

Mapping the Way Forward for Creative Words for Wellbeing in Scotland

Notes from Steering Group Meeting 10.00 am – 12 pm 27th March 2020
By Teleconference

Present: Asif Khan, Ruth Stevenson, Amina Shah, Larry Butler, Catherine Eunson, Ruthanne Baxter, Gillian Armstrong, Grace Beaumont, Ann Wales

Apologies: Rhona Millar (Grace Beaumont deputising), John Gillies, Phillipa Cochrane, Aly Barr, Hannah Lavery, Annabel Cavaroli, Jamie Begbie, Joyce Higgins.

1. Discussion of Roundtables report

Group members confirmed that the report reflects the discussions at the Roundtable sessions.

The following points were raised in the discussion:

a) Good representation achieved at Roundtables from third sector is important, as referrals to CWW services may come widely from the third sector, not just from GPs. Third sector also important as a direct provider of CWW services.

b) Need to be realistic about how we take future developments forward, taking into account the need for resourcing. Experience of Open Book may be useful to learn from. They were successful in getting Creative Scotland funding and disseminating outcomes and services Catherine has contacts that we can follow up.

c) Need clarity on who services are for and what they are trying to achieve.

2. Proposed vision and action plan

This was discussed initially in the context of John Gillies' email comments:

“We are in our biggest crisis-- clinical and economic since WW2. The lockdown which will have deleterious effects on the mental health of many (but by no means all), the loss of life due to the virus, the trauma for those working in health and social care, the hugely difficult ethical decisions re ventilatory support, the financial hardship etc will lead to a very difficult post COVID 19 period. At this time, CWfW could become important as a way of helping people and communities, including those who look after us, recover and rebalance their lives.

In making the case for support, particularly a network manager, I suggest that this argument be made forcefully.”

The group agreed that the action plan and funding proposals should highlight how CWW services will help to deal with the impact of COVID 19.

COVID-19 has brought to the fore the importance of online delivery of CWW support. Larry described his recent successful experience in facilitating an online experience. The action plan and funding bids should include thinking creatively about using digital tools to deliver CWW services, and training for online facilitation.

Other points highlighted:

- Importance of linking CWW services with growth in social prescribing culture.
- Engaging with RCGP (as suggested by John Gillies) and clinicians already leading the way in social prescribing. Ruthanne indicated that social prescribing champions have been identified across medical schools and could be a good leadership group.
- Working with existing organisations to make CWW a substrand of their work.
- Should consult with Scottish Storytelling Centre around engagement with the network.
- CWW network should link into, and build on, existing networks – e.g. Scottish Book Trust, Lapidus.
- **Leadership of CWW developments**
 - Asif advised that the Scottish Poetry Library is willing to take the leadership role with Lapidus for future CWW developments at least on an interim basis. Longer term leadership could potentially sit with another organisation – e.g. Creative Scotland.

3. Interim development - building on current offerings

The group agreed that it is important to promote and maximise use of existing CWW resources discussed during the initial 12 months while funding proposals are put forward for the next phase of development. They supported the proposal in the action plan to signpost and host CWW resources through the ALLIANCE Live platform.

The group identified the following resources that could potentially be signposted through this platform:

- Reports and online directory from the current project
- Assets from Prescribe Culture project (Ruthanne) – e.g. booklet on mindfulness activities, signposting to Prescribe Culture referral service, Prescribe Culture report and powerpoint slides, film.
- Wellbeing resources on St Andrews University site – directed at students and staff.
- Creative Connections (SLIC funded project) evaluation report across universities.

- Lapidus toolkit including resources for start-up services
- Evidence library based on Ruth's evidence review. Gillian offered support from Health Scotland library service in updating the evidence base.
- Where available, case studies of people who have used or provided CWW services

4. Next steps

- a) Ann to update vision and action plan to incorporate points made at this meeting.
- b) Ruth to draft 2- page summary report including key findings from research and recommendations for way forward, with links to full reports. Ann, Asif and Larry to review and circulate to Steering Group members and wider network who attended Roundtables.
- c) Ruth and Ann to liaise with Amina and Ruthanne about converting report into multimedia formats – e.g. video, podcast, infographics. To upload to ALLIANCE Live platform and
- d) Ann, Larry, Asif to develop collaborative approach with The ALLIANCE to put proposal to Scottish Government Health and Culture policy areas, to progress CWW developments as part of delivering the Collective Force for Health and Wellbeing implementation plan. This will make the point that these services have a key role in supporting people through the COVID 19 crisis and its aftermath.