



Summary Report

Are You Local? Working Together Differently in Districts

Thursday 8th February 2007

Following the three partnership conferences in 2005/6, this annual conference brought together members of the voluntary, community and faith sector and statutory partners to reflect on our progress towards district based, joined up services for children, young people and families in Manchester.

The aims of the event were to:

- Raise awareness of developments in the Change for Children Programme
- Identify what this could mean for the voluntary, community and faith sector and how the sector can contribute
- Clarify expectations and the nature of the relationship between other agencies delivering children's services and the voluntary, community and faith sector

The event focused on:

- A review of the priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan
- District commissioning – how a model of locally based multi-agency working might work for the voluntary and community sector

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Organisations/agencies were represented from:

42 nd Street	Children's Fund
4CT	Children's Services
Anson Cabin Project	GMP
Barlow Moor Community Association	Joint Children's Unit
Burnage Multi-agency Group	Manchester Education Partnership
Catholic Children's Rescue Society	Manchester Leisure
Cheetham Hill Advice Centre	Manchester PCT
Chorlton Youth Project	Manchester Play Team
Chyrsalis	Manchester Sure Start
City Centre Project	
CN4M	
Community Foundation for Greater Manchester	
Contact a Family	Total number of attendees: 80
Depaul Trust	VCFS: 59
Family Action Benchill	Statutory: 21
Gaddum Centre	
Kurd Faylee Women's Society	
Ladybarn Community Association	
Longsight Adventure Playground	
M13 Youth Project	
MACC	
MANCAT	
Manchester Care & Repair	
Manchester Carers Forum	
Manchester Foyer	
Manchester Residents Association	
Manchester Young Lives	
Moss Side and Hulme Rollersports	
NCT	
North Manchester Community Network	
Reach Out!	
Saath Saath Group	
Safe in the City	
Save the Children	
Signpost	
Slade Lane Neighbourhood Centre	
South Manchester Regeneration	
Sowing Seeds	
Trinity House	
Voluntary Youth Manchester	
Wai Yin Chinese Women's Society	
Wythenshawe Community Initiative	
Wythenshawe Voices	
Wythenshawe Women's Aid	
Young Disabled People's Forum	

Morning Session: Review of the seven priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan

Priority	What role does (or could) the VCS have in contributing to this priority (with emphasis on prevention/early intervention)?	What are the barriers to improving outcomes in this area?	What do we need to do to maximise the added value of VCS?
<p>Continue to strengthen the early intervention and prevention of mental health issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emphasis on well-being and holistic interventions • address complex needs whereas statutory services concerned with through put and quick fixes • promote a healthy environment for children • emphasis on social model, able to integrate with medical model where appropriate • eclectic approach within VCS rather than sticking to one ideological approach • source of good intelligence –needs to be used to inform commissioning • not constrained by statutory duties • independent – able to take more risks, more flexible and therefore more responsive • service users don't need a statement to get support – innovation and better engagement • informal education role • broaden scope of which intervention models can be used (outside of medical model) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need to better evaluate the impact of our approaches • need to better define what we mean by mental health • need to facilitate greater integration within and across sectors and services • need to take on a more eclectic approach rather than adherence to one model • different messages and relationships between PCT and Children's Services • no advisory support to implement strategies • need active promotion of partnership bidding • commissioning processes can be a barrier (not delivery) – VCS need to be involved from the beginning • parenting strategy not informed by CAMHS • no advisory support to non mental health projects to implement strategy on the ground • commissioning constrained by targets – unable to respond to voices from the frontline • CAMHS strategy etc – no coordination – paper exercise • VCS in victim position so what can we do? • Commissioning processes not delivering change • Power issues in giving greater voice to VCS residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active development of partnership bidding • 42nd Street could lead on discussions with CAMHS • Need real joint working in service delivery • need greater clarity across the voluntary sector in terms of who is doing what, a more strategic approach is required, perhaps using MACC as a model to push the agenda from a voluntary sector perspective and help commissioners to gain a better understanding • Communication needs to improve with commissioners, this is currently not working well • Need to link strategies together, e.g. the CAMHS strategy and the parenting strategy and their implementation on the ground

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<p>Significantly reduce incidence of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preventative approach – VCS provide a wide range of safe activities for young people • can be innovative and try new ideas • By being excellent and leading best practice challenge poor statutory provision • Services are mostly centred around helping people manage crisis (pregnancy, making a decision about termination, etc.). What's unique about the voluntary sector's offer is that it is non-judgemental and non-institutional. Even the best statutory services are still faced with the difficulty that they are "The Authorities" whereas small, community based voluntary sector projects are able to build up a relationship based on trust. This is traditionally a strength of the sector, but comes particularly into focus in these situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education – at school and at home • class issue • poverty – across several generations • cultural issues - sexual activity is something to be attained as early as possible as a sign of growing up. • drug and alcohol misuse • lack of aspirations for young women • lack of self esteem • peer group pressure • gap in provision for 14-18 • stability, continuity for young people, young people's ability to take ownership • lack of youth clubs – need to encourage more innovative VCS activities and support for young parents • Personal experiences are important (some people had personal experiences of being a teenage parent) • Lack of sustained funding – leads to losing trust, experienced staff Funding criteria sometimes prevents innovation and excludes the most vulnerable • Have to justify our existence and our provision • Surestart/childrens centres not working in partnership with existing quality voluntary sector provision • Lack of LA understanding about voluntary sector contributions • Periods of uncertainty • Lack of stability and continuity in the voluntary sector. Often have to re-badge to meet the commissioners' needs rather than getting on with 	

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		<p>the business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the voluntary sector provides above all is stability and continuity for young people in a crisis. Unfortunately, this then creates a risk: because organisations themselves need to have stability and continuity and yet funding mechanisms undermine this and thereby undermine the support they offer to young people. • Groups agreed that there is a constant need to be *seen to be* innovative...which is not the same thing as actually being innovative - they all reported having to continually rebadge and re-present existing services (which are proven to work and popular with service users) in order to meet the demands of commissioning bodies / grant makers. It was agreed that there must come a point when some ownership is taken of these projects as an important part of the system - how else can groups then offer a stable environment to young people in a crisis to enable them to develop themselves and take ownership of their own lives? • Know what works - good practice elsewhere eg Bury built a bus shelter in the park – youth workers went there to support young people 	
<p>Improve and integrate early intervention services for children at risk at</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCS absolutely key, this is not achievable without VS interventions. • VS strengths - engaging people. Some people will only go to VS services, including those from minority backgrounds • Local presence • Safeguarding • Preventative work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We're not working in a holistic way • Lack of resources to provide the services we want to • Small VS organisations not necessarily linked in to the whole, so don't understand the bigger picture and not able to input their expertise in to strategic developments • Worries in the VS about losing its independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to share learning across sectors, to find out what works • Common assessment framework, there is a strong case for the voluntary sector to be the lead professional. • Put as much as possible up for commissioning, within a strong

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coming into care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy • VS could be key role as lead professional for Common Assessment Framework (CAF) because of their local knowledge and because this role is often performed by VS already. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS not taking on the CAF lead professional role. Schools particularly key and reluctant • Lack of service provision for dealing with attachment issues • VS not reassured that the right level of funding will be input 	<p>commissioning framework – and include SS. May lead to competition and/or collaboration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VS itself needs to work together to ensure it's fully engaged and contributing. May lead to increase in standards. Must champion successes. • People need to learn how to work together – have joint working, joint training, practitioners meetings • Need resources in the VS to enable the functions needed. May need specific set up for small organisations • Have information sharing to all agencies so they can understand and apply the agenda
Continue to improve outcomes for LAC in terms of attainment and monitoring placement quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looked after children don't often access community activities, so more needs to be done to promote the information on activities with social workers and foster carers. • Social workers and foster carers can often be too protective of looked after children. • The voluntary sector should identify a lead name / contact for foster carers and social workers. • Recognised by voluntary sector groups that some LAC don't seem to have the same opportunities/access to provision such as recreational, out of school activities, etc; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profile of LAC perceived to be not high enough; • A couple of disappointing examples cited of when voluntary sector had worked with statutory provision – e.g. a trip/event for children from a residential home with a voluntary sector provider was cancelled by social workers as one child had misbehaved and all children had been punished by not being allowed to go on the trip; a LAC being accompanied at all times on a trip by a social worker – although voluntary sector understand need for supervision etc in some cases, it can feel as if the child has a bodyguard with them! • The arrangements for signing of permission slips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voluntary sector should be part of multi-agency teams • The voluntary sector should be able to participate in Review Panels. • Information sharing about voluntary sector provision could be improved – eg central database of provision held by social workers, targeted information to residential homes and foster carers – possibly handbook of voluntary sector organisations and what they can

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could help with this; 	<p>to join in with activities, etc seems to take a lot longer for a LAC which causes problems;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to formal meetings such as Review Panels where decisions are made about children and the package of care they are to receive seems limited for voluntary organisations; One member of the group expressed concern regarding Asian children going into placements, and whether enough care was taken to ensure the culture of the placement family was appropriate to reflect the cultural identity of the child; Some attendees also felt that MCC could perhaps do more to bring forward Asian families into fostering – training and awareness provided by the voluntary sector 	<p>offer being made available to each residential home and foster carer;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better ways of publicising events (both statutory and voluntary) across voluntary sector needed; Suggestions of a lead voluntary sector person for each district who could keep up to date records of provision available and act as a central contact point for the district; Multi agency teams could have at least 1 person linked to the voluntary sector on them – and if needed, resources to support that role, eg: funding for 1 day a week of that persons work. More networking needed – between statutory and voluntary sectors;
Improve school attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to assist with re-integrations of children into school Holistic approach of VCS enables contextual/environmental factors to be considered and addressed More flexible working allows for work with whole family, more targeted work Multi-methodological – able to use a variety of approaches therefore more likely to succeed in improving school attendance. Targeted, needs led provision, with flexibility to respond to needs Rooted in community therefore able to co- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priorities and targets of voluntary sector often different from priorities/targets of statutory sector – creates a barrier in communication and partnership working Targets of statutory sector are often incompatible with outcomes in terms of improved attendance. Narrow perceptions Rigid structures Lack of information available to voluntary sector Parochial attitude of statutory sector Lack of explicit prioritising Lack of partnership, seamless working School culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve access to resources Improve capacity Recognition by statutory bodies of value added by Voluntary sector Publicity by voluntary sector of the value they add Information sharing Extend work-improving liaison between schools and families to include voluntary sector, not just statutory ownership and drive. Sustainability – include voluntary

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	<p>ordinate local response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to shift perceptions • Work with those who are not at school yet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of flexibility to accommodate different patterns of attendance e.g. Young carers • Lack of inclusion – particular difficulties for disabled, LAC, young offenders • Narrow focus on outcomes – academic. Use of pre-school sports activities, inclusion of extra curricula activities, clubs within school hours would encourage attendance. • Judgmental, non-welcoming approach 	<p>sector in long term planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term planning rather than crisis intervention • Improved inclusivity - Ensure the participation of children and young people • Work with schools to strengthen their relationship with the voluntary sector, who can help in achieving softer outcomes • Develop a communications protocol between the voluntary sector, the local authority and schools to ensure dialogue rather than demands • Support schools in being less rigid with vulnerable groups to support them e.g. flexibility around attendance for young carers.
<p>Improve outcomes for 16 to 19 year olds who are not in education, employment or training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with young disabled people does not necessarily focus on getting clients into EET. It is important to recognise that developing basic social skills can be a significant achievement in itself, though not recorded in official outcomes. That said, all work with young people can help raise aspirations and some projects can directly prepare young people for work, e.g. helping them obtain basic computer skills • Need to recognise the need to remove barriers before young people feel able to participate, this work can be done by the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding arrangements mean organisations provide what they can get funding for, rather than necessarily what is most needed; arbitrary criteria such as the age 19/25 limits mean that agencies such as Connexions sometimes refer cases to the voluntary sector because they are unable to respond themselves; short-term nature of funding raises problems of sustainability • Overemphasis on negative aspects of youth provision - crime, nuisance, antisocial behaviour etc - can make young people feel even less inclined to engage • Lack of provision in the city centre (e.g. skate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closer working between organisations and with the police • Innovative projects - e.g. managed environments to race cars, practise graffiti etc • Keep in mind the need to work towards and demonstrate economic benefits for young people • Recognition that voluntary sector organisations often have skills to understand and respond to young people's needs

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	<p>voluntary sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non stigmatising environment - develop positive views of young people • Projects work with whole families, recognising that there are situations in which parents can hold young people back (particularly where they might lose out financially when children start work) • Voluntary sector can offer alternative, less formal provision that may be appropriate for disaffected young people • Ability to turn negative activities into positive ones by using the things that young people enjoy - e.g. graffiti art, motorbike activities etc • Police moving to focus on smaller areas, enabling them to more accurately identify needs and take whole-community approach to addressing these; often, the police also have access to significant funding for community projects; can help evaluate the success of voluntary sector projects by providing (crime) statistics • Knowledge of local projects and resources that can help • Good communication/working relationships; e.g. by working with voluntary sector groups the police can reach young people they otherwise would not be able to [NB. <i>This is true also of the Youth Service, although many youth workers have misgivings about working with the police, the "respect" agenda etc</i>] 	<p>park under Mancunian Way) reinforces the idea that young people are not wanted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of aspiration and/or access to legal employment among young people • Apparent belief by the City Council in "trickle-down" economics; young people will not take jobs (e.g. cleaning) that impair their status • Jobs in construction (for example Grove Village) are not being offered to young people, possibly because employers are ill-equipped to provide appropriate supervision and/or have concerns about health and safety • Reluctance of some young people in Manchester to venture beyond certain geographical boundaries - compounds lack of access to facilities • Small scale of voluntary sector operations • Changing national (political) and local priorities - eg when a new police inspector arrives 	

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Participation of children and young people in decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion and participation of disabled children/newly arrived families • Highlight gaps in services • VCS valuable in consulting with children and families • Good relationships – able to get families involved • Better placed – at heart of the community • District Youth Forums – responsibility to make sure all sectors are included • VCS a voice/champion for parents – encourage to ‘walk through doors’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation and engagement needs to be a priority in the MCYP Plan – evidenced by levels of interest at this event • Important to follow up /feedback to CYP on issues they’ve been consulted on so they can see impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bigger VCS orgs support smaller • Commissioning creates competition? Aim to work together • Look at groups needs as well as individual and look at services available • VCS and needs analysis and service audit

Afternoon Session: Integrated Commissioning and District Collaboration

Q&A response from Integrated Commissioning and District Collaboration Team

What level of detail does the Commissioning Statement cover?

The Commissioning Statement will identify those priorities for Commissioning from a citywide perspective. It will be complementary to the Children and Young People's Plan and will be informed bottom up from District Plans that will be developed by District Panels.

What funding will be available for Commissioning?

No specific long-term budgets have been identified for Integrated Commissioning and District Collaboration, in the first instance. However, there will be some limited Neighbourhood Renewal Funding for use in specific areas during the first year i.e. 2007-2008. After this period, it is hoped that there will be further discussion about pooling mainstream funding streams.

Has the Local Authority considered taking advice from some kind of change consultant who has experience of supporting large multi-million pounds institutions undergoing change? Or are we going to deliver this ourselves at the risk of "leaping a chasm in 2 bounds" which is not a good idea

The ICDC Project Team has a considerable amount of knowledge, skill and expertise in this particular area. The team is also seeking advice from regional Government advisors on implementing the change programme by learning from their experiences. Regular meetings have taken place with North West Commissioning Leads that is attended by Government Office Northwest, other regional associations and representatives of the northwest local authorities. The DfES and ECM websites provide support and case studies of how to implement integrated working and commissioning.

What sort of time commitment will be involved for the District Panel Members?

It is difficult to determine exactly how much time will be involved at such an early stage. It is anticipated that members should be allocated at least 2 days per month especially at the beginning of the Learning and Development programme.

There is a real issue of trust that is central to the success of district working. A centrally driven agenda could be perceived as undermining the trust the Local Authority appears to be giving to the 6 districts, by over-riding their authority.

Commitment to achieving Integrated Commissioning and District Collaboration by all Panel Members is vital if this trust is to be secured. If Panel Members do not take their role and responsibilities as a representative of a stakeholder group seriously then decisions will inevitably have to be taken by officers and the local authority. If, however, Panel Members do work effectively together and grasp fully the local needs of the area then this trust will be achieved. This is why appointment of the right representative on the District Panels is so integral to its success.

Would District Panel members have to have high levels of knowledge to be effective?

Each panel member will have detailed knowledge in their specific area but the real benefit of working collaboratively is that this knowledge will be shared. It is not a question of all Panel Members knowing everything, it is more that there is shared understanding that can then be used to contribute positively to achieving the five outcomes for children and young people.

How will local knowledge feed into the panel and panel members not only sit on the panel but also run services on the ground?

Panel Members are representatives of a stakeholder group that comprises of a range of organisations. With the right representation and development of successful partnerships, and working relationships it is hoped that the understanding of what the specific concerns are in each of the districts can be addressed using resources in a more focused and efficient way.

How do District Panels influence work at stakeholder forums and district partnerships?

District governance arrangements are still to be fully developed and worked up. It is essential that panel members truly communicate the views of their stakeholder group and ensure that there is effective 2-way communication between the stakeholder group and the panel.

Will any agency / sector be challenged on who is identified as a representative?

No. However, it is acknowledged that these are early days and the representative selected for this first year may not be the right person in future years. Careful consideration does need to be given in selecting the right person to participate in the District Panels, and to be fully representative of their stakeholder group.

Can we achieve agreed models of representation from a choice of many to enable the person / sector to choose the most appropriate mechanism to inform?

The District Panel members will be expected to achieve appropriate and workable communications between their stakeholders, home organisation and the District Panel. Creating this flow of information is a vital part of the District Panel structure and role.

What happens if a panel member moves district?

Each Panel Member is appointed to a particular District and is charged with addressing the needs in their particular District. Protocols will have to be drawn up to address what happens in the event of a change of circumstance or working role.

VCS need some reassurance that commissioning is about ALL services not just VCS. This may mean decommissioning of statutory services?

It is right that ICDC will involve commissioning of a broad range of services. It may involve mainstream or voluntary services. Statutory services will remain. The Local Authority or

indeed other public service providers have to meet statutory commitments, but all other services will be subject to market forces.

The role of the District Panel and its composition being quite committee style could block the 'change not democracy' principle?

It is vital that the representation on the District Panel is right to begin with. With the right people representing stakeholders and managing the flow of information and decision-making correctly there should be no risk of a simple 'talking shop'. Decisions will have to be made efficiently and with the interests of children and young people at their heart. The Learning and Development programme for District Panel members should support this process

How should the JCU support the District Panel in the quest for knowledge?

District Panels will be supported through the Project Workers who are to be appointed shortly and will be based in the JCU for the near future. The Joint Children's Unit is currently under review so it is too early to say what their role will be supporting the District Panels

What are the timescales? Is this achievable for 08/09?

The Children's Act 2004 has set down the timescales for all Local Authorities to bring about many of the change agenda projects within Children's Services. We, like many other Local Authorities, are seeking to introduce these changes within as practical timetable as is possible. It is clear that many of these change programmes require a shift in culture and working practices and that this may take time.

How can we ensure that smaller VCS groups are included in terms of representation on the panel and communication?

We need to ensure that the right infrastructure is set up to ensure that the views of smaller organisations are represented. The most important aspect is how the flow of communication is managed. We will need to ensure that existing communications routes are fully utilised to ensure that everyone is kept in the loop.

Are there 2 VCS reps on the panel, if so can we make sure smaller organisations are supported to be able to take on the role?

There will be 2 VCS reps trained per district, although only one rep will attend each panel meeting. It is important that every member of the panel feels that they are supported by their stakeholder group. As with the previous question we need to ensure that if a smaller group wished to nominate a panel member that they are fully supported to do so.

What involvement will the VCS have at a strategic level and on down through the system, and how will this be supported?

There is existing VCS representation at a strategic level on the Children's Board, the Project Board, and the project team, and they are supported by their voluntary sector organisations.

How much are people really prepared to give up their power to allow timely decision-making by local people?

The move to Children's Trust arrangements focus on moving services closer to the user and to make them integral to the decision-making. This has to inform how we deliver services, if we are to make a difference to the outcomes for children and young people.

What do you mean by district working? What would this mean to a community/playgroup/city wide group/regional group?

When making the decision to commission services we have to decide which level to commission at. For scarce resources it does not make sense to commission locally, as this would make the service more costly e.g. looked after children placements would probably be commissioned at a city wide or regional basis. However, less costly, more available services, would probably be commissioned at a district or local level e.g. family support.

What are the interim arrangements as commissioning is not happening until April 08 and there are delays in NRF decisions?

Services will still continue to be commissioned as the funding becomes available, and we are still waiting to hear about what NRF is available in 08/09. The situation is not perfect, and it is hard to plan when the funding is only for one year. It is hoped that this will improve through the Local Area Agreement.

How will the VCS keep its integrity within the framework of district commissioning? i.e. how do we value the diversity of approach, whilst working together?

The VCS is valued for its integrity and innovation in its approach, and we need more of this if we are to improve the outcomes for children and young people.

Additional thoughts:

- How do we ensure that people apply to the right pot of money?
- We need more info about the context of district working, some more background
- We need some 'pictures of possible practice' e.g. what district working and district commissioning will mean to a local community group/a city-wide group/a group on the boundary of 2 districts
- What are the opportunities, what real change?
- What's the linking going to be across districts
- How do we hold people to account when things don't happen as we're told?
- What does contracting mean?
- Is the authority expected to collect outcomes it didn't pay for? Do they get the stats only for the services they paid for?
- How long will people be commissioned for? 1/3/5 yrs?
- Will it become a postcode lottery of districts – depends on which district you are in to get your priority acknowledged
- What do you mean by procurement?
- What will be the implication of the gender equality duty on service design & delivery?
- What are the implications of the children's database for the VCS working with C&YP?

- Whose thinking about the impact of decommissioning services?
- What about forums for local people? How do we reduce the bureaucracy in the system in order to move this process on?
- Thought needed in terms of building capacity of local services and small to medium organisations
- Will there be funds available for core costs? Commissioning more than the actual service?
- Length of time services are commissioned for (3 yrs min)
- Realistic funding arrangements. Not changing the way its set up half way through
- Quality standards
- Evaluation – processes need to be in proportion to the amount – make it relevant
- How do we share practice on what a good relationship looks like?
- How is the view of the VCS not undervalued?
- How is the sector supported to increase capacity?
- How do we value the diversity of approach?
- If we diversify to meet commissioning needs, how do we keep our core services going?
- What happens to a VCS organisation when the pot of money hasn't got enough in it even though a VCS project is delivering a need in the community?
- Tension between working together v competing? 'business approach'

District Panels

- How can we best be part of the process – right representation?
- How do we keep informed?
- How do we learn to use the information intelligently?
- Need intelligence from coal face and capacity to act on that. Intelligence and strategic perspective
- Just get started with a manageable task
- Shared outcomes focus
- Is it strategic or supporting the delivery of good practice – need to define good practice
- VCS intelligence about need and what works
- Members – delegated powers. Clarity about why there and what they want to achieve and to contribute to and constraints
- Each partner should evidence how their views/objectives have been informed by end users
- Question for all officers – can you effect change?
- Members demonstrate how their view is informed by end users
- Start with developing a review of needs and how well services deliver against outcomes – identify good practice and have funds to stabilise good practice
- Honesty, clarity, hierarchy of knowledge
- What medium do we send out information
- How do we ensure that we get the same message between different organisations – issue re: Chinese whispers
- Most organisations will want to have information on more than one district
- Most organisations will hold information about needs across more than one district
- Panel members bring a range of perspectives from their cheese sector not 'represent interests'
- Definition needs to talk about 2 way communication, openness, transparency

- Need a mechanism to deal with conflicts of interest
- Need training and time to enable panel members to do their job well
- Chair of panel – either independent or chosen by agreements from within panel membership
- Communication mechanisms for VCFS will need resources and build on work of existing forums eg CN4M, CFSF, VYM
- Hub-centric communications are not very good at encouraging direct communications between/amongst the other cheeses direct. Hub-centric communications are good for strategic communications but not for getting practical initiatives up and running where direct communications are necessary.
- Question of double roles where members are also funders (health for example). How can they NOT advance the interests of their own organisation? They had responsibility for the money (this in relation to the point that constituent cheeses should have the good of the whole cheesecake in mind and not just their slice).
- Should be a lot more thought about managing information. Communication had to be timely and complete otherwise decisions made and practices undertaken were at risk of being half baked.
- Ease of access to full and updated information is critical. Needs input from IT specialists. Process to enable other districts to see what was happening around the city.

What should members of the panel bring to the table?

- Members could say they had first hand knowledge of meeting young people and finding out what they thought their needs and the needs of the area are.
- Members had authority to bind their cheese and effect change BUT had sufficient ground level experience and contacts to know what was needed themselves, create a and not rely on staff to inform. Hard to achieve both aspects. May need delegation of power.
- Communications vital as is training of members.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Number of replies received:

41

1 How useful did you find the event?

	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor
Presentations	6	30	6	0
Group Discussions	19	21	1	0
Written Information	9	21	9	0
Overall	9	28	4	0

