

Portfolio	Support & Safeguarding Portfolio

Purpose

To receive a presentation from Solette Sheppardson, Chief Executive Officer and Helen Frary, The VSNS Chairman.

1.0 Background

Voluntary Support North Surrey (VSNS) is a not for profit organisation that covers the areas of: Surrey Heath, Spelthorne and Runnymede. Its role is primarily designed to be an infrastructure organisation which focuses on supporting the community and voluntary organisations, that average 420 within Surrey Heath.

1.1 Christmas Networking Event

There will be a Surrey Heath Christmas networking event hosted by Voluntary Support on Monday 6th December at Camberley Theatre. The Mayor will be present to thank community groups for their support with local residents. As this will be a face to face event it is hoped that this will be able to progress as planned.

1.2 Covid volunteering

Voluntary Support continued to recruit and schedule volunteers at the Lakeside vaccination centre, deploying 165 volunteers in October (an increase of circa 30% on last month). A trial linking with GoodSAM to recruit volunteers was piloted, however this proved challenging to administer so has been discontinued. An appeal for GoodSAM volunteers to register on the 3Rings app was however successful, and additional requests for new volunteers continue. To improve volunteer retention Voluntary Support has carried out research with volunteers who have not been active at Lakeside over the last few months. A lead volunteer meeting for Lakeside was also organised to discuss good practice and a second meeting has been scheduled for November. This month 6 requests for oximeter delivery in Surrey Heath were fulfilled through the associated WhatsApp volunteer group.

1.3 WSATO (Whole Systems Approach to Obesity) Project Update

Voluntary Support continued their partnership with Frimley CCG and SHBC on the Whole Systems Approach to Obesity project and supported the summit on the 3rd November. The project group developed a survey for residents to better understand eating habits.

1.4 Workshop Project Collaboration

VSNS continue to share their volunteer database with 'the Workshop' and offer advice on appropriate opportunities. We encourage The Workshop to make use of the expertise of VSNS staff and referrals can be directed via VSNS' website or by phone/email to their offices.

1.5 Carers' Organisations group Christmas party

The Carers' Organisations group has made the decision not to run a Christmas carers event this year due to Covid restrictions and vulnerability of the clients. Voluntary Support were assisting the CCG with planning, but due to other voluntary groups not having capacity to participate the event is no longer viable.

1.6 Voluntary Support Database Refresh

VSNS have made a conscious decision to contact the charities and groups on its database. This has proved successful in finding out group needs and reminding groups of its portfolio of support. VSNS aimed to understand the third sector's needs and plans post covid, and how it could develop its plans around the local need.

1.7 Time to Talk Befriending Update

Time to Talk held a successful recruitment drive for befrienders in the run-up to national Befriending Week (1st-7th November). A social media campaign throughout the week highlighted the benefits of being befriended as well as becoming a befriender and the need to target the widespread loneliness in society. The campaign was a success and resulted in interest from both volunteers and those in isolation. In addition 5 new referrals were generated following refreshed promotion of Time to Talk at local community groups.

1.8 Funding Advice & Training

A successful trustee training session was organised with VSNS corporate partner Helen Harvie covering trustee liabilities and the role of the treasurer. This was attended by 4 SH groups: The Besom, Camberley Care, Citizens Advice SH & SH Tree Wardens. Future training courses scheduled for November include Virtual Volunteering, Board Diversity, Recruiting and Managing young volunteers. These courses continue to be well attended and delivered at no cost to the charities. In addition, VSNS have recently written and delivered a new course focusing on social media to meet the needs of the sector. The training has been delivered to The Hope Hub, Surrey Heath Neighbourhood Watch and Camberley Citizens Advice.

2.0 SHBC Revenue Grant Payments

The organisation applies for a revenue grant annually and this equates to a payment of £30,000 for the services provided in Surrey Heath, and this is consistent with other districts who contribute to the overall operational funding.

From April 2020 a further £10,000 has been added each year to meet the demand for the visiting and befriending service that was launched by VSNS, named Time To Talk.

VSNS are located in the Ian Goodchild Centre, along with Camberley Care and other local groups.

Recommendation

1. The Committee is asked to consider the presentation in relation to Surrey Heath any future steps which Members would wish to recommend to the Executive and/or Council.

Background Papers:

None

Service Level Agreement 2021/22

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