



North Alliance Conference 2017 Report

12 workshops
2 keynote speakers
1 opening address
97 delegates from

- Aberdeen City (22)
- Aberdeenshire (11)
- Highland (15)
- Moray (19)
- Orkney (3)
- Shetland (5)
- Western Isles (11)
- Other (11)

- Statutory sector (65)
- Third sector (32)



‘Overall a great day! As a new staff member in the area it was a great opportunity to network and find out what’s happening in the area. Some good workshops and great talks.’

‘A real buzz at this conference.’

‘Very thought provoking & useful workshops. Key note speakers really engaging & inspiring.’

‘It is important to do more of this in a difficult CLD landscape.’

‘Today has been very useful, every workshop had great ideas/practice and the whole day has left me with a lot to reflect on and think about as a relatively newly qualified practitioner.’

Speakers

Karen Delany, Moray Council and Chair of the North Alliance, welcomed delegates to Conference 2017 before handing over to Alan Armstrong, Education Scotland, who gave the opening address standing in for Scottish Education Minister Shirley-Anne Somerville. The morning keynote was given by Marion Allison, CLD Standards Council, who spoke on what the Education Governance Review means for CLD practitioners. The afternoon session was opened by Dave Simmers, Community Food Initiatives North East, who discussed what has happened to community work tackling poverty. (L-R Karen, Alan, Marion and Dave.)



Workshops

The 12 workshops received positive feedback from delegates. Delegates were asked to note down what they learned, loved, will take away and use and what they didn't find useful. The majority of comments in the latter category related to time constraints and issues with technology (with a number of workshops suffering from wifi connectivity issues).

A selection of comments from each workshop, along with information about the workshop are given below. Please click on the pictures for links to presentations where available.

Working in partnership across boundaries - Carmen Gillies and Ann Griffin

Through developing a simple yet efficient and effective community development model, Influencing change across a range of sectors and boundaries has been successfully demonstrated through Moray. Known as Vintage Tea Parties, Moray have successfully engaged and implement change with communities.



Learned

- How to use partners' strengths to overcome barriers
- Learnt about a fantastic new tool that can be used for all ages

Loved

- I loved how simple but effective the idea is
- Really liked the informal and interesting style

Take away

- Enthusiasm! And more intergenerational work ideas
- Already planning how I will adapt this

Community Development Principles and Practice - Dave Simmers

Dave used Community Food Initiative North East (CFINE) to illustrate how our support and services are based around the principles and practice of 'Community Development'. More than ever, Community Development's reality, not rhetoric, needs to underpin not only community work but all services and support.

Learned

- That the partners that Cfine work with are numerous and that they have a commitment to highlight how calamitous welfare reform is to our community
- Universal credit and foodbanks

Loved

- Renewed confidence – in that others share my thoughts and are actively taking things forward
- Discussion – hearing about the experiences of others

Take away

- That small is beautiful
- Confidence, belief and hope



Brexit and Civil Society - Alison Cairns



As Brexit negotiations get underway, Scottish charities and voluntary organisations want to ensure that the voice of civil society is heard in the negotiating process. The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) are working closely together with Scottish, UK and European Civil Society to help realise our ambition of remaining an outward looking and collaborative European nation.

As part of this work, it is also crucial to understand the key issues of stakeholders from wider European civil society and the EU institutions and to ensure we can continue to work in solidarity and to strengthen relationships between our nations and organisations.

With this in mind this workshop discussed the impact of Brexit on the third sector and the work we are undertaking in Scotland to protect all that we value about our relationship with Europe.

Learned

- More understanding of the impact of leaving the EU, ie movement of volunteers and in particular young people
- The importance of engaging and supporting others to engage in the conversation and influence what happens next

Loved

- Excellent speaker. Clear and jargon free delivery
- The audience was very engaged

Take away

- I will keep up to date with the Brexit page on the SCVO website
- Need to go back to your youth and community groups and start discussion about Brexit and the impact that it will have

Voice Tool - Christopher Third



This “VOiCE online taster session” gave a quick run through of what VOiCE is and how it relates to the seven new National Standards for Community Engagement. VOiCE is a free online tool which can be used for planning, delivering and reviewing community engagement activity. Anyone can register for it and use it.

Learned

- That VOiCE exists and looks easy to use
- How this tool can be used between multiple people and agencies, providing much needed unity in evaluation and planning

Loved

- The humour and the clarity of the voice
- It was clear, simple and straight to the point – well delivered

Take away

- I will definitely use it after this workshop
- A refreshed view of the tool. Will go away and make a conscious effort to use it more

Journey through a Community Asset Transfer- Fiona Birse

This workshop outlined how the Elgin Youth Cafe went through the process of Community Asset Transfer and the difficulties and hurdles they had to cross. The session discussed the support they received from different agencies, and the difference this made to their organisation.

Learned

- Different Local Authority approaches to Community Asset Transfer
- More information about the process

Loved

- The real story behind the process
- Great insight into behind the scenes and what makes this work

Take away

- Contact DTAS for support
- More information about the challenges facing Community Asset Transfer



Adult Achievement Award – Gillian Turner & Sara Aboud



Adults learn throughout their lives in a wide range of contexts. Many adults would like their learning to be accredited but cannot attend formal courses for a variety of reasons. Recognising this, SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework) Partnership and Education Scotland asked Newbattle Abbey College to develop Adult Achievement Awards, based on the model of Youth Achievement Awards. These have been piloted nationally at SCQF levels 3, 4 and 6 and level 2 is now under development. The workshop will offer: an overview of the Adult Achievement Awards; an understanding of what is required of learners and local tutors; a summary of the pilot programme; an understanding of what delivering an Adult Achievement Award is like in a local context.

Learned

- How well the Adult Achievement Award had developed since my last workshop
- The variety of ways that it can be delivered

Loved

- The value of reflective learning and how widely acceptable it is
- Very informative session, the enthusiasm was clear

Take away

- Discuss with my team to see how we can offer it in our suite of awards
- Will encourage staff and partners to encourage learners to do the award

Living Streets in Practice - Jade Hepburn

The workshop gave a brief overview of Living Streets along with an interactive activity to highlight the benefits of Community Street Audits. This was followed by a look at how a Living Streets report can shape the work of community workers, particularly around partnership working and empowering community members to be involved in local decision making.

Learned

- Interesting approaches to community engagement at a local level
- Very interesting – learned about a new resource that I'd not utilised before

Loved

- Liked the outdoor activity – trying it ourselves
- The simplicity of the tool

Take away

- To investigate this method and hopefully implement it
- Important to check what it is the community really wants



Generations Growing Together - Lindsey Johnson & Arlene Montgomery

This workshop explored the development of an intergenerational volunteering project attached to Voluntary Action Orkney's (VAO) Adult Befriending Service. The project originally brought together young and older people to deliver a small gardening project, and has developed substantially over the years. The young people (aged 15-21) are from VAO's Connect Project which supports young people who require 'more choices more chances', and the older people from local 'very sheltered' housing complexes across Orkney. This session explored how the project came about and how it has developed over the years. It also explored the benefits of intergenerational social interaction and learning to both old and young people alike, as well as to the wider local community.



Learned

- Great example of the far reaching benefits of befriending
- Fantastic project – learnt about the importance of intergenerational work

Loved

- Loved the passion about the project
- Really enjoyed it all. Would love to try this at home

Take away

- Great ideas for future work. Will definitely use the games and icebreakers
- Ways to engage both generations and the process of starting to connect them

Mobilising a movement to influence culture change - Clair Nichols

Youth Highland has been leading a movement of third sector and voluntary organisations to develop a new model for universal youth work in Highland. This session looked at how appreciative inquiry methods have been used to enable positive collaboration and an innovative new strategy for open (community based) youth work. It explored the importance of leaders sticking to CLD principles and values as they engage with others to bring about radical positive change to services in communities.

Learned

- How to ride the waves of change
- Knowing that you want to change and why. And owning it

Loved

- Analogy of cream scone, and tasting it
- Participants' willingness to engage

Take away

- Always carry your 'why' with you
- The importance of knowing why you do what you do every day



Influencing change: the voice of older people - Ed Garrett

This workshop explored how a network of older people's forums in Aberdeenshire has influenced change, particularly in the health and social care context. It focused on the links made between grassroots community action and local and strategic decision making processes, including the launch of an older people's charter.

Learned

- Encouraging reflective critical pathways to influence change
- Bigger picture thinking, reflection on decision making

Loved

- The philosophy puzzle – got us thinking critically
- Good debate within the group



Take away

- Explore the possibilities of partnership to set this up locally
- Info on the Charters – hope to implement into my own area of work

#You Choose – A participatory budgeting (PB) model for choice and change in Moray - Elidh Myrvang Brown

tsiMORAY's Health and Wellbeing Team presented the approach they take to participatory budgeting (PB) in Moray through #You Choose. They described how they work with partners and stakeholders from three themes: drugs and alcohol, mental health and older people. They presented success and learning from each theme, and invited workshop participants to consider key challenges and opportunities in relation to rurality, accessibility, inclusion and change. Together, they looked to the future of PB in marginal and rural communities and consider how digital engagement could be a 'game-changer' going forward.

Learned

- Very interesting to hear about how PB is being done in other areas and by someone other than the Local Authority
- Clearer understanding of PB

Loved

- The use of the market place and the tokens
- Facilitator's enthusiasm

Take away

- The determination to go away and re look at how to continue progressing the PB process and others in my area
- Brilliant idea/model to involve and engage the local community



Mentoring – Is it for me? - Jackie Halawi

All personal relationships are shaped by the environment in which they are set and all partners in the relationship bring with them contextual understandings, beliefs and perceptions that influence the relationship. Every relationship is also the context for other relationships. The terms coaching and mentoring are considered as two areas of practice have large areas of commonality and overlap. Mentors are often more effective if a coaching style is adopted where appropriate. Mentoring has become a visible and popular strategy for supporting the development of disadvantaged youth. It is easy to understand and intuitively appealing. Adults who can identify a mentor in their own lives need no convincing that a mentor can be important, even life-changing. Mentoring is a professional activity, a trusted relationship, a meaningful commitment. Whether the relationship is deemed formal or informal, the goal of mentoring is to provide career advice as well as both professional and personal enrichment.



Learned

- Mentoring is very valuable. A fantastic way to share your skills and to learn from others.
- Mentoring is a good way of tackling issues and supporting staff

Loved

- Video – I will be sharing this in my training practices, thank you
- Opportunities to share experiences

Take away

- To talk with my line manager/senior manager about mentoring
- Expectations of mentoring and the use of networks

Further feedback

35 Evaluation Grids were returned. On a scale of 1 to 10, (where 1 = not at all and 10 = very much) delegates rated the four conference outcomes as follows:

I have built/enhanced my professional network:	6.5 (range 3–10)
I have experienced a creative and stimulating learning environment:	7.5 (range 3–10)
I am more able to describe my personal and professional learning:	6.2 (range 2-10)
I have identified a spectrum of initiative within the North Alliance Area:	7.3 (range 3-10)

The North Alliance: Bringing people, ideas and practice together

As part of a CPD survey handed out on the day, we asked for your thoughts on the benefits of the North Alliance. Here is some of what you told us:

‘Brings people, ideas and practice together.’

‘Creating a strong voice for inclusion of a huge range of 3rd sector organisations in the national conversation on CLD.’

‘Sharing good practice across rural Scotland. Also raising awareness of national policies and agenda.’

‘Great opportunity for networking, sharing and learning about good practice and hearing from like-minded practitioners we would not normally heard from.’

‘Great opportunity to meet new people and to share practice. This is a wonderful opportunity to network with others in the field and having discussions around practice. This is often difficult when working in a rural island community.’

‘Sharing experiences across a larger “area” than your own area of work and also networking across the NE.’

‘Hearing what activities and projects are taking place elsewhere, getting ideas for what would be beneficial for our area.’

‘Potential for learning from others good practice. Potential for joint lobbying and campaigning.’

The North Alliance relies on your input and involvement. If you want to discuss how you can get more involved, have any local CPD events that you would to promote and share, or would like to run a workshop at Conference 2018 please contact your local [strategy group](#) member or email northalliance@vaorkney.org.uk

