Response ID ANON-N1EE-UFPQ-5

Submitted to **Research to understand the impact of Covid-19 on Communities - Organisational perspectives**
Submitted on **2020-05-27 20:23:01**

Questions

1 Please tell us about your organisation's aim(s), geographical focus, client groups and community activities since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic (i.e. from mid-March)?

Please share your views:
We are primarily a membership organisation that brings together representatives from across the community safety sector to achieve a shared vision. In 2019 we became an umbrella organisation for community safety, also hosting Neighbourhood Watch Scotland and Home Safety Scotland (a network of home safety organisations and professionals).

We are the strategic voice for community safety in Scotland and work to:
- Improve leadership across the community safety sector
- Ensure community safety is valued, and integrated across all relevant policy areas
- Provide support so our members are able to deliver their community safety outcomes

Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic our central aims and work have not changed significantly - we are still supporting the community safety sector to deliver their outcomes and working to ensure community safety is considered as part of the Covid responses and decision-making processes. We are doing our work in a different way however.
- This is primarily as the support the sector needs from us is different (as what communities need from public services has changed) - we have had a much more operational focus (particularly early on) and has been much more focused on evidence gathering and sharing with local and national partners.
- Our work on supporting learning across Community Safety Partnerships (e.g. through training) and giving direct support to CSPs has been suspended. Some of this is due to the people we tend to work with being redeployed. We will be considering in the coming weeks how to reframe our learning 'offer'.
- We have also done much more 'influencing' work than normal by feeding into scrutiny processes (of the emergency legislation for example) and other decision-making processes.

2 What information do you collect/hold/use to assess and monitor the general wellbeing of the people and communities you work with?

Please share your views:
We don't work directly with communities, but our network does. Here is a flavour of how we 'monitor' the wellbeing of the people we work with, and with communities (via our network):
Publish and share with partners including Police Scotland and Scottish Government a weekly media monitor on Covid-community safety emerging trends and issues.

Participate in a weekly meeting of Building Safer Communities (BSC) partner organisations where we share insights from our networks.

Question of the month - poll every month to take the temperature on the issue we're focusing on that month.

SCSN Surveys - of CSP lead officers, Elected members, Community Council chairs.

Participate and hoping to host webinars on community safety and Covid - current and future implications. We are hoping to have some with practitioners including in Scotland and across UK nations and Ireland and host some with communities.

Dedicated Covid webpage and fortnightly bulletin to share blogs, emerging issues for community safety and Covid.

Write briefing papers and blogs - for our website / social media and shared with other similar orgs e.g. Scottish Institute for Policing Research

2a How is this information aggregated? Does it include breakdowns by location, age, gender, and any other characteristics?

Please share your views:
Generally n/a but insight available by Scottish Local Authority.

3 Thinking about the people and communities you work with, which of the following, if any, has the coronavirus pandemic (including the restrictions and support arrangements put in place) impacted NEGATIVELY? Please select all that apply.

Finances (including income, outgoings, financial security), Personal safety and security, Social relationships and connections, Physical and mental health, Access to services, Confidence in government, Public services, Ability to cope generally

If other, please provide details:
This is not first-hand information, anecdotal from partners and other sources.

Clear to us there is a real polarity of experience across communities. All of these have been impacted negatively and positively in different ways by Covid pandemic.

If you have any specific examples or comments regarding negative impacts, please share them here:
This is only a brief insight and many negative implications are well documented e.g. mental health impact, social connections etc.

- Access to things like youth work services (compounded by funding concerns), access to shared spaces and community centres, access to drug and alcohol services, recycling and waste all negatively impacted.

- For many we work with access to services is there but different e.g. antisocial behaviour teams are contactable by phone only, drug and alcohol misuse services are online only.

On the surface the impact of Covid on certain things looks positive but in the longer-term there will be issues if this lack of access to certain services (and partnership working) continues e.g. redeployment of staff to emergency issues risks longer-term negative impacts from lack of focus on early intervention and prevention.

UK govt confidence lower, SG higher but still issues in terms of care home deaths, other things in the media regarding other mistakes which risks confidence and trust.

We were surprised at the lack of remote working / digital capability of local government in particular (of course there are some good examples). This meant that some of the access to services and/or the capacity of some of the people we work with to do their work has been negative or delayed.

Our organisational contact with Scottish Government and relationship with civil servants has declined due to moves to Covid response. We see risks for the future if they don't return. Relationship with other public sector orgs similarly impacted, for example, Police Scotland. Linkages and relationships from org perspective have been negatively impacted which affects our ability to do what we do.

We've seen poor road safety behaviour from drivers.

Income for partners we work with e.g. youth work funding, ROSPA has been negatively impacted from either lack of fundraising or funders focusing exclusively on a Covid response.

We anticipate and negative impact on: domestic abuse, vulnerable people, unintentional injuries such as falls.

Much focus from partners has been on communities confidence in public sector organisations. There is less of a clear sense of how safe (or otherwise) people and communities are feeling, how easing restrictions will make them feel and fears for the future for example. We've also starting to explore 'what's not getting done' due to the Covid focus (essential at the moment) and what the implications of this are.

The seeming openness of Scottish Government regarding collaborative decision-making has been positive but often at very short timescale which has been tricky to respond to as a) a small organisation and b) as an intermediary organisation where we need to do an additional stage of data/opinion collection before feeding in.

3a Thinking about the people and communities you work with, which of the following, if any, has the coronavirus pandemic (including the restrictions and support arrangements put in place) impacted POSITIVELY? Please select all that apply.

Personal safety and security, Physical and mental health, Neighbourhood support, Access to services, Public services

If other, please provide details:

If you have any specific examples or comments regarding positive impacts, please share them here:
Some of these have been well-documented (e.g. wonderful community efforts and community spirit) but as we don't have specific examples of this from our networks we haven't included them.

Some of the positive things we've seen:
ASB team redeployed to also deliver 'crisis services' - breadth of skill from community safety
Local resilience hubs to coordinate
The focus on point of need from public services has been really positive, and the trust in frontline staff and communities (in some places, definitely not all) to make decisions has been great.
Some of the lifting of barriers to innovation and rapid "transformational change" has been really positive.
Capturing the learning from some of these innovations and using to build forward will be critical.

Our BSC group meeting weekly has been positive. Sharing and coordinating comms has been really valuable and positive outcome.

Increase in cycling and walking has increased physical mental health (but possibly not outweighing the negative impact of Covid on mental health).

We've seen some really positive improvements and redesigning of services in response to Covid however some of our partners have spoken of now having too many offers of support or options to access support for their communities.

Large no. people stopped or reduced drinking.

The openness of Scottish Government for collective decision-making with other sectors and communities has been great. We can't speak for whether communities have experienced the same with SG or with local government but some examples of collective working with communities has reached us.

4 Have you developed any new ways of working (including new links with other organisations) to enable to you to understand, and respond to, the issues facing the people and communities you work with? If so, please provide brief details.

Please share your views:
Some of these are covered in our earlier responses:
Weekly Building Safer Communities (BSC) group.
Media monitor and upped bulletins.
Coordinated communications with other community-safety focused organisations.
Submissions into Scottish Parliament, CJVSF, SCVO joint responses, more influencing / advocacy work e.g. SPA, Police Scotland etc.
Webinars from UK and Europe - joining and sharing learning from them.
Expanded our agile working (and anticipating expanding our learning 'offer' online)
Contributing to research questions within SG, academic research collaboratives.
Conducting our own surveys more rapidly to capture insight - CSP survey and elected member survey

5 Has your organisation started working with any new people or communities since the start of the coronavirus pandemic?

Yes

If yes, what has brought about this new engagement?:
Covid and value of connecting and coordinating across different organisations with shared outcomes e.g. EFUS webinars, BSC group, new UK contacts in community safety.

Helped us find a way of working together differently. Operational focus has helped.

Need to influence / advocate on matters of new powers and scrutiny.

If yes, do you see this work continuing long-term, or is this a temporary shift for the duration of the coronavirus pandemic?:
Yes continuing long-term but probably less frequent. Need to find a new focus for this to continue longer-term e.g. not Covid focused, not operational...so perhaps themed?

Yes the beginning of the journey / new relationship e.g. EU and other UK nations colleagues.

Yes we would like to continue to influence and advocate through democratic channels available in Scotland.

6 What does your organisation understand as the short, medium and long term priorities of the people and communities you work with in responding to, and recovering from, the coronavirus pandemic?

Please share your views:
SHORT TERM (as restrictions are eased in the coming months)
Income as this situation continues e.g. furlough and other crisis responses beginning to wind up.
Mental health and loneliness concerns (of communities but also the workforce - frontline and those who have been working from home in pressured situations)
Domestic Abuse (has been a concern right through)
Violence from Serious Organised Crime as a 'new normal' gets established.
Concerns about road safety re active travel, changes to public transport, people returning to work.

MEDIUM
Vulnerable people referrals increasing e.g. child neglect and abuse, vulnerable adults, domestic abuse
Crime changing as lockdown restrictions ease
Making the case for community safety teams and partnership working - not losing what's been gained and capturing the learning from this time.
Understanding the experiences of those that are seldom heard.
Making the case for localisation and community participation in public services and capturing community 'goodwill and connectivity'.
Organised crime - violence, 'viable' financial service option for communities, learning new ways of 'working'

LONG TERM
Mental health / trauma resulting from pandemics (communities and workforce)
Impact of predicted recession on impact and therefore crime and safety; and also on public services.
Creating a better new normal for community safety, considering how partnerships work, continuing to make the case for community safety.
Duty of public services not being rolled back due to the amazing community efforts from this time e.g. NHS is not a charity, local food bank responses have been great but probably not the type of nation we want to live in; but also creating a new relationship between public services and communities.
Prevention has to become our collective focus again.

Uncertainty in how this has impacted how safe people and communities feel?

Of these, what seem like the most fundamental issues for the long term?:
Pandemic has exacerbated so many issues and reinforced existing inequalities. This, across all portfolio areas needs to be the focus.

7 Are there any new opportunities that this situation has created that you see as valuable for the recovery period and your longer term practice (e.g. new relationships/partnerships, communication flows, technology, etc.)?

Please share your views:

New relationships and partnerships - new organisational connections in Scotland and also in UK and EU - a real sense of a collective coming together.

Connecting into the influencing work, for example Scottish Parliament, academic research and others.

Technology - showed we can work in a more agile way (from home, opportunity for webinars and connecting with our members in different ways). Technology can make our offer more inclusive e.g. rural partners we work with. But there is a challenge with this regarding Local Authority technology, rural broadband connectivity issues, other digital exclusion for particular groups of people or communities.

8 Is there anything else you would like to share with us, including any comments on the content/structure of the questions?

Please share your views:

We like structure of the questions, it has allowed us to organise some of our own thoughts and reflect on issues and to share with partners.

Would be useful to repeat the exercise when restrictions have lifted and see how these issues change over time.

About you

What is your name?

Name:

Hannah Dickson

What is your email address?

Email:

hannah.dickson@scsn.org.uk

What is your organisation?

Organisation:

Scottish Community Safety Network

The Scottish Government would like your permission to name your organisation as a contributor to this research.Please note, we will not attribute any response to your organisation or publish any response in full. Please indicate your preference:

Please name organisation as contributor

Are you content for the Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this research?

Yes

I confirm that I have read the privacy policy and consent to the data I provide being used as set out in the policy.

I consent