

The Community-led Health Agenda

The speeches and presentations at CHEX's second National Conference, held in Stirling earlier this year, focussed on the community health agenda for a healthier Scotland. Emma Balfour of Drumchapel Life (see photo, right) and representing the Communities for Health Advisory Group highlighted the Group's Manifesto for the new Government. Conference fully endorsed the Manifesto which highlights the issues that community-led health organisations are key partners at a national level in shaping and delivering programmes that tackle health inequalities at a local level. With the new government now in place, the Group is pressing on with the priorities laid out in the manifesto which can be read in full on page 2.



Emma Balfour, Communities for Health Advisory Group, addresses delegates at the CHEX National Conference 2011

Elsewhere in this issue, we have an overview of the National Conference itself. We also have a fascinating article on Safe Space, a project based in Dunfermline which has been offering a range of support services to survivors of sexual abuse for the last 21 years, as well as an article on community work in Norway, following on from a recent visit to our office by Kirstine Ford, Community Worker with Batteriet, an NGO based in Oslo.

On a personal note, I have to report that this edition of CHEX-Point will be my final issue as Editor. After six years at CHEX, I will be heading off to pastures new at the beginning of July and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to the newsletter during my time at the helm. Your enthusiasm - along with the consistently high quality of submissions - has made my job easier and I hope that inclusion in CHEX-Point helped in some way to raise the profile of your organisations and, of course, highlight the valuable work being carried out by community-led health initiatives across the length and breadth of Scotland. You'll be glad to hear that CHEX-Point will continue in the capable hands of my colleague, Olivia Hanley. In the meantime, we hope you like our new cover design which incorporates the new CHEX logo. Until we meet again somewhere down the road...keep up the great work!

Tom Warrington, Information and Communications Officer, CHEX

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Community-led Health Manifesto: For Communities, By Communities

“We have the answer and it’s affordable!”

Communities for Health Advisory Group is a group of practitioners working in community and voluntary sector health organisations. It became an independently constituted group following the Community Health Exchange conference in 2009 which identified the need to have a representative voice at a national level. It supports the case for a more strategic and central position for community-led approaches to health improvement strategies and in the allocation of resources to community-led health improvement and reducing health inequalities.

The ‘Community-led Health Manifesto’, reproduced below in its entirety, was presented by the Group at this year’s conference where it was fully endorsed by delegates.

For further information on the Communities for Health Advisory Group or the Manifesto, please contact Bobby Sturgeon by e-mailing fchh@dialstart.net.

Latest news: Communities for Health Advisory Group is currently exploring with the Scottish Healthy Living Centre Alliance the merger of membership and activity to create a united strategic voice at the national level. CHEX staff would support a new combined network with information, advice and any capacity building required.

What Community-led health organisations do

At a time when Health Inequalities remain one of Scotland’s biggest challenges ¹ Community-led health initiatives continue to address this issue successfully by supporting positive change in Scotland’s communities by:

1. Being embedded at the heart of our communities.
2. Using a community led approach which delivers health and well being.
3. Tackling inequalities by combating the effects of poverty, both of economic status and consequential poverty of aspiration.
4. Encouraging and increasing social networks and connections.
5. Recognising that individuals themselves are an asset and experts in their own life circumstances.
6. Responding in flexible and adaptable ways to community needs through listening to and acting on community identified priorities.
7. Involving communities in creative and innovative solutions to the challenges they face in their everyday lives.
8. Supporting behaviour change in relation to improving health and well being.
9. Ensuring that those who are traditionally ‘seldom heard’ have a voice.
10. Developing and supporting appropriate services.
11. Engaging in constructive partnership working.
12. Having a willingness to be open to new ideas and working with ‘hard to reach’ groups.
13. By establishing sustainable community organisations e.g. through new social enterprises.

¹Chief Medical Officer’s report Health in Scotland 2009: Time for Change

Our Vision for a Healthier Scotland

The right to influence decision making

- Individuals and communities (particularly those currently most excluded or marginalised) will have the right to have control over the decisions affecting them and their communities of geography and interest or identity to ensure positive health outcomes.

Access to Partnership working

- There will be constructive partnerships for health between community-led health organisations and the Scottish Government, NHS Scotland, Local Authorities and other statutory partners both locally and nationally.

Appropriate resource allocation

- The added value brought by the community-led health sector to health improvement will be appropriately recognised through allocation of resources.

We call on Government to

- Recognise and collaborate with the community-led health sector as a key strategic partner for improving Scotland’s health
- Ensure sustainable investment in the community-led health sector
- Recognise the significance of the preventative work undertaken by community-led health organisations
- Encourage statutory agencies to acknowledge and welcome the contribution that community-led health makes to Scotland’s health improvement, thereby meeting the shared challenge of working towards healthy communities.

Second Edition of Routes to Sustainability now available

The building of social capital and development of community resilience are currently high on the agenda of some national policy-makers (e.g. the Chief Medical Officer in his Annual Report ‘Time for Change’, 2009) and, more than ever, there is an appetite for new models of practice in supporting community-led health approaches to health improvement.

Despite this welcome validation, the current funding environment is creating ever-greater challenges for community-led health organisations to negotiate and secure long term sustainability. Consequently, CHEX has produced a second edition of our ‘Routes to Sustainability’ publication.

The first edition (2007) was a pack which included individual pull-out sections, each of which highlighted a different aspect of the support services and resources, both national and local, which could help community-led health initiatives with securing long term sustainability.

For the second edition, the format has been streamlined and the content has been comprehensively revised to take account of new and essential resources which have appeared in the interim, while retaining material which we believe to still be of relevance. ‘Routes to Sustainability (second edition)’ is available at www.chex.org.uk.

In order for us to ensure that the information within ‘Routes to Sustainability’ remains relevant and up-to-date, we would welcome your assistance in identifying any additional information that you may have found to be useful and which you think would be of help to others. Please contact Olivia Hanley, SCDC Information & Communications Officer by e-mailing olivia@scdc.org.uk.

We hope that the publication will continue to be an invaluable resource, particularly in these challenging times.

'CHEX Points to...New Challenges, New Responses' Report from the CHEX National Conference



John Cassidy updates delegates on the progress of the Scottish Healthy Living Centre Alliance

of the Scottish Healthy Living Centre Alliance.

Emma and John talked about the role and engagement of community-led health initiatives at a national level and helped delegates to think about their influence and potential engagement in the national policy arena. Emma also invited delegates to endorse the 'Communities for Health Advisory Group' draft Manifesto for community-led health.

We were very pleased that again the keynote speech was given by Shona Robison MSP, then Minister for Public Health and Sport. In revisiting her speech at the previous conference, she fully endorsed the work of community-led organisations and highlighted the need for their approaches in health improvement and tackling health inequalities.

With cut-backs and stringent budgets beginning to severely bite, she underlined the need to support communities to become more involved in their health outcomes and reinforced the role of CHEX together with other initiatives (e.g. Asset Alliance) in this movement.

Another highlight of the day was the lively 'CHEX Chat' panel discussion hosted by broadcaster Lesley Riddoch who provoked both panel members and delegates alike to articulate their new responses to both old and new challenges.

Lesley was keen to get under the skin of current language and particularly pushed for clarity on the significance and benefits from asset-based work.

A full report of the conference is available on the CHEX website at www.chex.org.uk. For more information on the conference, contact Olivia Hanley at olivia@scdc.org.uk.

CHEX welcomed approximately 100 delegates to its national conference in Stirling on Monday 28 February 2011. After the original date in December 2010 was postponed due to bad weather, we were extremely pleased that the majority of delegates and presenters were able to reschedule and maintain their commitment.

The conference, 'CHEX Points to New Challenges, New Responses' was an informative, interactive, and stimulating event which brought to the forefront the key challenges facing community-led health organisations working to tackle health inequalities and turned the spotlight on the creative contribution that communities themselves are making with proven methods and new approaches.

Stewart Murdoch, Director of Dundee City Council and Chair of CHEX's parent organisation SCDC, chaired the event and welcomed contributions from Gerald McLaughlin, Chief Executive, NHS Health Scotland, Emma Balfour, Communities for Health Advisory Group and John Cassidy, Volunteer Director

Safe Space - Inspirational Community

Safe Space has been established within the community of Dunfermline for 21 years and offers a range of support services to survivors of sexual abuse (male & female aged 12+). With 8 members of staff and 35 volunteers, Safe Space has proved adaptable, innovative and forward thinking in overcoming difficulties at all stages of development and was awarded the title of 'Inspirational Organisation' from Fife's Voluntary Sector Awards 2010 and was also nominated for the Volunteer Team Award. Safe Space has also gained COSCA Recognition as a Counselling and Counselling Skills Organisation.

These are great accolades to the dedication of volunteers and staff that remain committed and enthusiastic in this particularly difficult area of practice. Safe Space Manager Pauline McGhee tells us more...

Safe Space began when a group of survivors, recognising lack of local dedicated services, began supporting others on a voluntary basis. Some local volunteers have worked with Safe Space for over 15 years, shaping and developing the service and have great understanding of local needs and community safety issues.

A comprehensive group work programme, devised in consultation with service users, is adapted to needs for social interaction, working through traumatic issues, skills based groups and creative and fun themed groups. Groups provide secondary impact through benefits to families, access to employment and engagement with all aspects of the community.

Safe Space works in partnership with other agencies in identifying local needs and seeking solutions. One Safe Space counsellor is deployed to work as part of NHS All Round Care multi-disciplinary team in local health centres, proving crucial to survivors requiring direct access to services in outlying areas of Fife.

Learning from survivors has been important to informing practice and strategic development, locally and nationally. Safe Space now delivers its own 'Pandora's Box' training informed by current research and widening the pool of support available to survivors across agencies and is currently engaged in collaborative research with Edinburgh University looking at attachment issues for survivors as parents.

Continual engagement with all aspects of the local community has had huge benefits in raising awareness of the prevalence of sexual abuse and its affect on victims, keeping children safe, and highlighting support services. Working closely with local media ensures that the facts about sexual abuse are presented and survivors are not ashamed or fearful in seeking support.



Pauline McGhee, Manager and Iain Banks, author and Safe Space Patron at the Safe Space writing group

Fife author Iain Banks is now Safe Space Patron ensuring that a high media profile will be maintained. In a recent interview with Dunfermline Press, Iain said he was delighted to have been asked on board as Patron and would call for wider support of the service. Mr Banks said "In the end, it's people's lives and dignity we're talking about and the lives of their children. So it's very important that somewhere like this is supported".

Enabling survivors find a voice for their experience is important to everyone at Safe Space with creative outlets offered at every opportunity. With assistance from Fife adult basic education service, an anthology of writing, 'The Hope of Diamonds', is being published with a foreword provided by Iain Banks.

An art exhibition, 'Small Pieces of a Bigger Picture', containing hundreds of messages and art work on postcards was compiled from contributions from all over Scotland and displayed in Edinburgh, most recently at The Scottish Parliament.

Working with the complex issue of sexual abuse will always prove difficult but, through consistent awareness raising, high visibility, creativity and strong working partnerships, the problems can be tackled positively across services and within local communities.

To contact Safe Space, please phone 01383 739084 or, for further information, access the website www.safe-space.co.uk.



Masks being displayed at young people's Feel Good Factor event

Community-led Health Organisations: Removing Barriers to Wellbeing

New CHEX publication profiles the activity and impact of community-led health organisations

CHEX is delighted to publish 'Community-led Health Organisations: Removing Barriers to Wellbeing', the second edition of our 'Breaking Through' series of articles. While the first series highlighted the work of Healthy Living Centres, the second profiles the activity and impact of other community-led health organisations in Scotland. It also builds on lessons from Healthy Communities: Meeting the Shared Challenge programme disseminated in 2010 which drew on a range of case studies, including those from public sector agencies.

This edition complements these with illustrations of work and demonstration of impact from six organisations in the community and voluntary sector focusing on different themes and highlighting the variety of approaches from rural, town and urban communities.

The six organisations featured are Humjolie in North Lanarkshire, Kingsway Court Health and Wellbeing Centre in west Glasgow, Lifelink in Glasgow, Ormlie Community Association in Thurso, Wester Hailes Health Agency in Edinburgh and Yipworld.com in East Ayrshire. These organisations aim to remain at the forefront of working with communities. Despite significant cutbacks in funding, they strive to break down barriers in engaging with people, respond to local needs, reinforce connectivity within communities and link their evidence into national and local strategic priorities. All aspects of health are addressed – psychological, physical, emotional, and environmental – and woven into outcomes and activities.

These articles are designed to inspire and enthuse, but can also be used to highlight the added value of community-led health approaches and to strengthen the evidence base of community-led health work. They illustrate diverse approaches and activities for responding to community identified need and differing community characteristics, and ensuring the fullest community involvement in all aspects of their work.

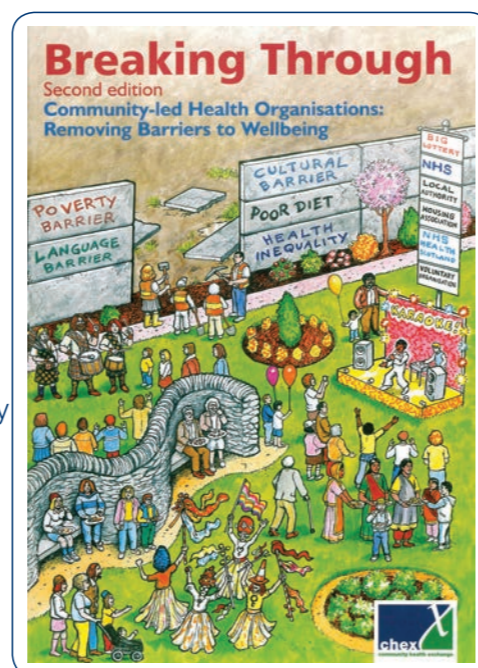
'Community-led Health Organisations: Removing Barriers to Wellbeing', along with the first edition, is available to download from www.chex.org.uk.

Humjolie is a group of South Asian women in Lanarkshire working together to tackle the many health related challenges and inequalities that blight the lives of Asian women in their area. Members of the group said:

"Taking part in the production of 'Breaking Through' was a great learning experience. Sometimes when you are busy planning events or applying for funding, you don't get a chance to see and realise the amount of good work you have done. This gave the group an opportunity to look at the body of work they have delivered since its inception.

The article will indeed help in raising the profile of the group. Humjolie will also use this article when applying for funding as this would indeed help the group in securing funding."

For more on Humjolie, contact Anila Ansari, NHS Lanarkshire by e-mailing humjolie@yahoo.co.uk



Ormlie Community Association is committed to a participatory, community-led approach to creating a healthy community, both by creating a healthier environment and by improving the wellbeing and confidence of local people. When asked about the Association's involvement in 'Breaking Through', Company Manager Sheenagh Christie said:

"When CHEX approached our association about participating in the production of 'Breaking Through', we could not have been more delighted. Over the years, Ormlie Community Association have worked tirelessly to make Ormlie a healthier, happier and more pleasurable place to live. With the support of CHEX, we now have our chance to crow about our achievements and see them in print. Introducing a pioneering Home Zone project was the onset of a long and fruitful development of a dull housing estate. And the work continues on today.

CHEX has given us the opportunity to showcase all our projects, to prove the good they are doing in the community and how they are perceived by the residents of the community. This has been invaluable to us from a funding perspective. All funders need to know that what we do makes a difference, and thanks to CHEX we have it in black and white – or, indeed, glorious technicolour.

Being published in 'Breaking Through' has made our life easier persuading funders to support our causes. Using the publication as a supporting document along with our funding applications has proven to be extremely helpful, and many have commented on the professional and interesting way it was presented."

For more information, visit <http://www.ormlie.org> or e-mail info@ormlie.org

'The Picture of Health: a community-led health film'

The Picture of Health highlights the impact of community-led health on four communities - Aberdeenshire, Edinburgh, Argyll and Bute and Scottish Borders. It brings to life the health impact that community-led health organisations have on individuals and the wider community.

The film tells us about the health benefits of intergenerational work in the Mearns and Coastal Healthy Living Initiative; the organisation of community participation for health activity in Eyemouth; how the Men's Health Group in Leith has transcended cultures and enhanced mental health and well being; how young people have used the Argyll and Bute Healthy Living Initiative as a stepping stone to training and articulating their particular needs and how the Healthy Living Initiative has developed a social enterprise trading arm.

The film also features CHEX staff who talk about their community development approaches to supporting community-led health organisations and their public sector partners in developing and sharing good practice to build the evidence base.

We hope you find the film valuable in working with communities on health improvement and in particular the building of asset based and co-production work between public sector providers and community members.

Clips from the film are available on our website www.chex.org.uk which links to our YouTube channel. The film is available with or without subtitles. We also have a small number of hard copies available. Please contact us if you think this would be useful for your organisation.

CHEX Seminar: The Picture of Health

This seminar held on 31 May 2011 looked at using film to evidence community-led health activity. Based on the experience of the CHEX film 'The Picture of Health', the seminar invited 2 of the projects who took part - Bute HLC and Pilmey - to share their experience with participants using story dialogue. Susan Paxton of SCDC provided an input on choosing the right method to evidence outcomes, and Tomas Sheridan of Green Banana Productions (who created the CHEX film) gave a very practical input from the film-makers' perspective.

Evaluation from the day was excellent and there was a real enthusiasm around the discussions which took place and a lot of interest in using film, not to mention willing participants in a fun Hollywood-themed icebreaker! A report is now available on the CHEX website.

Working with communities in Norway

Kirstine Ford, Community Worker with Batteriet, an NGO based in Oslo recently visited the Scottish Community Development Centre to find out about community development in Scotland and exchange ideas on approaches in working with communities in our respective countries.

While Kirstine was interested to find out about what is happening in Scotland, CHEX and our SCDC colleagues were equally as interested to learn about community work in Norway. Our information exchange led to discussions on strategies and approaches adopted by our respective countries. In this article, we feature Norway's priorities in working with communities.

Norway has a high standard of living in comparison with other European countries; Norwegians enjoy the second highest GDP per-capita (after Luxembourg) and ranks as the second wealthiest country in the world in monetary value, with the largest capital reserve per capita of any nation.

However, this by no means cocoons it from impoverished and marginalised communities. Significantly, it illuminates the inequalities within and between certain communities even more. Communities most affected are immigrants, single parents, single men, and long term unemployed.

Immigration to Norway has increased rapidly in recent years, with net immigration tripling in only three years. Net immigration currently makes up more than half of the population growth. In and around the cities such as Oslo and Drammen, many different nationalities - in particular, Polish, Swedish, Pakistani, Irqui and Somali (Ref: Immigration to Norway 2010) - have migrated to settle.

Despite policies underpinned by restrictive admissions and equal treatment for migrants, Norway faces significant challenges with provision

of employment, housing, and access to services and participation in civic life.

Norway does not have a community development sector as such, but does have national organisations working with marginalised communities and local agencies supporting community involvement in educational and environmental projects. A new law requires that all governmental bodies include 'user participation' in shaping implementing national policies.

The Batteriet is a resource centre for grassroots organisations working against poverty and social exclusion. Examples of their work include a development group for women leaders, courses and training in organising and organisations, conflict resolution, guidance and advising.

Batteriet also serves as the secretariat for the Collaborative Forum Against Poverty, made up of representatives from grassroots organisations which meet 3-4 times a year with the Minister of Labour.

Organisations in Norway face some key issues when organizing. One is acquiring the skills needed to transform their experiences and knowledge from the grassroots into a strategy for influencing politics. Another key issue is that there are many small organisations which stand alone. They would have a stronger voice if they worked together.

Batteriet creates opportunities for networking via both small local events, such as monthly brunches with a guest speaker, and a national twice-yearly conference 'Power and Possibilities'.

Visit Batteriet's website www.batteriet.no and, for further information on Kristine's visit with SCDC, contact Janet Muir, CHEX Manager by e-mailing Janet@scdc.org.uk.



Views expressed in CHEX-POINT are not necessarily those of CHEX, unless specifically stated.

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