**ICNC Minutes 6 April 2016**

**In attendence:**

Ruth Hayes Islington Advice Alliance (Chair)

Chris Taylor Voluntary Action Islington

Guljabeen Rahman Voluntary Action Islington

Phill Watson Manor Gardens

Jane Chambers Age UK Islington

Mark Brennan Islington Homelessness Network

Despina Tsiakalou Islington BME Forum

Janan Aljabiri Islington Refugee Forum

Feride Kumbasar Islington BAMER Women's Network

Melanie Stray Galop

Lauren Phillips Age UK Islington

Marta Aparicio Voluntary Action Islington

**Apologies:**

Colin Adams Octopus Community Network

Roz Miller Islington Faiths Forum & Mental Health and Poverty Networking Forum

Jean Smith Islington Children and Young People’s Voluntary Sector Forum

Kate Kelly Creative Islington

Nicholas Watts Islington Environment Forum

**1. Knowledge and mapping of local VCS:**

Guests: Lauren Phillips, Navigation Services Manager; Marta Aparicio, VAI Directory

Questions for discussion:

* Who do you / your members want to reach? (service users, voluntary or     statutory partner services, etc.)
* How do you / your members reach them now?
* How can you / your members work with today’s guests to improve your     reach?
* Are there ways of streamlining information gathering and sharing updates     more effectively?

LP outlined the Locality Navigator service, which is commissioned by Islington CCG and provided by Age UK Islington. There are six staff employed as Locality Navigators. People over the age of 16 with long-term health conditions can be referred to them for help to find and access non-medical services which may ameliorate their condition. Referrals are taken from GPs, community matrons, social workers, community organisations and people can also self-refer. Work with clients is not time-limited, but continues until an outcome is achieved. The service helps people to manage their care pathways so Locality Navigators can, for instance, go to hospital appointments with clients. It is hoped that in the future they will be able to help with form filling. The Locality Navigators methods of searching for services depend on what the request and/or need is, but those used most often are: the council’s Links for Living webpage; networking locally; and consulting colleagues at Age UK Islington.

MA spoke about the Islington Directory of Voluntary Sector Services. The Directory is a collaboration between VAI and Islington council. It lists almost 400 organisations. To ensure it is as up to date as possible, organisations are able to update their own record and VAI will be auditing the list periodically check on the status of organisations and their services. VAI is now being approached by organisations that want to start working in Islington and see a listing on the Directory as a good way in. The council uses the Directory to find and contact cohorts of groups to explore collaboration on new projects. The Directory is linked to the Map of Medicine, a resource accessible to GPs to help them easily find local services.

**Action:** MA/CT to contact Lizzie Stimson about the possibility of presenting on the Directory at a CCG Social Sector Forum meeting.

It was acknowledged that the short-term or seasonal nature of some services means that a formal directory may be quickly out of date, and that it may not be appropriate to list some services more accessibly, for instance, if they are already at capacity. Nevertheless, members disclosed the extent to which they use data from their networks and partners as directories or resources for referrals among their own staff and/or volunteers:

* IAA has an internal directory of advice services
* IRF has developed a directory of services that can help to support newly arrived Syrian refugees
* AgeUK Islington has a database of partner organisations that is used as a directory for signposting and referral
* Manor Gardens keeps details of the organisations it hosts and often refers people to AgeUK
* Islington Council has webpages listing homelessness services.
* Islington BAMER Women’s Network does hold data on member organisations but does not currently organise it as a directory

**Action:** CT to share link to VAI Directory with MS.

The importance of maintaining a balance between raising awareness of services and avoiding encouraging referrals to services which are already over-subscribed was pointed out. Organisations do want to know how many people need their support, but don’t want to encourage people to join a waiting list they’ll never get to the end of.

Members noted that the particular quality of a service may need to be taken into account as increasing the volume of referrals isn’t helpful if the service doesn’t fit the individual being referred. However, it was also thought that some organisations are overly risk averse when assessing who they can work with.

The Locality Navigators make referrals according to their knowledge of the current capacity of services. JC collects information on that capacity on their behalf.

**Action:** CT to enquire about AgeUK Islington’s monitoring of partner’s current service capacity and report back to ICN.

**Action:** MA & LP to discuss whether VAI and Age UK Islington can share new additions to their directories of services.

**Action:** Locality Navigators to meet MB at a local homeless shelter.

**Action:** CT to email ICN members to ask if the formal networks they represent would like to be listed on the VAI Directory.

Members agreed that it is the job of all in the sector to help keep these resources up to date.

**2. Previous minutes and matters arising**

**Action:** CT to write to Alison Blair to ask for update on progress regarding CCG grants.

**3. ICN Update**

Members discussed the recent visit to City & Hackney Together, the bidding consortium supported by Hackney CVS. Attention was drawn to the possibility of tension between bidding for, administering and delivering contracts. Similarly, consortium members may experience conflict between their roles representing the consortium, and their own organisation. GR suggested that thematic networks could be developed to allow them to form consortia.

**Action:** VAI to consider whether or not it will lead on forming a bidding consortium.

**4. Mental Health provision workshop**

It was reiterated that this potential event was conceived as a collaboration with the council. It was thought that as all voluntary sector services work with people whose mental health is poor or at risk, it may be possible to form creative partnerships working on early intervention and prevention, perhaps on a ‘systems thinking’ basis, to reduce the number of people who need to access mental health services. IRF held an event on the mental health of refugees last year and the findings of that can feed into this workshop. Recent correspondence with Cllr. Shaikh indicated that ICN and council views on the purpose of the workshop may have diverged.

**Action:** RH to speak to Cllr. Shaikh again to confirm the aim of workshop.

**Action:** in the event that the workshop doesn’t go ahead, CT to ask ICN members by email what the main topic of discussion with Cllr. Shaikh should be at the next ICN meeting.

**5. Voluntary Sector Conference**

Members were advised that the title and aim of the conference have been agreed. It is now being advertised and places can be booked. The Conference Working Group will aim to meet again in May.

**6. Forums Feedback**

JA  - The Forum ran a 23 March training event on Health and Safety Essentials. The Forum will hold two events during refugee week, which runs 20-26 June. On the 21 June there will be a celebratory event to welcome refugees, and on 22 June there will be a seminar on refugee rights and entitlements.

JC – AgeUK Islington has a new Contact Centre at Manor Gardens. There are events lined up for Carers Week from 6-12 June. There is a new project, Future Matters, about planning for death.

PW – Manor Gardens is holding a Street Fair on 9 July and is planning a 22 September event on free speech. It has won the Mental Health Champions contract and has a new project, Bright Beginnings, which supports pregnant refugees.

DT - The Forum is focusing on fundraising and, in partnership with Ocotpus (and others, ask) has secured money from Trust for London for an employability project. Match funding must be found before the project can begin. DT is meeting members to find out what their main issues are, and to encourage collaboration.

MB – There is a petition to support the Crisis campaign No One Turned Away, which calls for every homeless person who approaches their council to get the help they need. Housing is the main issue in the Mayoral election. The Museum of Homelessness is to take over the 5th floor of Tate Modern for one week a year.

FK - The network was set up in June 2015 and aims to campaign for support and funding for services specific to BAMER Women. It has held an event to identify the issues specific to its members. A recommendation was made to lobby for ring-fenced funding for BAMER Women’s services. Jeremy Corbyn attended the event and it has been confirmed that this ring-fence will be on the Labour party manifesto. The network will meet Kate Green MP, Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities, in May. A seminar on gender based persecution and issues particular to recently arrived migrants is being organised.

MS - With online abuse increasingly a problem, Galop and partners have launched a website, [www.stoponlineabuse.org.uk](http://www.stoponlineabuse.org.uk/), to support women and LGBT people.

RH - A bid to the Reaching Communities fund was unsuccessful at the second stage. A move to favouring direct referrals is anticipated as there is generally less money available to support other methods. An Islington Law Centre research project with UCL on the long-term impact of the effect of low income on nutrition is underway. The Law Centre won funding to appoint a trainee solicitor. It also wants to recruit more form-filling volunteers. It has won legal cases allowing young migrants to rejoin their families in the UK and has had exceptional case funding granted for an immigration case.

**7. Community Chest update**

It was noted that there has been no meeting of the Community Chest Panel since the last ICN meeting. The first round of the 2016/17 Community Chest grant programme has opened for applications.

**8. Safer Neighbourhood Board**

The SNB held its annual Crime and Safety Summit on the 5 March. It was attended by 160 people and a report on the event has been published.

**9. AOB; future meetings**

* Wednesday 25 May 2016; 13.30 – 15.30; Cllr. Shaikh