

Voluntary and Community Sector Staff Conversations

Mental Health and Substance Use: Improving
Our Response

JULY 2023

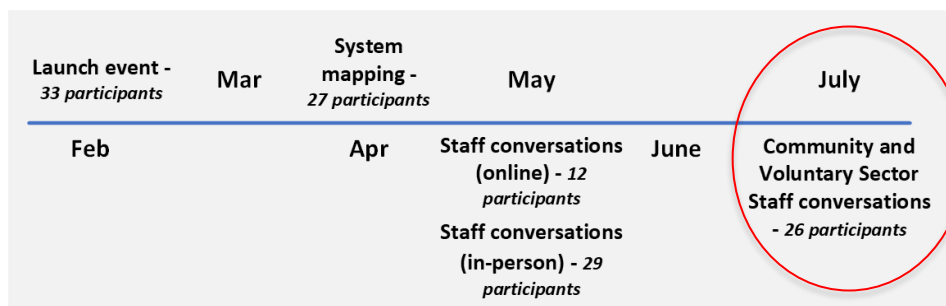
Introduction

The aim of the mental health and substance use work within Inverclyde is to improve interfaces across services for people with mental health and substance use support needs, as a way to improve the quality of care and health outcomes for people with both mental health and substance use support needs. This will include pathways between specialist services, as well as coordination to support complex needs.

This Third Sector Conversation event gave staff working in third sector organisations an opportunity to come together to hear about the activity planned for the programme and offer a space to discuss some of the potential challenges and opportunities. With a focus on:

- Experiences in supporting people with mental health and substance use needs
- Understanding how statutory and non-statutory services work together
- Identifying challenges and opportunities in joint / collaborative working.

The purpose of this report is to highlight the key themes from the event (*circled below*) to enable a fuller understanding of the mental health and substance use system within Inverclyde.



Timeline of engagement activity so far

Key Themes

Trust and
Relationship-
Building

Collaboration
and Referrals

Recovery-
Oriented
System

Expertise and
Limitations

Your experiences supporting people

We asked participants to discuss their experiences in providing support to individuals with mental health and substance use needs. They shared insights into the types of support their organisations offer, including addiction rehabilitation, mental health counselling, and support for justice-involved individuals. Participants also discussed their approach when individuals presented needs outside their expertise and the significance of collaboration with other service providers.

Key themes that emerged from this discussion are:

Trust and Relationship-Building: Building trust and **maintaining strong relationships** with individuals seeking support is crucial in the third sector. The **frequency of contact** and offer of person-centred care creates a level of trust that encourages people to engage with services. Service providers recognised the significance of regular and consistent contact, which nurtures trust and enables a **deeper understanding** of each person's unique needs.

“Most people come back when they disengage with us because of the relationship we have built”

Collaboration and Referrals: Participants emphasised the significance of collaboration and referrals between third sector organisations and statutory services. The importance of working together to ensure a **holistic approach to support** was highlighted, referring individuals to specialised services when needed. It was noted that organisations face challenges related to co-occurring needs as **substance use can act as a barrier to accessing mental health support**. Instead of receiving the needed support, individuals are often advised to seek a referral to Wellpark or the GP. This creates **difficulties in accessing support during times of crisis**.

“We’re just told to refer them to Wellpark because that’s who deals with addictions”

Recovery Oriented System: Participants expressed the need for services to work together to **close gaps in support**, build a supportive community, and shift the focus from ‘ticking boxes’ to providing personalised and **comprehensive care**. This highlights the importance of a recovery-oriented system of care that focuses on supporting individuals on their **journey to recovery and well-being**.

“Recovery starts where people are”

Expertise and Limitations: Each organisation in the third sector has its area of expertise in providing support for mental health and substance use, while also recognising their limitations in supporting individuals with complex needs. When individuals presented issues outside their expertise, participants emphasised the **importance of referring** them to specialised services or services better equipped to handle those specific need, ensuring individuals receive the most relevant and effective support available.

“Even if we don't know the best people to support someone, we'll know a person who does!”

What does 'good' look like across third sector and statutory services

Participants were encouraged to share examples of successful collaborations with statutory services, highlighting key elements that contributed to their effectiveness, such as good communication around referrals.

Key elements of good working relationships

Good Communication



Where effective, this involves clear lines of communication where service user **information can be shared securely and promptly.**

Example

Jericho House have good experiences with the Prison to Rehabilitation program - building positive relationships with the criminal justice system.

This effective communication ensured seamless support for individuals transitioning from prison to rehabilitation, informing services about users' needs, goals, and progress and enabled a coordinated and holistic approach to support.

Trust and Understanding



Developing trust and mutual understanding between providers enables **effective collaboration**. This includes **recognising and respecting the expertise and roles** of staff and organisations.

Example

A strong partnership between the third-sector organisations and the Rapid Rehousing Team.

Built on **mutual trust and shared expertise**, enhancing support. This collaboration helps **breaks down the "us vs. them" mentality**, leading to more joint working for the benefit of the individuals they support.

What does 'good' look like across third sector and statutory services

Key elements of good working relationships

Flexible and Person-centred



Services should be responsive to the specific circumstances of the person and adapt support to individual need.

This might involve offering a **range of support options** or collaborating to **create personalised care plans** that reflect the individual's goals, strengths and challenges.

Examples

Participants mentioned that certain GPs demonstrated a supportive approach by actively engaging with third-sector support workers either before or after speaking with patients.

These GPs seek to take into account the input and insights of third-sector workers who have a deeper understanding of individuals' needs.

Inverclyde Life was highlighted as a useful online directory.

This directory services allows staff and service users to find available services and community groups. Users can create a personal directory of services specific to an individual's needs and preferences.

The Rapid Rehousing Team was praised for its support in tenancy, conducting drop-ins every fortnight.

Advocacy



Services can advocate for service users' needs and preferences. This might involve **supporting individuals wishes** (e.g. to reduce medication dosages, if appropriate), as well as facilitation **self-referrals**).

Example

People experiencing crisis

Third-sector organisations play a vital role in advocating for individual's needs. They ensure that individuals are able to seek **prompt support** and **appropriate care**, offering a sense of purpose and helping them navigate through challenges whilst in crisis.

How do you work with statutory services

Statutory services you work with	How you work with them	How you communicate with them	Where the relationship could be improved
Police Scotland	• Support during Challenging Behavior Warrants • Incident Reporting • Drop in • Emergencies	• Phone • Face to face	• Better relationship with community police • More engagement out with hub
Housing Support	• Tenacity issues / support • Support with applications to housing • Referrals – liaising with housing support on behalf of service users	• Phone • Email • Reviews • Comes into service	• More communication • Direct contact / referral • Further involvement before returning home
Social Work Teams	• Referrals • Advice seeking (safeguarding) • Closely update progress	• Emails • Phone • Reviews	• A named contact – more familiarity for staff and service users • Open communication • Appropriate referrals • Communication afterwards at reviews
Criminal Justice	• Referrals • Drop ins at recovery hub • Outreach to prisons	• Reports • Emails • Phone • Face to face • Partnerships agreements	• Better links with staff • Referrals into recovery community • Joint working approach • Signposting support • Liaison worker designated
Addictions Teams	• Referrals – to and from service	• Email • Phone • Reviews	• More updates, especially if there has been a change • More involved • Better visibility
Mental Health Teams	• Referrals – to and from service	• Phone • Email	• More updates on care management • Allocation meetings • Team visits • More services to refer in



Thank you to all those who participated in these conversations.

The insights developed through these discussions are being used to develop and shape the workstreams that will see the testing of new ways of working in Inverclyde.

Finding a focus

With thanks to all those involved, there is a clear idea of the broad areas where improvements can be made. The next steps will be to identify a practical focus that allows for meaningful change, in a way that can support ongoing improvement as a test of change/proof of concept.

Staying involved

Keep an eye out for emails and invites regarding future opportunities to be involved in this work. There will be further activities regarding co-designing change projects and supporting with evaluation.

Thank you

Thank you once again to everyone who contributed. We are looking forward to continuing these conversations.

These conversations were part of a wider programme of engagement in Inverclyde that also included:

- Programme launch event
- System mapping workshops
- Conversations with staff in statutory services

For further information, please get in touch.



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