



Connected Recovery Action Plan  
Meeting Notes  
Thursday 30 July 2020, 9.30 am  
Online via Zoom

**Attendees:** ABC Council – Lissa O’Malley, Alison Beattie, Gillian Topping, Gillian Dewart, Jill McEanrney, Sarah-Jane MacDonald, Michelle Markey, Jennie Dunlop, PSNI – Aine, Campbell, Pamela McElhinney, Volunteer Now – Jane Gribben, Banbridge Twinning Association – Gilbert Lee, P200 – Geraldine Lawless, SRC – Catriona Regan, Department for Communities – Simon Sloan, Southern Health & Social Care Trust – Lynne Smart, Sport NI – Angharad Bunt, Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service – Dermot Rooney, Northern Ireland Housing Executive – Johnny Blease, Business Partnership Alliance – Derek Browne, Adrian Farrell, Michael Donaghy, Libraries NI – Evelyn Hanna, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools – Majella Corrigan, Tourism NI – Martin Graham, Public Health Agency – Danny Sinclair, Colette Rogers

**Apologies:** Department of Infrastructure – Sid Stevenson, Education Authority – Averil Morrow, Health & Social Care Board – Sophie Lusby, ABC Council – Elaine Gillespie, Sara McGeary, Brian Johnston, Jonathan Hayes, Therese Rafferty, Seamus McCrory, Riann Coulter, Nicola Wilson, Libraries NI – Adrienne Adair, Invest NI – Ethna McNamee, SRC – Fiona Bradley Department for Communities – Nichola Creagh, Southern Health & Social Care Trust – Gerard Rocks, Northern Ireland Housing Executive – Ailbhe Hickey, PSNI – Barbara McNally

## 1. Welcome

Jennie welcomed everyone to the first Connected Recovery Planning Meeting and covered the following points:

- The CPSP has recognised the impact of Covid and the change it has brought and has asked us to bring you together to think about what needs to be done in the short-term to support communities and businesses as we start recovery from COVID
- Jennie acknowledged the **partnership working** and **community spirit** in very difficult circumstances throughout the response which gives the partnership a lot to build on for recovery. She thanked everyone for attending.
- Jennie gave an overview of the process – development of a **12 month recovery plan** over three meetings. The group includes representatives from the six thematic action planning teams along with CVS Panel and BPA to develop one 12 month recovery plan. The plan will replace the six thematic action plans for the next 12 months.
- The recovery plan will include actions from the existing action plans, some of which were implemented in the immediate response to covid, and there may be new actions that are being planned in response to emerging needs.
- Intended outcomes of the meeting today are to connect with each other, share evidence and learning, identify the big issues for action over next 12 months.

- Jennie explained that Eleanor Gill would facilitate the three recovery planning meetings and that Anna Clark from Prospect Awards was in attendance to observe the meeting as she will be working with the panel to hold some focus groups to inform the recovery plan.
- The task then is to develop a 12 month recovery plan informed by evidence and partners' experience which will go to CPSP in September via the Better Outcomes sub-committee. Adrienne Adair from Libraries chairs the subcommittee will join us at next meeting and throughout process.
- Jennie also informed the meeting that it was being recorded for note taking purposes only.



Jennie advised that Roger Wilson, Chair of Community Planning Strategic Partnership meeting couldn't make it to the meeting and recorded a short video which can be viewed by clicking the link below: <https://vimeo.com/442198718/31501fef3b>

## 2. Reflecting on partnership working and community spirit during lockdown and what we've learned

Gillian Topping, Head of Environmental Health, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough opened the next agenda which looks at evidence and hear from the experiences of others. Gillian explained that many organisations are now in a period of recovery and reflection, looking at what worked well? how do we continue to sustain what we need to do and where we look at the difficult decisions to agree what we need to set aside to focus on priorities.

Aileen Gordan, Statistician, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council went through the Covid Impact Presentation elaborating on the following points:

1. Impact of covid-19: The virus
2. Impact of Covid-19: Business Survival and Job Losses
3. Impact of Covid-19: Mental Health and Wellbeing
4. Impact of Covid-19: Social Isolation and Loneliness

## 5. Impact of Covid-19: Hardship and Poverty

## 6. Strengths and Opportunities

A full copy of the presentation will be shared with group members following the meeting.

**Geraldine Lawless, Acting Chair of ABC Community and Voluntary Sector Panel** shared some of the experiences and challenges facing communities within the borough in the initial response to covid.

- Assisted the delivery of 1400 food parcels across the ABC Borough from April until mid-July, still delivering food parcels to vulnerable people.
- Came in contact with people facing lots of issues including: Isolation, depression and families.
- Signposted people to many organisations including PSNI, Links, Action Mental Health, food banks.
- Moving forward need a strategic plan – duplication and issues around some families not receiving help needed. Partnership working has been fantastic with business, council etc

**Adrian Farrell, Chair of the Business Partnership Alliance** shared the experiences facing businesses within our Borough during this time.

- BPA Strapline – Better Business Together came out very much to the fore
- Sharing experiences and pool of knowledge to guide business through covid.
- Initial work was supporting business to Furlough
- Disparity around rate holiday between NI and UK – BPA lobbied a rates package
- Managed and best prepared local businesses for lockdown
- Webinars developed in partnership with Council
- Business Survey with Council support - with a high response rate
- Shop local campaign– Boost our Borough Campaign ongoing
- Loyalty discount scheme
- Highlight and promote Town Centres
- Clean and tidy streets and civic pride for areas

**Jonny Blease, Regional Manager** shared the NIHE experience of Covid 19

- Changes to how services were delivered
- Services all about people – not able to do face to face – challenges
- Emergency mode – maintenance emergency service, housing need and homelessness
- Found difficult to source accommodation as people were not moving house during lockdown
- Partnership working was important due to complexities of some issues
- Rise in Antisocial behaviour
- Existing networks were vital to the response

### 3. Agreeing issues to aid recovery: development of 12 month recovery plan

Eleanor presented 4 post-COVID issues that have emerged from research and feedback to date:

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Business survival and employment

- Financial hardship and poverty
- Isolation and loneliness

**In breakout sessions members discussed the following questions:**

1. During lockdown, what things went well, and where could we do better together?
2. Do you agree these are the main issues to look at in the Connected Recovery Action Planning? Any gaps?

**Group one feedback**

**Challenges**

- Council Arts department focus on recovery in the arts sector
- CCMS - challenging times for schools. Accommodating key workers' children. Date for reopening and how to reopen. Impact on children especially on mental health and loss of capacity to interact with others and socialise
- ABC Regeneration - challenge of reopening town centres. Maintaining business programmes and providing support. Supporting the agricultural sector especially around mental health and isolation.
- Sport NI how to restart sports participation and supporting clubs to adapt
- Sports clubs stepped up and got involved in their community, created new links and partnerships.
- Creative sector did a lot of new things digitally
- Covid accelerated change and schools and community adapted well to the new situation. Schools have embraced tech but not all able to access
- Bureaucracy was reduced because so much had to be done but risk aversion is creeping back. Need can do attitude
- Communications are really important

**Priorities**

- Need to add physical to mental health
- Focus on business opportunity not just survival

**Group two feedback**

- Agreement across the four issues identified
- Noted that the connections of community groups was not universal– depends on the social deprivation an area facing – affluent areas didn't have access to groups
- CVS massive in its response
- Gaps in elderly and rural settings – not relying on relatives for support for response
- Lack of IT a challenge going forward – new ways of working will require people to connect digitally
- Befriending
- Northern Trust – identifying those
- Lots of challenges felt in business survival – delay in provision of welfare for those newly unemployed
- One of the good thing is that everyone coming up with them focus and will help streamline what partnerships are looking at across the region

**What could have gone better?**

- There was some duplication of effort and some in need that were not identified until very late in the process. There were those who were not capable of accessing the

online hub and this needs to be kept in mind in the future. There were some people that received support that were clearly not in need, perhaps Social Workers should take the lead in terms of identifying who needs support. There needed to be someone in the lead overall to clarify who was doing what and ensure efficiency in effort. We need to agree these things now and plan for a second wave.

- It would be good to have a comprehensive pack to give out covering all available support.
- There was a loss of human contact with those that we provide services to, this is only just returning.
- For those on the front line delivering parcels it would be good to have someone to report back to on practical issue about services needed (or not needed) and for mental health support (secondary trauma).

#### **Priorities**

- One area to add to the 4 identified was the issues associated with unemployment – advice, support and reskilling. It was identified that this is going to have a bigger impact on young people as they work in the tourism and hospitality sectors.
- Have we engaged with young people.

#### **Group four Feedback**

- Partnerships across the sectors worked really well and staff willing to be adaptable – rose to the challenge
- The challenge though is how we maintain and continue as a sector to respond as well as how we keep the knowledge base up to date.
- A lot based on relationships that were developed before – need to continue to find ways of helping each other.
- Challenge – how to we replicate and meet the needs that Geraldine outlined at the beginning of the meeting.
- The PSNI noted that the volunteer bureau was a great resource in providing support to those in need
- Flexibility and agility are needed to be able to respond again however need to know about those who were missed this time for whatever reason.
- Council support for business was really welcome and it was noted that the guidance from Westminster was really unclear and that from Stormont was better but slow in coming out.
- It was noted that a Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing campaign was being planned with a focus on suicide. Running from September through to World Mental Health Day in October.
- Also webinars for schools and teachers to support the re-engagement of pupils.
- Important to know the fundamentals and where to signpost to.
- Noted that it was important not to lose sight of other health issues – many general health inequalities.

## **4. Next steps and timeline**

Jennie outlined the next steps for the Connected Recovery Plan Group:

- Action template for partners to return to Community Planning Team by 11<sup>th</sup> August
- CVS Panel Consultation with members
- Meeting 2 – Friday 21<sup>st</sup> August 10 am to 11.30 am

## Appendix one

### Copy of Zoom Chat during Connected Recovery Workshop 1 30 July 2020

- Aileen - that was an excellent overview - thank you
- Super overview
- Excellent and impacts highlight need for ongoing action across partners
- Great to have an overview and to see the volunteering effort being recognised
- Lynne, thank you for the offer of webinar on mental health this would be much received for our businesses, I am also taking the lead on Agricultural piece of work, this webinar could be cross referenced. Would like to catch up after also. I am representing the Regeneration Dept, ABC.

### Following Break out Sessions

- Thanks to everyone in my group - we just didn't have long enough
- Danny Sinclair, PHA- Zoom gets rid of that problem of trying to get breakout groups back to the main plenary!!
- Thanks everyone
- Colette Rogers, PHA - Hi all - suggest we use zoom more frequently as a group to move our recovery plan forward - much easier to make time in day for zoom than travelling to meetings. More meetings; shorter duration and very focussed?
- Danny Sinclair, Public Health Agency: 1A. System relationships, structures, flexibility, agility, 'can you help', communication between council and businesses, NI Exec have listened well to businesses. 1B, Maximise our use of these structures and opportunities again, Ensure we reach people who REALLY need us, who we may have missed before, target better. Qu 2. Personal reflection - yes agree to the 4 themes - the data presented today backs these up - group keen to ensure wider health than just mental health, "we need to ensure we enter the autumn/winter period (or indeed next phase of our new normal) in the best health and wellbeing that we can" - this, I think, is a good mindset to promote - credit to Gillian for this!
- Angharad Bunt Sport NI : We all may have to live with Covid and the effects for a long time - building capability and resilience will be key for being able to deal with the expected and unexpected in the future. I wonder whether our plan should be more than just looking at 'recovery' from the initial lockdown?
- Gillian Topping ABC Council : Would be keen for CP to explore expansion of telephone call schemes to Older/ vulnerable people - how do we find the persons that would benefit from it
- Danny Sinclair, Public Health Agency: Angharad - talk of 'building back better' perhaps this picks up what you mean and would work to account for recovering as well as strengthening for future
- Angharad Bunt Sport NI : ... and also that they are the right people to receive calls...
- Angharad Bunt Sport NI : Danny - agreed
- Eleanor Gill : suggested actions - keep sharing thoughts on these

- Danny : Catriona - talk of packs - can we pick up on this - I have Drugs & Alcohol providers wanting to get packs out, but having distribution headaches - perhaps this could connect?
- lynne.smart SHSCT : likewise let us know as we have information too for packs
- SarahJane.Macdonald : Apologies I need to join another meeting. Great to see you all this morning and I look forward to building on this and continuing our partnership working. Best wishes
- Gillian.Dewart ABC Council : I didn't get a chance to share my views in our group but in terms of Sports Development what went well was that we had to quickly go from face to face delivery to digital delivery and this was a challenge but something that we rose to and engaged lots of people, some of whom didn't exercise before. Sport NI were very helpful with this. Reaching out to those who aren't digitally minded was a challenge and something we could do better. Absolutely agree with Mental Health and Well Being as a key area and obviously physical activity is an excellent tool to address this. Particularly with the increase in physical activity during COVID there is a real opportunity to build on this and launching the Get Moving ABC Framework and implementing it for the benefit of the ABC community.
- Anna Clarke Prospect Awards CIC : the #BuildBackBetter campaign/movement is wide ranging and very much picks up on a lot of these issues and also community resilience and building community wealth that helps local economy and provision of services
- Danny : Adrian - also - we want to target Drug & Alcohol messaging in suitable time with business developments (as in negative developments) that will likely lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms - reduction in government support for businesses/self employed, business closures etc
- Angharad Bunt Sport NI : Gillian D - agreed - opportunity to revisit Get Moving to take account of new landscape.
- GERALDINE LAWLESS : Agree Angharad
- Colette Rogers, PHA : Health (all orgs) currently planning for 2nd wave preparation as it will be challenging if we have coronavirus and winter colds/ flus etc and demands on services will be high. Good to use current interim phase to plan well together
- Danny : Reminding all here that there are supports for people on PHA website - acknowledging that folks will have taken on roles and exposure to new situations - go to our covid page, there is a section for councils and community responses - eg stress
- Martin Graham Tourism NI : Overall - key benefits that Tourism NI has experined in a sector that has been severely impacted by Covid : -
- Danny : Can this chat be captured and circulated?
- Angharad Bunt Sport NI : Sport NI plug...Sports Hardship Fund closes for new applicants next Wed at 12 noon. £2k awards provides relief for clubs and organisations who own or lease their facilities
- Majella Corrigan - CCMS : Agreed that clear communications and agreed messages across the system would be really helpful and how we ensure messages get to those who need to be made aware
- Colette Rogers, PHA : I have a suggestion for partnership re Covid and co-ordinated responses to help to mitigate impacts of any potential lockdown situation at town / village level - can I add?
- Danny : PHA small grants close soon, they include grants for not-constituted groups which is key at this time for those who have risen up during the crisis
- Martin Graham Tourism NI : sorry, to continue - positives - formation of NI cross dept and agency recovery steering and working groups - monthly meetings with council officers -

circulating of info on support schemes, webinars, toolkits etc - support for national recovery tourism marketing campaign and safe re-opening guidelines for staff and customers

- Alison.Beattie ABC Council : Council has also been liaising closely with the Advice Sector and via the helpline to provide support for individuals and businesses, keen to promote this service and ensure effectively targeted. Welcome the partnership approach and potential for building on the opportunities presented for enhanced collaboration.
- Jill.McEaney ABC Council : People were able to engage with arts and cultural activity on line in a way that they hadn't done before. Real help in terms of mental health, loneliness, connectivity. This needs to continue going forward. Need to consider different ways of working to continue this engagement
- Angharad Bunt Sport NI : Disability Sport NI and RNIB launch new 6 week programme 'ConneXercise' tomorrow at 11.30am on youtube specifically targeting people with sight loss - but suitable for all.
- GERALDINE LAWLESS : We discussed previously a need for insight from young people It would be a benefit to have some schools involved?
- Eleanor Gill : how are you all leaving this first meeting?
- Eleanor Gill : I feel energised
- Lissa OMalley ABC Council : it is important to commend all businesses and organisations that supported colleagues working and home and those colleagues who quickly adapted. When workes are n the office - they spend £ in our town centres and bring back some of that vitality. So - how do we provide a safe message to encourage a percentage of the working week at the businesses/office environment, and benefit the town centres.
- GERALDINE LAWLESS : Thanks Eleanor positive
- Anna Clarke Prospect Awards CIC : thanks for the opportunity to sit in - great discussion
- Danny : Feeling good - good workshop - thank you. Feeling grateful to Michelle and Jane for getting me out of an IT hole
- Dermot Rooney NIFRS : thanks everyone
- Angharad Bunt Sport NI : thanks! See you next time!
- From Gilbert Lee CVSP : Thanks everyone very good its good to chat
- Simon Sloan DfC : Thanks all, great session!
- Martin Graham Tourism NI : Tourism NI has launched a new Web Development Programme grant programme with up to £40k avail to tourism providers to develop their websites and web presence - visit [covid19.tourismni.com](https://www.covid19.tourismni.com) for info
- Martin Graham Tourism NI : Thanks all !
- Anna Clarke Prospect Awards CIC : great to think about how we build on the positivity
- Anna Clarke Prospect Awards CIC : Geraldine - Id love to have a follow up chat with you about how we can draw on this for the CVSP
- Anna Clarke Prospect Awards CIC : great to see comments about resilience coming up too
- Anna Clarke Prospect Awards CIC : DTNI and CLES doing some interesting work around community wealth building and it touches on all this