Time to Move on Newsletter
July 2021 Edition

Welcome, to the July edition of our Newsletter covering the Spring workshop on Navigating and Engaging with the Community "Third" Sector

This newsletter covers the workshop hosted by Genio and the HSE to examine how service providers and the people they support are *Navigating and Engaging with the Community "Third" Sector* as active citizens and members of their local community.

The workshop provided an opportunity for service providers to come together to view presentations and hear the evidence gathered by Genio Researchers in 2020 through their targeted interviews with service providers. At the workshop, the research team presented an overview of the key findings that had emerged under this theme. There were valuable inputs and presentations from two service providers, St Margarets Irl-IASD in Dublin and St Mary's Drumcar which is part of the St John of God Community Services in the North East. The Disability Federation of Ireland also delivered an informative presentation setting out the landscape of the wider community sector and the opportunities for collaboration and innovation outside of the disability services.

We wish to thank all of those who took the time to present at the workshop:

Dr Ciara Brennan & Dr Niamh Lally , SRF Researchers
Paula Doyle, Saint John of God North East Services
Breda O'Neill, St Margarets Irl- IASD
Cathy McGrath, Disability Federation of Ireland
We also thank our colleagues that facilitated the break-out rooms and everyone that contributed in those discussions on the day

For copies of the presentations from this or any other of our recent events please email us at
timetomoveon@hse.ie
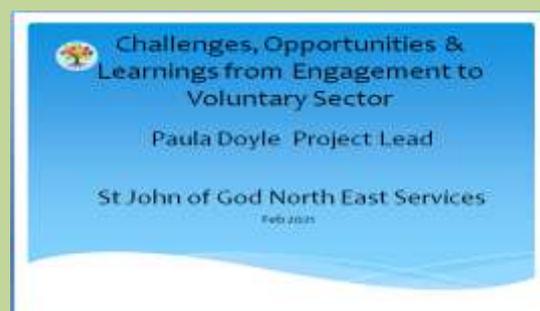
Community / Third Sector Webinar Workshop

Insights into community engagement and structures.

Challenges, Opportunities & Learnings from Engagement to Voluntary Sector

Paula Doyle Project Lead

St John of God North East Services

Feb 2021

Transforming Lives
Programme to Implement the Recommendations of the "Value for Money and Policy Review of the Disability Services in Ireland" report

What the research tells us about .....
The role services and staff play in community engagement

How Services have prepared the groundwork by recognising the challenge:

- Sometimes there is a dilemma at the start of the process about losing the "community" people had in the congregated setting
- Often there are no ties with the local community
- It is about striking a balance, it doesn't mean cutting off all old ties and change for change's sake
- The people we support can be scared about moving to or engaging with the community in smaller settings

> There is "Such a poverty of experience in people's lives"
> *Quote from a staff member*

How services have supported and prepared staff:

- Staff training – SRV, SSDL, Person Centredness
- A level of investment in staff training to support change process
- Putting yourself in someone else's shoes, empathising with the person to compare your life

Reflections from a Service Provider:
Breda O'Neill, Chief Executive with St Margarets Irl- IASD

Speaking about the experience in the Dublin based service, which has successfully supported all the people they support to transition to new homes in the community and closed the congregated service, Breda highlighted:

- The Importance of "Home"
- That engagement with the community is influenced by our values and our networks
- Listened to storytelling and be influenced by that
- When staff could not *come on the journey* that had to be managed
- Building a network of support for staff
- Being surprised by joy
- Supporting people to choose their support staff and build relationships with these staff
- Over time people become *visible* in their community

Videos capturing the story of people that have moved to the community and the views of family members and staff that have been involved can be viewed on the Genio website https://www.genio.ie/videos or the Time to Move on webpage www.hse.ie/timetomoveon

Transforming Lives
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What the research tells us about .....
Approaches that can be taken around community engagement

Approaches to the journey of Discovery

- Staff collaborate to share the journey and enable shared learning at a local level

- Recognising that Discovery is likely to be a trial and error approach: it is a continuous process as people change over time

- Finding new ways to help a person explore or express their interests

- Revisit and rediscover because interests change over time

- Watch out for scepticism from staff, families and people that can hamper and limit progress

- Gather and learn from examples where people grow and exceed expectations

Further reflections from a Service Provider:
Breda O'Neill , Chief Executive with St Margarets Irl- IASD

Key points on the challenges and solutions to enable meaningful community engagement and inclusion

- Change and action requires a top-down and bottom-up approach within an organisation

- Have a consistent approach and find the best ways to support how people can engage

- Focus the support network on each individual

- Friendships from the institution may not endure; people may make other connections with support

- Ensure the person is visible and spoken to in the community i.e. at the GP, in the pharmacy, when out shopping etc. Staff must not do this for them. Incrementally this builds confidence.

- People will grow into "their own space", but watch that routines and practice do not emerge that result in a mini-institution

Managing Challenges and "push-back"

- Be conscious not to saturate the local community and particular groups with over involvement from the services

- Work with local community health services- GP and primary care supports, where there may be concerns over capacity to provide support.

Connecting

- There is no *one size fits all*, it takes a tailor-made approach

- It takes time to build up standing in the community- staff that has lived abroad for many years can understand this as they settle back into new communities

- The importance of:
  - Being a *participant* in activities
  - Having a *role*
  - Being a *consumer* in the community

- Building up external supports as well as internal supports.

- Internal supports- events co-ordinators, tapping into staff knowledge of local communities, interests and skill sets,

- External supports- linking with neighbours, part of local groups

Reflections from a Service Provider:
Paula Doyle Transforming Lives Manager, SJOG, St Mary's Campus

How their approach to community engagement has evolved from lessons learnt over the course of their significant decongregation programme

Rose Cottage opened in 2019

- Managing expectations and managing questions from all stakeholders including the people we support
- Start as early as possible with community work and have a physical presence
- Do your research with community mapping
- Similar to "no town hall" meetings, involvement and engagement needs to be individual
- Importance of familiar and well trained staff particularly when a person has communication challenges
- See the people you support as individuals not as a group : Go to the house on their own, go shopping on their own
- Managing mis-information and the "push back" from communities
- In the community we see a different side to people's personality than we see in the institution

Disability Federation of Ireland:
19 Stories of Social Inclusion – Ireland: Stories of Belonging, Contributing and Connecting

Cathy McGrath from the DFI gave a presentation on the opportunities for service provider organisations in local communities and highlighted their role in this.

- Communities and community services have a role to play that is backed by policy.
- Community engagement is everyone's business and strategic plans needs to recognise the role of the organisations in this.
- The concept of "community" is not new and there are established structures in place that services can engage with.
  Finding that reciprocal arrangement is key, but realise that it is not all on "your shoulders"

- Organisations have an entitled space to engage and influence the structure and programmes delivered in the local community
- Management may need to look at this formalised engagement
- Staff cannot do this themselves, they need the support of organisation
- Consider training and engagement with stakeholders at senior level- ETB, Councils etc
- We know that the people that we support have a lot to contribute to the community
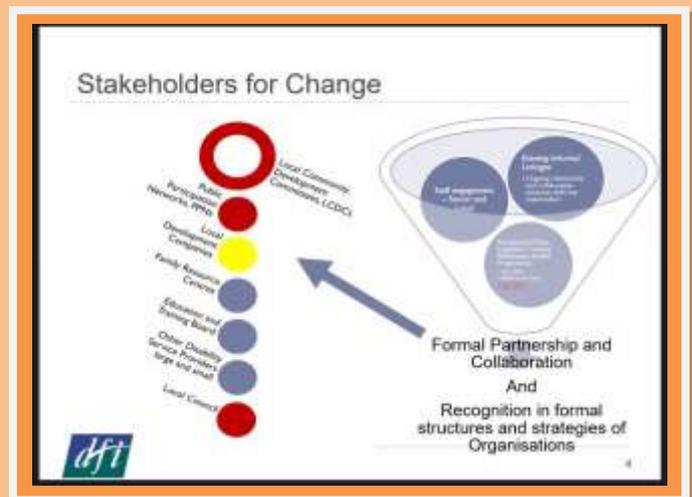
For all the current resources developed by the Time To Move on Team go to our webpage www.hse.ie/timetomoveon or you can email us at timetomoveon@hse.ie

Feedback from participants in the Breakout Rooms

What do you think would assist your service in maximising the engagement?

- Organisations putting on a new lens to assist people to see what is in the community, how to access and engage in the community and fund people to reconnect with their community
- Do intentional work so that when opportunities arise, one person is supported at a time and communities are not over-saturated.
- Work is needed with 3rd level colleges to develop pathways to education, particular for younger people.
- Training on how to navigate the community "third" sector to achieve success in the community for people.
- Matching the right staff to each person is a good starting point.

What in the workshop resonated with you about working towards community engagement?

- Should be actively engaged with a plan for everyone who is still living on campus
- The significance of people having their own doors
- Need to remember the simplicity of what we are trying to do and keep your eye on the objective
- There is always a way around, a solution
- Taking a positive risk approach
- Push the open door – start the movement and if someone wants to take an approach, it is important for the service to support change even if it is just one house.
- When staff are positive it makes engagement easier
- The biggest challenge can be the change from the old norm but with training and willingness staff can embrace the change.
- Giving staff the confidence to know where they were going and what they were doing, to support people – to show up properly.
- Get the relevant contacts in the community – there is no point getting staff from the setting who have no affiliation with an interest, area e.g. get the footballer to make the link to the local club.
- Start small; this is especially important with those who've been in residential settings a long time.
- Be mindful of the background context.
- After people settle into community living, old habits can emerge – watch out for that.

What key messages did you identify from the workshop around community engagement?

- Breaking the societal perceptions and historic misconceptions
- Need to challenge that we are applying the same standards as we would want for ourselves
- If something isn't straight forward, find the way around, which may mean finding people that have the creativity to do that
- Constantly engage, challenge and question : This can be hard to keep going with everything else.
- Promoting and supporting staff to take a solution- based approach to risk vs. traditional attitude
- Roster changes are a massive challenge.
- The over dependence on service staff to source local employment, supports and opportunities for people. It is a challenge for staff to link with other services locally in a way that doesn't borrow work, but allows staff to source meaningful resources and supports.
- Connecting a person into their community effectively can be very dependent on the motivation and knowledge of staff.
- Finances are needed to support the work in navigating and engaging the community
- There can be challenges with families who perceive their family member/ children as safe in the congregated settings.