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East Sussex Assembly 2017

9 July 2018, International Lawn Tennis Centre, Eastbourne

**CONFERENCE REPORT**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The ESSP is recommended to:**

1. **Note the content of the presentations given to the Assembly;**
2. **Note the feedback and suggestions for next year’s Assembly theme.**

**BACKGROUND**

The East Sussex Assembly meets once a year and focuses on a topic that is of interest to Assembly members and wider partners. This year around 35 delegates attended from organisations across the public and voluntary and community sectors to discuss the topic of community confidence. The theme of ‘Furthest First’ was selected from a list of recommendations made by Assembly members at last year’s conference and subsequent discussions at the East Sussex Strategic Partnership meetings throughout the year.

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**S1. INTRODUCTION**

The East Sussex Strategic Partnership’s (ESSP) Pride of Placestrategy includes the priorities to ‘ensure people and communities are safe and secure and to ‘create strong communities and community leadership’.

One of the key tasks set out to deliver this priority is to: ‘Plan a response in case of emergencies, reducing risk and informing the public’

The Assembly considered the particular challenges facing each sector, examples of successful community engagement and how working in partnerships to maintain communities’ confidence is vital.

**S2. ASSEMBLY ITEMS**

**2.1** **Introduction**

Ian Fizpatrick, Director of Regeneration & Planning at Eastbourne and Lewes Councils, opened the Assembly by welcoming attendees to the International Tennis Centre. Ian took the opportunity to inform the Assembly of the Devonshire Park transformation work taking place on the site. The redevelopment will create first-class cultural, conferencing and sporting facilities known as The Devonshire Park Quarter.

The new Welcome Building will provide a fully accessible entrance to the Congress Theatre, including lifts to every floor, two new large conference spaces, a central box office, breakout and hospitality areas and a coffee and wine bar with views across the tennis lawns to the International Tennis Centre.

In addition to the construction of the brand new Welcome Building, the existing Grade II\* Listed buildings, Devonshire Park Theatre, Congress Theatre and the Winter Garden are being extensively restored. This will include improvements to the accessible infrastructure between the Gold Room and the Floral Hall with additional meeting rooms created where the current administration offices are housed. The work is set to be complete on the site in 2020.

ESSP Chair Steve Manwaring thanked Ian Fitzpatrick and then welcomed everyone to the Assembly and explained why ‘Furthest First’ had been chosen as this year’s topic. Steve explained that the idea came from a suggestion at the last Assembly to look at Equality and Diversity as a theme. Steve explained that ‘Furthest First’ looks at this idea so that by reaching and solving the challenges of those in most need of help, you learn more. All of these learnings can then be applied to reaching the rest of the population with improved speed and scale. Steve went on to explain that the following three presentations would look at this idea in further detail. With presentations looking at 1) a person’s protected characteristic 2) a person’s location; and 3) a person’s circumstances (in this case homelessness).

For further information about the East Sussex Strategic Partnership please access the website at <http://www.essp.org.uk/>

**2.2.1 Gig Buddies**

Paul Richards, Stay Up Late, followed Steve Manwaring with a presentation on Gig Buddies, a charity that matches adults who have a learning disability to a volunteer who has similar interests, to go to events together. Gig Buddies is a volunteer, befriending project that seeks to build community capacity by enabling people with shared interests to connect, working in an assets based way. The focus is promoting physical and mental wellbeing for the individuals involved.

Paul began his presentation by highlighting the obstacles of people with learning disabilities getting out including, lack of support, safety concerns, transport issues, low confidence and motivation, nobody to go with and not knowing what was going on. The focus is promoting positive physical and mental well-being for the individuals involved, as well as collectively for the wider community. The project is about what individuals want and not an organised event for people with learning disabilities, it seeks to build community capacity by enabling people with shared interests to connect, working in an assets based way.

Paul introduced Harrie and Dean so they could give first-hand experience of using Gig Buddies and the changes it has made to Dean’s life. Dean answered questions about how his life has improved and loneliness decreased. It has given Dean the opportunity and confidence to take part in acting himself.

Paul described the befriending as ‘volunteering made easy’ but explained how they manage the risks. The outcomes of the project mean that people with learning disabilities are less lonely and have more friends and are empowered to make choices about how they live. Volunteers also have a greater understanding of the needs of people with learning disabilities.

Paul concluded by talking about Gig Buddies’ vision for the future, supporting other organisation to launch Gig Buddies where they live.

For further information about Gig Buddies’ go to: <https://www.gigbuddies.org.uk/>

**2.2.2 Impact of Universal Credit in a rural area.**

Kay Birch, CEO of Wealden Citizen’s Advice Bureau briefly covered Universal Credit (UC) by explaining it is a monthly payment for people on a low income, whether in or out of work. It replaces 6 means-tested benefits:

* Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance
* Housing Benefit
* Working Tax Credit
* Child Tax Credit
* Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
* Income Support

Kay went on to say that UC is

* Paid whether or not a claimant is working
* Single payment, made monthly
* If a claimant receives help with rent, this will be paid as part of Universal Credit
* Applied for and claim managed online
* Where both partners in a couple are eligible, one payment will be made to cover both
* Requires all claimants to make a Claimant Commitment, covering things such as job search or training
* Access to dedicated work coach

Kay then spoke about how claimants in Wealden have to access UC, there has been no specific date for rollout of UC in Wealden as there was in Hastings, Eastbourne, Lewes and Rother. Different areas of claimants have been moved onto UC at different times, as there is no job centre in the area claimants need to travel to Crawley, Haywards Heath, Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes, Newhaven or Tonbridge. Claimants are expected to have their initial assessment with job coach face to face. This means that face to face access for a work coach is difficult and for one claimant this means a cost of £24 to get to their Job Centre.

Kay explained the Citizen’s Advice approach in Wealden that has enabled claimants to still get the support they require through building relationships with Job Centre Plus offices, getting weekly DWP outreach sessions in place with each Job Centre with support of local councils, building partnerships with other service providers, co-locating advice provision with DWP sessions and developing services at other community venues.

Kay spoke about the challenges faced with their approach with more sites operating the higher the cost, volunteers needed for those multiple sites, accessing local IT and the increased competition for funding. Kay also found that it was becoming harder to volunteers and the cases were becoming more complex to deal with. The lessons that Kay had learned during this process were the importance of effective partnerships and praised the partnership working with the Councils, Job Centres, Homeworks, STEPS and AIRs Village Agents. Emma Brown, ESCU, agreed that the complexity of cases was demanding and where assessments took place on an annual basis only added to the workload.

**2.2.3 Street Community and the National NHS Pathfinder Project**

Annie Whelan, Chief Officer, Seaview Project provided a presentation on how medical access and records can best be provided to those who have complex lives and insecure housing.

Annie Whelan began by showing a short video that provided information about Seaview and the award won at the 2018 GSK Impact Awards. The Seaview project operates services through two departments. An open access Wellbeing centre which helped around 14’000 people and provided over 6’500 hot meals in 2017. And an Outreach service to rough sleepers and the street community, they service covers 15miles from 4am -7am and last year found 317 rough sleepers which is a 40% increase from the previous year.

The GSK Impact Awards provide funding and training and development for charities doing excellent work to improve people's health. They are funded by GSK and managed in partnership with The King's Fund. The awards are open to registered charities that are at least three years old, working in a health-related field in the UK, with a total annual income of between £80,000 and £2.5 million.

Seaview are also one of 20 Digital Pathfinder sites, and Annie explained how this works within the project. Digital Pathfinders were set up by NHS Digital as their data found that one in 10 people in England lack the confidence and skills to benefit from digital health technologies. The pathfinders develop models for effective local partnerships to improve digital health skills and access to digital services and information. This will support patients in the move towards a more digitised NHS - particularly the most excluded in society - and gather evidence and lessons that will be shared throughout the NHS to improve future services. Seaview are the first voluntary led pathfinder site and the only one for rough sleepers. They have found that:

* Service users were very engaged with the pathfinder computers and explored long overlooked health issues;
* Problems were identified with patient/GP online registrations
* Taking a table on outreach work was enabling a link between rough sleepers and health professionals.

Annie finished by explaining that Seaview is a good practice site for Caldicott implementation and sharing. This was a review of information sharing to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the protection of patient information and the use and sharing of information to improve patient care. Seaview have joined up with a mental health street triage team of police officers and nurses who visit the centre and there is a close working relationship with the local housing department.

Annie explained that the Seaview approach means that the team create a safe environment in which the trust of the service users is established and maintained. A service user-centred approach underpinned by consent is normal; however, there are rare occasions when information is shared without consent for safety, public interest or safeguarding reasons. The Seaview team follow the Caldicott Principles in training staff from different agencies in working with this service user group who are often excluded from care environments because of their behaviour. All staff sign a declaration based on these principles.

Annie described how Seaview have explicit rules for service users and act to maintain a safe environment. Use is made of the police liaison officer and East Sussex County Council safeguarding team to share concerns when they arise.

Annie informed the Assembly that the benefits of sharing information have been:

• improvement of service provision to a difficult to reach group of service users and patients many of whom have complex mental, physical and social needs.

• improved integrated and collaborative working with service users and better early intervention in mental health crisis for individual service users.

• earlier access to shared information can result in less stress to service users in repeating distressing information. This also creates more holistic planning and faster referrals with improved outcomes for individuals.

• providing better access to services for a historically difficult to reach group and to lower demand on individual teams through collaborative working. Outcome measures are yet to be determined but the intention is to establish these as the commissioning process continues to develop allowing services to be more targeted and to maximise impact.

**2.3 Table Top Exercise**

Following the break and networking opportunity, attendees took part in a table-top exercise. On each table were two scenarios of people furthest away from communities or services

Attendees had 15 minutes to discuss what needs to be put in place for those people to find accessing the service/facility more easily

Attendees were also asked to make a note of any common themes found when discussing the scenarios and to have one or two common themes to feed back at the end of the session.

Each table considered two of the following scenarios:

Scenario 1: M, 27 years old, is an ex-offender who is living with his girlfriend in social housing but the relationship is breaking down and he is at risk of homelessness. He has limited qualifications and no job. He has problems with substance misuse and has been told he won’t receive any benefits as his drug habit and location mean he can’t make it to the job centre to sign on.

Scenario 2: J is 15 and lives with his Roma family on a campsite, he hasn’t been to school routinely for most of his school life. He started feeling ill a couple of days ago and his sore throat is worse, he is having difficulty breathing, and has developed ulcers on his legs. His family are not registered with a GP as they do not have a trusting relationship with the local GP practice and are reluctant to go to hospital and be required to fill in the paperwork. Other children on the site have also started to display similar symptoms, apart from one who has regularly attended school and had a recent ‘teenage booster’ vaccination.

Scenario 3: W is a recent migrant worker to the UK with his wife and 2 children, he tries taking his 3 year old son, B, to the GP surgery as he has developed a rash and is crying as he is so uncomfortable. B can’t be seen at the GP surgery as he is not a registered patient.

Scenario 4: T is an 89 year old living in his own home in a small village. His wife died 3 years ago and T is becoming increasingly isolated as it was his wife who held a driving licence and organised social activities. T relies on the local shop for all of his needs and this will be closing 3 months for refurbishment.

Scenario 5: L is a 17 ¾ year old male, his family are fed up with his attitude and unwillingness to live by their rules and L has recently become violent. L’s family have asked him to leave the family home at the end of the week and L has nowhere to go.

Scenario 6: P is an 80 year old immigrant, she emigrated in the 1960s. P has not learnt English as both her husband and her daughter lived with her and managed her interactions. P’s daughter moved out a year ago when she married and P’s husband passed away 4 months ago. A fire starts In P’s kitchen where she’s cooking and she tries to ring the emergency services to get help but the language barrier is an issue.

**2.4 Common Themes.**

After the table top exercise Steve Manwaring and Jeremy Leggett spoke broadly about the common themes identified:

* The need for consideration to be given at the earliest stage of planning to the likely barriers faced by service users rather than by “bolting on” provision.
* Make use of the intelligence and expertise within specific communities. Not only will this inform service planning but it is more likely to build confidence that communities are being listened to.
* Wherever possible attempts should be made to improve access to mainstream services and the experience of projects like Gig Buddies is that people want to access the opportunities as everyone else”
* The rural dimension in all its forms needs to be properly understood whether this is transport, access to broadband or local community facilities. It should be recognised that these issues still face people in urban areas as well.
* At a time when services are being cut the need for the “furthest first” principle to be utilised is paramount.

* It is important that there are workforce development opportunities to understand the difficulties people face in accessing services and how small things can make a huge difference.
* The examples and projects profiled at the Assembly are all from East Sussex. If we are truly working in an asset based way we should make best use of the expertise and knowledge we have in East Sussex.
* The opportunity to connect leaders with those who use services has been most valuable and to reduce the gap between those who plan services and those who need them is one of the key purposes which events such as this can fulfil.

**S3. FEEDBACK**

At the end of the conference all delegates were provided with an event feedback form. The following results are based on the 18 completed forms returned by attendees at the Assembly.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Yes** | **No** |
| **Did the conference meet your expectations?**  | 100% | - |
| **Was the content appropriate?**  | 100% | - |

Attendees were asked which part of the Assembly they found most useful. Most participants found the opportunity to network particularly useful, especially the opportunity to learn from other providers, consider partnership working in practice and and gain a list of contacts. Others said they found the presentations informative and they had enjoyed hearing about things they hadn’t heard about from anywhere else. Some attendees have contacted the ESSP after the event to say how much they enjoyed

Attendees were also asked which part of the conference they found least useful. The majority of respondents found the whole Assembly useful, while others gave the following suggestions for improvement:

* More presentations
* More time for networking
* NHS attendance
* More statutory sector partners
* No Q&A session

Overall, the evaluation forms found that attendees regarded the content of the event appropriate, informative, and useful. We will continue to ensure that content is relevant to organisations invited to future events. Attendees’ suggestions for next year’s focus will be considered when planning the 2019 Assembly. The suggestions were:

* Access to arts venues – or maybe it would be more inclusive would be to look at the impact of Culture across the County
* Community capacity building and engagement/Encouraging communities to do more for themselves *(this was the 2015 topic)*
* The ageing society
* Cross sector partnership development
* Mental health/suicide*(this was the 2016 topic)*
* To make more time for networking

**S4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **Note the content of the presentations given to the Assembly;**
2. **Note the common themes and revisit the them at a future ESSP meeting to see how the learning from this session can be built into partnership working; and**
3. **Note the feedback and suggestions for next year’s Assembly theme.**

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