



Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council.

Report for the second quarter of the financial year.

July to September 2015.

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INTRODUCTION

This report describes the performance of the organisation for the second quarter of the 2015/16 financial year - July to September 2015 against the revised Service Level Agreement (SLA) targets.

During this period GVOG has continued to offer a quality, professional and independent advice and support service to the Voluntary and community sector of Gateshead. GVOG's dedicated staff team have responded to increase demands for its services exceeding its SLA targets in a number of areas whilst receiving excellent feedback from service users.

GVOG has been actively engaging the sector and community members through a number of events, volunteering services and through its web-presence including the OurGateshead website. These activities offer valuable information and support to the communities of Gateshead.

'In November 2014 Gateshead Indoor Bowling Club were informed by Gateshead Council that all Council funding for the centre would be withdrawn with effect from October 1st. 2015 which threatened the existence of the club and leaving the club's 420 members with nowhere to bowl during the winter months.

In March 2015 a Management Committee was formed with the aim to preserve the club by working with the Council and G.V.O.C to obtain an asset transfer and also to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

In achieving this status the members of Gateshead Indoor Bowling Club are indebted to the staff of G.V.O.C who worked many long hours patiently and tirelessly guiding the committee through a very difficult process and giving us sufficient additional information to enhance the successful future of the club

As a club we would strongly advise any organisation within the Gateshead locality that are placed in a similar situation to ourselves to seek the free help and advice from G.V.O.C to help them resolve their problem.'

George Hackett

Chairman

Gateshead Indoor Bowling Club

Representation of the sector is an important part of GVOG's function and the organisation takes this role very seriously attending a number of boards and committees to ensure the voice of the sector is being heard.

Performance achievement is reported against the five headings of the Service Level Agreement and these are:

1. Intelligence Function
2. Capacity Building, Community Engagement & Development Function
3. Volunteers Function
4. Resources Function
5. Representation Function

Details of the statistical achievements against targets have been recorded in accompanying spreadsheets. (Attachment 1)

Current Staff Structure

Please see attachment 2 (Management Structure)

NEWS FROM GVOC

The GVOC staff team have striven to meet the SLA targets while promoting and enhancing the reputation of GVOC. This is shown in the increase in target figures as indicated in the accompanying spreadsheet (attachment 1).

Following the staff re-structure in June, GVOC staff relocated offices within John Haswell House which caused major disruption to the work of the GVOC staff team. New phone lines, internet connection, computer setup and downsizing all had to be completed before the staff team could continue to function normally. The building has been leased to Gateshead Carers Association (GCA) and GVOC rent rooms within the building however this arrangement still provides a steady income into John Haswell Memorial Trust.

GVOC has successfully recruited a new Volunteer Advisor, who will come into post in October. This post will recruit and support volunteers, advise organisations on good practice in volunteering and deliver volunteer related training.

The Gateshead Supported Volunteer Programme (GSVP) has recruited an experienced staff member to cover the maternity leave of one of the workers and a further worker has returned from maternity leave ensuring the continuity and high level of performance of this Lottery funded project.

In this reporting period GVOC have been successful in the stage one application process for continuation funding of GSVP from The Big Lottery. A further 3 years funding of approximately £327,000 has been applied for. The stage two application will be developed and submitted in November.

Funding secured includes:

- Awards for All; the project will deliver five community roadshows these roadshows will be used to promote GVOC services and other available support in five deprived areas of Gateshead. Workers will be available to give advice and support on a range of organisational development and volunteering issues.

- Christ's Hospital in Sherburn funding to deliver a Friendship Cafe project. This 12 month project will give people with learning difficulties the opportunity to find out how to become involved in in their local communities and become more socially active with the support of staff and volunteers.
- The Bailey Thomas Charitable Fund. This 12 month project will support people with learning difficulties to take part in one off group based volunteering opportunities

These projects are in the process of being planned and delivered.

1. INTELLIGENCE FUNCTION

Areas of achievement

OurGateshead has continued to share news, events and promote over 1000 local groups and organisations to the residents of Gateshead. 91,514 pages were viewed in this period.

The new CharityLog data collection system is being designed and introduced. This will not only improve future GVOG monitoring, but will enable GVOG to analyse and report on the changing needs of the voluntary sector.

Future Developments

A new communication plan has been designed which includes sharing more information via regular newsletters.

Initial talks have been held with the new managers of the Do-it volunteering website to explore how volunteering opportunities can be automatically added to the OurGateshead location and topic pages.

Meetings have been held with Gateshead Public Health to discuss possible funding to improve the functionality of OurGateshead, particularly for health workers and other professionals working in the community. The site was accessed 1,089 times from NHS computers, an increase in 72% on the previous year. The site is being increasingly used to support the social prescribing agenda and especially early interventions and support through referrals to the voluntary and community sector. This work would help to promote the services of the voluntary sector and help support the sustainability of the Gateshead voluntary sector.

New systems are being designed to monitor membership and ensure that service users are members of GVOG.

2. CAPACITY BUILDING, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT FUNCTION

Areas of Achievement;

Organisational Development

During this quarter 76 groups have been supported with a range of advice and support. This is a significant improvement on the first quarter and is partly due to improvements in monitoring and the recruitment of an additional part-time organisational development worker.

The type of advice and support are listed below:

- Governance
- Charity Registration
- Funding
- Finance
- Charity Law
- Group start up
- 'OurGateshead' support
- Training
- Asset transfer advice and support

Some of this work has been complex and time consuming with 28 groups receiving more than one advice and support session. Six groups receiving over 10 sessions of advice and support, this level of support is needed in order to develop and sustain these groups. As well as this complex workload GVOG also provided advice and support on a number of one off enquiries.

My name is Enid Easton. I live in a sheltered accommodation scheme and became secretary of the tenants Association.

I had no experience at being on a committee at all. I felt I had been dropped in the deep end. A council employee recommended that we as a committee should contact GVOG which we did. This was the best thing we ever did. I don't think we would still be here if we hadn't. Whenever we have a problem we would contact GVOG as they are always there to help.

Problems like funding applications, chairing meetings, solving conflict in the group, getting advice on legal issues, reviewing the constitution, finding suitable courses etc. All these problems became easy to handle because of the support we got from GVOG.

Today because of the support we have grown as a group. We do more activities, raise funds, have an allotment, sell produce on the allotment, go on outings. Residents are less isolated get involved in activities such as chair based exercises which encourage them to be more healthy.

If GVOC hadn't helped us these things would not have happened. GVOC helped us gain confidence so when we visit other schemes we recommend GVOC. As we know from experience we can rely on them when we need help which gives us confidence to carry on progressing.

One session of informal group training has been delivered in this quarter and there are plans to deliver a number of sessions in quarter three and four.

OurGateshead continues to offer community groups free promotion to local residents. During this quarter the site received 33,704 visits.

Gateshead Supported Volunteers Programme facilitated a Disability Equality Training session for staff members from organisations across the voluntary & public sector. Six organisations attended the training with more training planned in the New Year.

The Community Development Project (Macmillan) is delivered on behalf of Macmillan Cancer Support and although it is not a service required as a part of the SLA it does add value to the role of GVOC in Gateshead. The project has delivered five cancer screening and prevention training and information sessions to a total of 35 people in the period. In addition the project worker has carried out 13 awareness raising activities reaching a total of 37 people. 10 events have been attended to promote the work of the project. Work is ongoing to produce a bespoke training package for carers and people who work with carers to enable people to have a good understanding of cancer screening, signs and symptoms of cancer and preventative measures.

GVOC runs a Disclosure and Barring Service as additional support for the sector. Two new community groups registered to access the DBS service offered by GVOC and seven existing groups have been supported to complete 15 checks for volunteers and paid staff during the reporting period.

Future Developments

A bid has been submitted to the Virgin Money foundation to offer advice and support for organisations and individuals to develop charitable companies.

GVOC are in the process of:

- Re-introducing the X-funder events. These are workshops that bring together community groups and funders enabling them to discuss their plans and projects to secure funding for their organisation. It is planned to run these sessions bi-monthly.
- Identifying funding to introduce new services and projects that will support the VCS in Gateshead.
- Securing funding for the development of the health and wellbeing section of OurGateshead to support the social prescribing, self-help and health innovations agendas.
- Exploring funding opportunities for formal and informal training opportunities.
- Improving monitoring and reporting with the introduction of the Charitylog database which is being developed. Staff will be trained to use the systems as part of their daily working practice.

3. VOLUNTEERS FUNCTION

Areas of achievement;

Between July-September 2015 the Volunteer Centre has completed brokerage work with 462 people interested in volunteering.

The Volunteer Centre has completed brokerage in a number of ways. This has included;

- Processing do-it applications & enquiries
- One to one meetings
- Drop in Services

The Volunteer Centre has supported organisations with Volunteer Recruitment via Do-It. Examples of organisations are

- Family Lives
- Groundwork North East
- Teenage Cancer Trust

In July the Volunteer Centre were awarded the VCQA Certificate which is a Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation. This Quality mark is also recognition of the standard and professionalism of the service we provide with a number of volunteers achieving their volunteer goals

"I first became involved in 1986 when I asked GVOC about volunteering. I was introduced to an Arthritis Care Regional Organiser some weeks later who asked me to help them set up a group in Gateshead. GVOC then helped by giving me some much needed training. Over the years I have had training in many subjects including minute taking, finance, fundraising, employing staff, governance, chairing a Management Committee and taking an organisation through to becoming a charity. Because of the confidence I gained I was able to be part of setting up 3 very successful organisations in Gateshead. I sit on many Strategic Boards in Gateshead, and I am regularly asked to attend meetings at very senior levels.

I also was a member of GVOC's board for 9 years.

This all came from walking into GVOC in 1986 and asking how I could become a Volunteer.

I cannot thank GVOC enough for helping to change my life, gain so much confidence and learn so many new skills."

Esther Ward

**Gateshead Older People's Assembly
The Felling Hub**

VCQA is valid until 2018 and ensures the quality of the service the volunteer centre provides. GVOC continue to have exclusive use of the Volunteer Centre Brand within Gateshead.

The Gateshead Supported Volunteers Programme has continued to support people with a learning disability to volunteer in Gateshead. This has been achieved by delivering a qualification and matching people with a Buddy until they are confident to volunteer alone.

The Volunteer Centre has continued to have a presence on the Volunteer Action Group meeting with Kate Marshall to ensure partnership working and that the Gateshead Offer is being achieved.

Gateshead Supported Volunteers Programme staff sit on the Meaningful Lives Subgroup, working towards more opportunities for people with learning difficulties in Gateshead. This has included working on the 'Evening & Weekends Strategy.'

Future Developments

The newly appointed Volunteer Advisor will expand and develop the volunteer related training offer. This will include the new bite size Volunteers & the Law, and Supporting Volunteers and writing a volunteer policy training courses.

Gateshead Supported Volunteers Programme (GSVP) are planning five one off volunteering events in different areas of Gateshead. The events will be based around the 'Christmas Box Appeal' completed in previous years and packages will be made up for different groups in the community including young people leaving care, Asylum Seekers & Refugees & older people.

As part of our future development on training we will also be looking into offering our Buddy skills training to organisations and some bespoke training involving volunteers with a learning disability.

Funding is being sought to employ a dedicated volunteer development worker to promote good practice in the sector, through training and group support.

4. RESOURCES FUNCTION

SLA Target Overview

GVOC has offered quality advice and support to a number of groups and organisations. The groups GVOC supports with funding applications are small, usually with no paid workers and require intensive support; they often do not have the skills or confidence within the group to submit funding applications. Therefore this is a time consuming and resource intensive area of work.

In this quarter these groups were seeking amounts of less than £1,500 therefore to meet the SLA target would require 333 applications per year or 27 applications per month to support small groups to achieve this target. Many of the groups who receive advice and support do not then report back to GVOC to inform us they have submitted funding applications or received funding.

To meet the SLA funding target GVOC will need to work with larger organisations to submit substantial monetary applications to funders such as the Lottery, however we feel that the grass root group approach is a priority at present as they are most in need of the limited resources we can provide.

Areas of achievement

GVOC holds and administers GVOCs Grants for Groups, this is a small grant giving fund with a maximum of £500 available per application. There was no decision making panel meeting in this quarter however GVOC continued to administer the grants by:

- Promoting the scheme
- Processing the 11 applications for the October grants panel meeting, these applications totalled £5,047.
- Monitoring the grant expenditure, total £7, 055 from the 15 groups awarded funding at the February panel meeting.

There has been one funding workshop / training delivered this quarter, this session supported an organisation to develop and submit improved funding applications.

Future developments

GVOC will explore the viability of working with groups and organisations that require support with larger funding applications.

Many of the groups who receive advice and support do not then report back to GVOC to inform us they have submitted funding applications or received funding, we will look at putting systems in place to further encourage feedback. By introducing robust monitoring procedures to gain this valuable information we believe that a truer picture of funding brought into Gateshead, from the advice and support that GVOC have given, will emerge

Develop further funding workshops to support the VCS within Gateshead to submit a higher percentage of successful applications to charitable trusts and foundations.

GVOC are also developing the X-funder events as we see this as an excellent opportunity for local groups to gain confidence, ask questions and obtain the ability to apply for funds. GVOC staff will also be available after the events to discuss how they can support those attending to enable them to submit good funding applications.

5. REPRESENTATION FUNCTION

Areas of achievement

GVOG have represented the voluntary and community sector by attending a range of meetings and boards including:

JSNA Steering Group
Gateshead Voluntary Sector Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group
Safeguarding Adults Board
Gateshead Multi-Agency Resilience and Emergency Planning Group
Gateshead Older People's Assembly Annual General Meeting
Big Local

Partnership working

GVOG has worked closely with the following partners:

- Public Health Gateshead
- Live Well Gateshead
- Big Local
- Neighbourhood Management
- Economic and Housing Growth
- Gateshead Newcastle CCG
- Gateshead Volunteer Network
- Macmillan Cancer Support

Future developments

GVOG will explore ways to improve communication channels to enable effective feed back to the VCS of important information from strategic meetings and representation functions.

GVOG will enter into discussions to explore the future role of Gateshead Community Network.

Discussion are being planned to re-launch of the virtual capacity team in partnership with Gateshead Council.

Re-establish the Chief Officers Group and develop the terms of reference and membership criteria for the group to increase the potential membership.

CONCLUSION

GVOC remains focussed on its core aims which are to support Gateshead's voluntary sector and make sure our services remain relevant to the VCS. GVOC's new staffing structure and office accommodation is now fully operational. There is a renewed determination and drive within the organisation to ensure GVOC continues to deliver its high standard of service.

We are exploring new ways to maximise the impact of our service delivery and align our resources with priorities highlighted by the sector. This information will be gained from consultation with the sector through the community Roadshows and the most recent GVOC VCS community consultation, as well as feedback information from service users.

GVOC will continue to develop and grow in the future and will re-establish its influence as the VCSs representative within Gateshead offering valuable information, support and advice.

The figures accompanying this report show that, with the exception of the funding target the SLA targets are being met and in a number of cases exceeded. This indicates the need for GVOCs local, independent, professional service delivery.