to provide support and encourage voluntary sector organisations to use the CAF but this needs to be supported. Voluntary sector organisations have suggested a multi-agency forum for

CAF champions across all partnerships to meet throughout the year to share good practice and support each other in this role.

Think Family

Think Family is about making sure that the support provided by children's, adults' and family services is coordinated and takes account of how individual problems affect the whole family.

Think Family representatives held two workshops bringing together organisations from the sector. These workshops provided an update on Think Family within Manchester, showcased some organisations that had been delivering a "Think Family" approach and identified ways the voluntary sector organisations could support each other to embed Think Family in Manchester.

The voluntary sector are eager to continue to embrace the Think Family ethos and are committed to working in a holistic way to meet the needs of whole families. MACC is well placed to support the wider children, young people and families sector to embed this approach but would recommend further partnership working to look at specific issues to ensure that Think Family isn't just a strategy but is a live commitment throughout the workforce. The following questions were posed by the attendees:

- What tools could we develop to help organisations embed Think Family? Could we develop some joint tools across the partnership such as self-audit tools, assessment support tools etc?
- How can we ensure when referring service users on that the transition is handled safely, not passing the buck?
- How can we ensure that across the partnership we get better at sharing information, especially between statutory and voluntary sectors?
- Can the partnership look at the information, communication and technology systems within and how this information can be shared, for example, we have Family Information Service and we also have One Central Place, how do we ensure these are linked?

Through MACC the voluntary sector was represented on the Think Family Board and Strategy Group. MACC will work to address some of these questions posed.

Workforce Partners

This is a partnership between Voluntary Youth Manchester, MACC and Manchester City Council initially set up to deliver the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC)-funded Workforce Strategy Partners Programme.

The three-year programme which ended in March 2010 was acknowledged by

CWDC to be one of the better partnerships in the region, leading to an extension of a further year's funding of Manchester's re-branded Workforce Partners programme committed to the roll-out of a voluntary sector managers online workforce development tool, and an associated support package for the third sector. This toolkit can be found on the macc website:

<http://www.macc.org.uk/macc/childrensworkforcetoolkit.php>

The success of this partnership led to VYM chairing the Children's Workforce Strategy Steering Group, which is a cross-sectoral partnership of agencies committed to delivering the integrated working agenda in Manchester.

Commissioning

In the current climate all organisations and agencies across the public, private and voluntary sector are facing uncertainty and new challenges. The voluntary, community and faith sector are in some ways able to meet these challenges head on as they have historically been more flexible and able to adapt to changing circumstances. However, there are ways that the sector and statutory partners could work more effectively together to find creative solutions to the current financial situation and reduce some of the hardships and difficulties that are coming our way.

Over the last few years the voluntary sector has engaged with the move from grants to competitive tendering and organisations such as MACC through the strategic lead role have supported the sector in preparing for this. However, this shift doesn't come without consequences. In an era of competitive tendering and competition between organisations it makes it difficult to collaborate effectively within the sector especially with an ever decreasing budget and significant concerns about future funding.

MACC has facilitated training around preparation for commissioning and will be following this up in the coming months with training on measuring outcomes and workshops around developing consortia and partnership arrangements.

The strategic lead has been involved in the development of the commissioning framework for children's services and has collaborated with the head of commissioning and service improvement around a number of commissioning workshops for the sector.

The strategic lead and the head of business development and commissioning within the authority are working together to develop a set of good practice standards for commissioning of children, young people and family services from the sector. These will be launched in the new year.

New Opportunities

In recent years Government has recognised that voluntary community and faith sector organisations have an important role to play in the drive to improve public service delivery, and it has committed itself to increasing the involvement of the sector in public services. With the “Big Society” Agenda and the localism movement of the Coalition Government, focus on the voluntary community and faith sector has never been stronger. There are huge opportunities here for the children, young people’s and families sector to begin to deliver more public services, and research shows that services delivered by the voluntary sector are significantly more cost effective than those delivered by the local authority at the same time keeping high quality in delivery. However there is an acknowledgement that in order to be able to deliver these over the coming years organisations like MACC need to work in partnership with the authority to identify support needed for the sector

MACC, through the role of strategic lead, and links with the sector, is working to respond to the changing landscape since the general election and new challenges within the children and families agenda including working with the sector around commissioning. The following is emerging as the future agenda:

- Areas of joint working
 - Blueprint
 - G.P. consortia
 - Manchester Safeguarding Children’s Board and Manchester Safeguarding Adults Board
- Consortia and Collaboration
 - Is this a model we will want to adopt in Manchester
 - How can we support the sector to do this?
- Commissioning
 - How can we ensure that any funding cuts are delivered effectively without the loss of effective frontline service provision?
 - What could be commissioned out?
 - What could the sector provide?
 - How can we work on these areas together?

Manchester has always had a very strong, active and diverse voluntary, community and faith sector, how can we work together with infrastructure support to ensure the sector achieves the vision and development that it aspires to and can truly pave the way for the delivery of effective, value for money services.

If you would like to find out more about the work of the strategic lead, the child and family support forum or how you can get involved in some of the areas of work please contact Nicola Shanahan at MACC on:

Email: nicola.shanahan@macc.org.uk
Telephone: 0161 834 9823
Fax: 0161 832 2352

About MACC

Manchester Alliance for Community Care (MACC) is a voluntary sector development agency which, for over 20 years, has been working to reduce inequalities in health and social care and wellbeing across Manchester. Broadly our work includes

- challenging both statutory and voluntary sectors to design and deliver services which address the rights, needs and wishes of individuals rather than the ability of organisations to deliver them
- the development of the capacity of local voluntary and community groups to identify unmet needs and to work to meet this need, through building up the skills base of the individuals inside these organisations.
- supporting networks of local voluntary and community groups to enable them to be a mechanism for developing collaborative work across the sector
- encouraging and enabling participation by the voluntary and community sectors in the planning and decision making structures which shape the health and social care economy in Manchester and to provide a conduit for this participation.
- promoting understanding of inequalities in health, social care and wellbeing and the role of the voluntary and community sectors in addressing them

Further details about our work can be found on our website www.macc.org.uk