

ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

The Directors have pleasure in presenting their report for the year to 31st March 2017.

OBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Voluntary Health Scotland (VHS) is the national intermediary and network for voluntary health organisations in Scotland. We were established in 2004 as a registered Scottish charity (SC035482) and a company limited by guarantee (SC267315). Our formal charitable objects are to “preserve, protect and promote the health of people living in Scotland, and to assist in the relief of ill health and the provision of health education for people living in Scotland”. Our full members range from large national charities to local, community based organisations. We also have associate members who are individuals or organisations in the public and independent sectors who wish to support our work. Beyond our own members, we work with a wide range of stakeholders from the voluntary, community and third sector, Scottish Government, NHS, other public sector and academia.

Our mission is:

To promote greater recognition of the voluntary health sector and support it to be a valued and influential partner in health and care.

We have three strategic priorities:

1. To promote greater recognition of the role of voluntary health organisations
2. To support voluntary health organisations to build their understanding of health agendas so as to play an active part
3. To influence change in policy and practice, by providing a bridge between the voluntary health sector, decision makers and public services

FINANCIAL REVIEW

VHS recorded an overall deficit of £ 11,006 for the year (2016: surplus £21,216), due to the use of restricted funds brought forward. There was a surplus of £31,727 (2016: £542) on unrestricted funds.

Total funds as at the year-end amounted to £28,965 (2016: £39,971) including restricted funds of £32,829 (2016: 5 £75,562) and a deficit of £3,864 (2016: £35,591) on unrestricted funds. The deficit is due to the provision for pension deficit catch-up payments, which are payable over thirteen years. VHS's principal funding during the year came by way of grants from the Scottish Government and NHS Health Scotland.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE IN 2016/17

Engagement and Partnerships that maximise the voluntary health sector's collective impact and supports wider engagement

Engagement and collaboration through workshops, conferences, networks and working groups are key to how VHS delivers its strategy and enacts its values. Face to face events are delivered and *Key Message* reports, presentations, blogs and online articles published so as to share discussion, foster new relationships and spread knowledge and understanding.

The Health Policy Officers Network (HPON) marked a new collaboration between VHS and member organisation Queen's Nursing Institute Scotland. The jointly administered network supports policy officers who are either at the start of their careers or work for a small health charity. It aims to develop their skills, knowledge and confidence so as to maximise their organisation's policy effectiveness. Following its inaugural meeting, the network grew to 32 individual members representing 25 organisations. VHS organised topic focused network meetings on the following:

- The future work programme of the Health and Sport Committee and the opportunities this offers health charities with the Clerk to the Committee
- How health charities can work most effectively with Cross Party Groups
- Implications for health charities of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act, with the Scottish Parliament Lobbying Registrar
- The Health and Social Care Delivery Plan, with the Scottish Government lead official.

VHS conducted and published the results of a survey of HPON members to investigate its usefulness and impact. The survey indicated a very high level of support for the network's approach and its usefulness. One member commented: "The network provides a wonderful opportunity to get together in a supported environment to discuss different health policy areas. The best bit is that there are no stupid questions".

Mental health and role of social support. During the year, VHS partnered with the Open University and Support in Mind Scotland, with the goal of promoting understanding and dialogue about the role social support plays in mental health. VHS had the lead role in organising the series of jointly presented seminars and workshops. Seminars ran in Dundee and Glasgow, attracting 90 delegates in total. The series continued during 2017 with workshops in Helensburgh and Stirling, also attracting 90 delegates overall. After each event, VHS published and disseminated a *Key Messages* report.

NHS Health Scotland. VHS engaged continuously with the special health board throughout the year, with the focus on promoting the role of the voluntary health sector in addressing health inequalities. Work included a presentation to the NHS Health staff health inequalities forum and representing the voluntary health sector at the *Maximising the Role of the NHS in Health Inequalities* stakeholder event.

Our Natural Health Service. VHS was an active member of the national group set up by Scottish Natural Heritage to support delivery of the Action Plan for Our Natural Health Service. The Action Plan is helping to join up thinking and action across the national greener and healthier strategies. VHS also joined the Paths for All partnership of thirty national organisations who share the vision of a happier, healthier, greener, more active Scotland.

Evidence Building that promotes the voluntary sector's contribution to health agendas

Understanding the Gap. Building on the energy of the Cross Party Group on Health Inequalities, VHS organised a major conference in Stirling. *Understanding the Gap* focused on knowledge creation, exchange and mobilisation between third sector, NHS, academia and peer researchers involved in health inequalities research. 120 delegates attended the very well received event which was sponsored by the Open University and chaired by Carnegie UK Trust. A *Key Messages* conference report and all presentations were published and disseminated more widely. One immediate outcome was that Aberdeen University sought VHS's help to identify and engage third sector organisations in Edinburgh as research partners (impact of smoking on children in family home). Another outcome was that Stirling and Glasgow Universities initiated some scoping work with a group of homelessness charities and VHS, to explore the potential for further research into health inequalities and street homelessness.

Loneliness, social isolation and health. This was to emerge as a major theme for the year, starting with VHS's input to Befriending Networks' *Loneliness Summit* and to a British Red Cross round table on loneliness. VHS's Annual Conference took *Loneliness: A Threat to Health* as its theme. It was chaired by the Big Lottery and attracted 156 delegates. VHS published and promoted a *Key Messages* conference report and the conference presentations. There was significant social media coverage, as well as mainstream media coverage in *The Scotsman* and *Scottish Daily Mail*. VHS published a suite of blogs about loneliness, looking at its impact on older people with dementia, people with terminal illness, children and young people with learning difficulties, and exploring how to create kinder communities.

VHS organised a further event for 90 participants: *Developing a National Social Isolation and Loneliness Strategy*, in collaboration with British Heart Foundation, Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland, Befriending Networks and Age Scotland. This took the form of a workshop at SCVO's 2017 Gathering and was designed to influence and engage with Scottish Government officials charged with the development of the national strategy. A set of promotional postcards featured some of the voluntary health organisations engaged in tackling loneliness: Action for Sick Children, Samaritans, Scottish Palliative Care Partnership and Positive Prison? Positive Futures. In tandem, VHS created a postcard wall, to showcase what other health charities said they were doing to tackle loneliness.

VHS worked with Glasgow Caledonian University, whose Marketing (Masters) students took on the challenge of developing a social marketing strategy on loneliness and health. This collaboration culminated in a 'Dragon's Den' type event when four groups of students presented their campaigns to an invited audience drawn from voluntary health organisations, Scottish Government and NHS Health Scotland. VHS also published the four campaigns on its website. Speaking at two conferences, VHS's Chief Officer focused on creating kinder, more social communities as her theme. These were: *Loneliness and Older People* and *Developing a National Social Isolation and Loneliness Strategy: Scottish Government National Stakeholder Event*.

The Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, Dr Catherine Calderwood, invited VHS to provide a comment on loneliness and health, and published it in her Annual Review 2015-16: *Realising Realistic Medicine*. The following statement was published:

"Loneliness and social isolation are public health and health inequalities issues. Realistic medicine can help address this challenge, with its emphasis on improvement and innovation, shared decision-making, and a personalised approach

to care. Our vision should be for kinder, more inclusive and enabled communities. To get there we need joined up, strategic action across all the social determinants of health and strong partnership working between our public, third and community sectors”.

VHS’s engagement with the Scottish Government and voluntary health organisations concerning the development of the national strategy continued to grow exponentially beyond the end of the financial year 2016/17. Resulting from specific requests for face to face briefings and discussions on loneliness and health, VHS met with Senscot, Big Lottery, Elder Abuse, Macmillan, SAMH and Scottish Prison Service. VHS spoke at a conference on the role of churches in tackling loneliness, organised by Faith in Older People, the Church of Scotland Guild and Action on Churches Together in Scotland

Community Link Working. During the year, the Scottish Government (Creating Better Health team) commissioned VHS to map and report on third sector involvement in community link worker schemes across Scotland. The Scottish Government had made a commitment to create an additional 250 workers to support primary care to tackle health inequalities and the aim of the VHS study was to help inform the government’s development of the national programme. VHS worked with the Simon Jaquet Consultancy, carrying out electronic survey work and case studies over a six month period and producing a final report and recommendations to the government. This was then launched and published by VHS as *Gold Star Exemplars: Third Sector Approaches to Community Link Working Across Scotland* to an audience of 70 invited voluntary health organisations.

Drink Wise Age Well. VHS was an active promoter of a range of other third sector evidence throughout the year, including evidence produced by the national Drink Wise Age Well programme led by addictions charity Addaction. VHS is a member of the Drink Wise Age Well Impact and Advisory Board for Scotland.

Policy influencing that supports voluntary health organisations to engage with policy and have a platform for their voice to be heard

VHS focused strategically on its four key policy themes: public health, health inequalities, health and social care integration and mental health. A cross-cutting theme was the development of the national loneliness and social isolation strategy discussed above. Another cross-cutting theme was the Scottish Government’s planned development of a national diet and obesity strategy. VHS identified obesity, health and the role of the third sector as a theme to be addressed in its 2017/18 work plan.

Public Health. VHS worked to promote much greater awareness and understanding across the professional public health community of the third sector’s role and contribution to public health. As the third sector voice on Scottish Public Health Network’s (ScotPHN) National Advisory Board, VHS contributed to ScotPHN’s programme throughout the year, including a short life working group on housing and public health and a workshop to help shape ScotPHN’s annual work plan. At this latter workshop, loneliness emerged as a public health issue and was subsequently incorporated into ScotPHN’s work plan as a topic to be addressed in 2017/18. VHS contributed a third sector perspective to NHS Health Scotland’s public health intelligence discussion on a response to the public health review and met with NHS Health Scotland’s Director of Public Health Science Dr Andrew Fraser in his new role as Chair of Directors of Public Health. Dr Fraser subsequently gave a keynote address at the VHS Annual Conference 2016 and is chairing the 2017 Annual Conference.

Looking ahead to 2017/18 VHS and ScotPHN would go on to organise a collaborative Round Table on public health between twenty voluntary health sector organisations and ScotPHN. The aim of this was to support ScotPHN to engage with a wider spectrum of third sector audiences, with a focus on their planned work streams on gender reassignment, chronic pain and ophthalmology. VHS would also chair two successful parallel sessions on diet and obesity at the 2017 NHSScotland event. In September 2017, VHS's Chief Officer would be nominated by SCVO to join the Public Health Reform Oversight Board, and the Head of Public Health Reform would meet with the Health Policy Officers Network.

Mental Health. Early in the year, VHS met with the Scottish Government mental health strategy lead, to emphasise prevention and the role of smaller voluntary health organisations. VHS emphasised these points again in its formal response to the Scottish Government's formal consultation on a proposed ten year strategy.

Health and social care integration. VHS held its second round table for Audit Scotland with members of the Third Sector Health and Social Care Collaborative, publishing and disseminating a Key Messages report about the discussion as well as a VHS briefing paper on Audit Scotland's report on Social Work in Scotland. VHS held an event to help third sector organisations engage with the Scottish Government's National Health and Care Standards consultation, with Dr Fiona Waddell of Healthcare Improvement Scotland providing an input. Originally planned as a round table, the topic generated enormous interest and the round table was very oversubscribed, but VHS was able to accommodate 40 participants. VHS subsequently submitted a formal response to the consultation.

Health inequalities. Following the Scottish Parliament election in May 2016 VHS sought to re-establish the Cross Party Group (CPG) on Health Inequalities for a further four year term. With the support of twelve MSPs and the previous 33 members of the CPG, it was successfully re-established. VHS was re-appointed as Secretariat and three Co-Convenors elected: Donald Cameron MSP, Clare Haughey MSP and Anas Sarwar MSP. Two further meetings were held during the period, each with an attendance of between 40 and 50 people. The CPG met twice to consider the built environment and health inequalities. On the first occasion, attendees considered a presentation on The Place Standard by the Scottish Government and NHS Health Scotland. On the second occasion there were presentations by Professor Jamie Pearce of Edinburgh University and James Jopling of Samaritans.

At a further meeting in June 2017, the CPG would focus on health inequalities in prison, with presentations from Royal College of Nursing, Positive Prison? Positive Futures, and the Clerk to the Scottish Parliament Health and Sport Committee. Looking further ahead, VHS would organise an evening reception in the Garden Lobby of the Scottish Parliament to celebrate the work of the CPG in September 2017.

Health Literacy. As an active member of the Scottish Government's Health Literacy Action Plan Implementation Group VHS disseminated NHS Education Scotland resources to the voluntary health sector during the year, and contributed to the development of 'Making it Easier', the next phase of the action plan.

The Lampard Report. The Scottish Government (Health and Social Care Directorates) consulted VHS in the preparation of a formal letter to Health Boards and IJBs concerning the "Safety and Protection of Patients, Staff and Volunteers in NHSScotland". The letter was eventually issued in April 2017 and covered three high-level actions relating to governance, safety and engagement of stakeholders. Health boards were recommended to liaise with VHS concerning matters relating to third sector volunteers in NHS settings. At a meeting of the Cross Party Group on Volunteering VHS gave a short presentation on the aims of the Clear Pathway project concerning these matters.

Programme for Government. In response to the outcome of the 2016 Scottish Parliamentary elections, VHS held a breakfast event called *Health charity leaders in Conversation with Pennie Taylor*. The purpose was to enable voluntary health organisations to discuss their ambitions for health and the role they thought the new Scottish Government should play. 60 delegates participated and a Key Messages report from the event published.

VHS submitted responses to several other formal consultations:

- Integration Authorities' Engagement with Third Sector, Patients and Carers (Scottish Parliament Health and Sport Committee)
- Places, People and Planning (Scottish Government)

A briefing paper on the implications for health charities of the Lobbying Act was produced and disseminated to VHS members.

Other policy work. VHS contributed and promoted a voluntary health perspective to a wide range of work streams and policy work led by other organisations, for example, a leadership round table on organised by Social Enterprise Academy as part of the Scottish Government's development of a ten year social enterprise strategy. VHS also contributed to the roundtable convened by Carnegie UK Trust, the Alliance for Useful Evidence and the Big Lottery to explore 'The Scottish Model of Evidence'.

Sharing knowledge that raises awareness and disseminates information across the network

In addition to its face to face engagement with stakeholders, VHS shared a wide range of news and intelligence via its e-bulletin, e-alerts, social media channels and website. The popular E-bulletin was distributed monthly to over 1,600 contacts, providing both a channel to communicate health policy news and a platform to promote awareness of the voluntary health sector. VHS continued to make active use of Twitter as a communication tool, particularly as a means of enhancing discussion at its events.

The website was refreshed by VHS's web developer Graphics Coop, so as to further improve functionality, enable people to subscribe online for the monthly E-bulletin and to give greater prominence to the Clear Pathway project. The E-bulletin itself was given a refresh in appearance and, from April 2017, is now also published online each month. The drive to attract blogs from member organisations continued, with a number of blogs being published during the year, including contributions from Marie Curie, Cope Scotland, Lifecare Edinburgh and Salvesan Mindroom Centre.

VHS produced and disseminated briefing papers, designed to translate and interpret policy developments for a voluntary health audience. These included a briefing paper on the new National Clinical Strategy (May) and on the Lobbying Act (February). VHS also worked to extend its reach beyond health networks. For example, it provided and promoted a paper at and after the Engender round table (A Road Map for Women's Equality) on women and health inequalities on 29th November.

Building a strong network: growing and developing a dynamic, interactive and mutually supportive network

VHS ended the year with 415 members (157 full members & 258 associate members), an increase of 74 over the numbers 12 months previously. VHS's wider network and distribution

list across sectors numbered over 1,600 contacts. The VHS three year strategy emphasises the importance of encouraging, enabling and facilitating a dynamic and engaged network of voluntary health organisations. During the year VHS continued to embed and improve its approach to this. For example, VHS held Kitchen Cabinet meetings with member organisations, to help inform and shape two major conferences planned for September 2017: *Volunteering: The Golden Thread in Health* and for November 2017: *Get Real: Real People, Real Communities, Real Health*.

VHS conducted a survey of its member organisations, publishing the full results and a summary infographic version on its website in August. The survey asked members whether VHS's activities and priorities were the right ones for them, sought feedback on the quality and relevance of activities, and gathered information about members' own work and interests. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with one respondent commenting: "you set the bar for what a small team can achieve". Members were asked to describe VHS in three words and the resultant responses were remarkably coherent, typically: "professional, informed, inclusive", "relevant, grounded, connected", and "informative, engaging, active". VHS used the survey results to help shape its 2017/18 work plan and is taking on board areas where members have asked for changes, for example, a greater geographic spread of events. Between June and August 2017 VHS set out to conduct a further membership survey, benchmarking results against the 2016 survey, and using both sets of results to inform the development of a new three year strategy.

Resources and development that equip voluntary health organisations with new skills, ideas, connections and learning

Clear Pathway: Third sector Volunteering in NHS settings. As part of its response to the Lampard Report and to complement the existing national NHSScotland Volunteering Programme run by Scottish Health Council, VHS established a new project called Clear Pathway. The Scottish Government provided funding for a Project Officer and a year-long programme of work. The aim of Clear Pathway has been to engage the third sector and NHS in exploring the shared agenda of providing safe, effective and person centred volunteering in NHS settings.

The final project output will be guidance for health boards, currently scheduled to be available in early 2018. The project has been guided by a stakeholder Reference Group and by the National Group on Volunteering in NHS Scotland, of which VHS is a member. The project has included face to face engagement with 33 third sector organisations, 7 third sector interfaces and 10 health boards, with the Voluntary Action Scotland annual conference, the Scottish Volunteering Forum, and the Cross Party Group on Volunteering. Looking ahead into 2017/18 VHS has gone on to present a poster at the 2017 NHSScotland annual event, deliver the *Volunteering: The Golden Thread in Health* conference for 130 cross-sectoral delegates, and produce draft guidance for consultation.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Looking ahead to 2017/18, it will mark the final year of VHS's current three year strategy. VHS will develop a revised strategy for 2018/19 to 2020/21, consulting and engaging with stakeholders and taking into account the results of the 2017 Membership Survey. VHS will strive to amplify the voice and influence of voluntary health organisations and to act as a conduit between the statutory and third sectors and a platform for voices less heard. It will continue to focus strongly on the themes of health inequalities, health and social care integration, public health and mental health. It will work to influence national policy in relation to loneliness and health, obesity and health, and public health reform.



We welcome new members from all sectors – join us now

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