

CCW
Minutes of the Committee for Wales
13:00 on Thursday 7 October 2021
By video conference

Present:-

Committee:- Emma Clancy
Jeff Halliwell
Bev Keogh
Rob Light
Rhodri Williams, Chair

CCW:- Amanda Caton, Executive Head of Business Services
Mike Keil, Head of Policy and Research
Lia Moutselou, Senior Policy Manager
Janine Shackleton, Policy Manager
Alison Townsend, Board Secretary

Speakers:- Alexis Stevens, Money and Mental Health Policy Institute
Gwyneth Jones, Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services
Richard Eynon, Oasis Cardiff
Tomasz Dyl, Gottabe!

Delegates:- In addition to the participants set out above there were approximately 20 stakeholders present at the meeting.

1/21 Welcome and apologies for absence

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the Committee for Wales. The Chair explained that Jeff Halliwell and Bev Keogh had been recently appointed to the CCW Board and welcomed them to their first Committee meeting.

1.2 The Chair indicated that Welsh/English simultaneous translation was available for this meeting for those delegates that wanted to participate in Welsh.

1.3 There were no apologies for absence.

2/21 Declarations of interest

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3/21 Minutes of the last meeting

The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 23 February 2021 as a true record.

4/21 Discussion: Community Engagement

4.1 The Chair introduced the discussion topic “Community Engagement” and noted the importance of communication and engagement with consumers across the water sector. Engagement with hard to reach groups was even more important so that their voice could be heard and the Affordability Review, completed earlier in the year, had identified there was scope to make improvements and to share best practice in this area.

4.2 The Committee heard from four speakers:-

- Alexis Stevens, Money and Mental Health Policy Institute outlined the work that the institute was doing to break the link between financial difficulty and mental health problems to the Committee. The Committee heard how services and communications could be designed to enable those with mental health difficulties to engage more easily and the benefits that this can bring to organisations. The importance of enabling people to easily access support was emphasised and the Board noted that there was a relationship between mental health difficulties and ability to pay;
- Gwyneth Jones, Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services gave a short presentation that looked at how the Pembrokeshire Community Connectors initiative had supported communities during the Covid-19 lockdowns and the lessons that had been learned;
- Richard Eynon, Oasis Cardiff, a charity working with asylum seekers and refugees in Cardiff, gave a short presentation that looked at the work of the organisation. The presentation also explored the type of issues faced by asylum seekers and refugees when engaging with utility companies and adjustments/considerations that could be employed to better support them; and
- Tomasz Dyl, Gottabe! gave a short presentation that explored techniques for engaging with multicultural audiences. The Board heard about a number of campaigns that Gottabe! had worked on and how cultural events could be used to access customers.

4.3 The Chair thanked the presenters and opened a discussion with all people present that included:-

- If consideration had been given to measuring the success of the Pembrokeshire Community Connectors scheme. The Committee was advised that work was underway in conjunction with Cardiff University to look at this using the Most Significant Change model.
- If there were any lessons that could be learned from other sectors. The Committee heard that some sectors, for example banking, were able to draw on higher levels of funding to create different channels for engagement. There was a recognition that funding was more limited in the water sector although it

was suggested the non-competitive/collaborative nature of the water sector could that there were more opportunities to learn from others and share best practice.

- The Committee explored whether companies had a responsibility to improve their engagement with customers and 'do the right thing' and suggested there were opportunities for both customers and companies to gain from this approach.
- There was a recognition while that there had been an increased reliance on digital channels over the last 18 months during the Covid-19 lockdowns there was a clear need for companies to have multiple communication channels.
- The committee discussed issues around engagement with isolated rural communities and heard how partnership working could be used to maximise outcomes in this situation particularly.

4.4 The Chair everyone for their contribution to the discussion and explained how the discussion would help inform and support CCW's campaigns as well as its work to identify and share best practice.

5/21 Questions for CCW

5.1 There were no questions for CCW.

6/21 Other Business

6.1 There were no other items of business for the Committee.

7/21 Next meeting

7.1 The Chair explained that the date for the next Committee meeting would be set shortly.

The meeting closed at 15:05