

CEO Annual Report

The past year has been one of “Connect Collaborate, Challenge and Change” for ACVO. That was the mission behind the Big Aberdeen project and it continues to be an exciting concept for much of our work. As the 3rd sector interface for Aberdeen city, it is critical that ACVO works with other sectors to be a conduit and facilitate relationship building and understanding of the value of working with the 3rd sector.

In terms of Community Planning - Developing credibility with and demonstrating value in our interactions with our Community Planning Partners has been key to being an effective TSI. ACVO has also been one of five leading TSI's in Scotland taking on the challenge of a Scottish Government supported partnership improvement programme which has helped to highlight development areas. ACVO also works to ensure the 3rd sector voice is present and heard at all levels in community planning and in the forums and partnerships which feed into it. Community planning may still be a mystery to some, so please ask where and how your organisation feeds in and can make a difference.

Health & Social Care Integration - The move towards integration of Health and Social care has been a significant area of work for ACVO. It's not simply a merging of council and NHS staff but a full scale transformational change programme, building a health and social care sector which is fit for the challenging future ahead. The 3rd sector, with ACVO's support has been embedded into the process and has added value to discussions and activities around key areas such as the caring workforce, hospital discharge and community based support. Indeed the strategic planning group for integration has been an exemplar in Scotland of how to involve and derive best value from the sector. ACVO will continue with this work as we move to delivery of the new phase of locality service in 2016.

Events – as mentioned earlier the Big Aberdeen concept grew in momentum over the past year. The Big Disruptive Breakfast celebrated a year of intense activity. Building cultural bridges between the artistic, business and public

sector. New links have been made and citizens from all sectors are working together to change our city for the better.

The highly successful ACVO Awards lunch, held just before Christmas was a great celebration for the sector and those who support it. It reflected the diversity and range of the sector yet held our values close.

Other events in the year which were well received included some meet the team sessions and an event with OSCR the charity regulator as well as a range of training workshops on social media, project management, finance and governance.

Volunteering – the enthusiasm and commitment of Aberdeen citizens for volunteering knows no bounds. We had over 7000 queries from potential volunteers last year. We also have details of 1500 volunteer opportunities in Aberdeen within organisations looking to recruit volunteers and the vital help volunteers provide. We further supported many business skills volunteers to bring new knowledge and capabilities into the 3rd sector to help on boards, with marketing, understanding management and bidding for new work. Volunteers in the city are one of the most inclusive groups you could imagine, from 14 to 96, with no gender bias and covering every ethnic background, ACVO is indeed proud to be supporting our volunteers on a daily basis.

Gathering the views of a group so diverse as the Aberdeen 3rd sector can be a challenging activity. ACVO's role is not to take a view but to listen and facilitate the delivery of those views in a number of partnerships. In the past year we have worked with care providers, children's services providers, and organisations supporting older people, faith groups and regeneration areas to gather views and feed them into consultation and engagement processes. These have included the Integration of Health and Social care, community empowerment act, the joint inspection of children's services in Aberdeen, reshaping care for older people and welfare reform.

A major issue over the past year and currently has been commissioning and procurement of public services. ACVO formed a commissioning and procurement sub group which has lobbied for clearer commissioning processes, creation of proportionate tender requests and early discussions on implementation of change. Both the City Council and the new Health and

Social Care joint board's are keen to develop new and improved processes for the future and ACVO will continue to urge this move.

ACVO however is here to support and develop the sector and part of this is to challenge the norm. Funding from any source is becoming more difficult to find and keep. We have worked with over 400 organisations this year to help them look at funding, promotion, operations and assist them to be fit for the future. No funding is guaranteed and the sector itself needs to be squaring up to the challenges its facing otherwise organisations will simply disappear without trace and those in need will be the ones that suffer.

Many organisations have been for some time recognising that the environment in which we all operate is continually evolving. Charities and community groups more and more are looking at diverse and more sustainable income streams. Last year we identified that 80% of the organisations we supported had some form of social enterprise in place or were setting one up. Social enterprise is no longer an adjunct to the 3rd sector, its core to the wellbeing of most organisations. ACVO continues to work with Aberdeen Social Enterprise Network to identify what the needs are and has delivered support on marketing, funding and business planning to help in this area.

All of this work cannot be done without a committed set of people within ACVO. This applies to both the board and the team. I would particularly like to thank the ACVO team members their encouragement, focus and dedication in what has been an extremely busy and challenging year.

Finally I'd like to thank you for coming along today and to ask you to keep working with us to ensure we are able to promote the fundamental position the 3rd sector holds in the city and its capability of being the driver for change and success in the future.