



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE NETWORK

24.01.2018 at London Funders

Participants

Holly	MacKavoy	BBC Children in Need
Juliette	Kelvin	Big Lottery Fund
Olu	Alake	Buttle UK
Fan	Gu	CAF Venturesome
Daisy	Ryan	Henry Smith Charity
Poonum	Chandal	John Lyon's Charity
Jolenee	King	London Borough of Camden
Tania	Skae	London Community Foundation
Rosie	Tharp	London Community Foundation
Mary	McKaskill	Project Oracle
Mary	Mason	Solace Women's Aid
Rachel	Earnshaw	The Big Give
Sara	Masters	The Mercers' Company
Rosie	Spiegelhalter	Toynbee Hall
Holly	Budgett	Young Camden Foundation

In attendance

Geraldine	Tovey	London Funders
James	Banks	London Funders

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Sara Masters (Chair) welcomed everyone to the group and roundtable introductions were made. Sara explained that this session aims to provide information to funders about how best to fund organisations supporting children affected by domestic violence (DV). The issue of children affected by DV arose from the discussions at last Children and Young people network which focused on early years.

2. Report of last meeting, 31st October 2017

Minutes from the last Children and Young People's meeting were agreed.



Guest Speakers (slides can be found on the London Funders website)

3. Mary Mason – Solace Women’s Aid

Mary introduced herself and provided a background on Solace Women’s Aid. She explained that domestic violence is at the heart of the work of the organisation. She informed attendees that DV is a huge issue in London (it has the highest amount of victimisation in England and Wales), and that there are definite links and correlation between domestic violence and poverty. Perhaps an explanation for higher rates of domestic violence in London is that pressure on poor families is more extreme in the capital, and often there limited space available for interaction in the home. DV predominantly affects females, but it does also affect some men. Both sets of victims tend to be reluctant to come forward because of a sense of shame.

Children and DV

Solace’s first question on the phone to victims is ‘are there any children’? The trigger for many women leaving abusive situations is having children. The point of leaving and year after leaving is when women have the highest risk of violence from former partners – there is a need for safe spaces and learning in this period.

Solace tries to meet the need for housing women fleeing from domestic violence, although this is especially difficult in London. Many women experiencing domestic violence in inner London are allocated housing in outer boroughs. Many referrals for Solace Women’s Aid come from Local Authorities and statutory services. Solace often tries to co-locate with these services for porous learning on domestic abuse and coercion to be facilitated.

The average time before a woman accesses services relating to DV is 7 years 8 months. There will likely be more than one incident of violence before a woman leaves a relationship. This is often not reflected in the criminal justice system where single incidents are reported. Solace Women’s Aid is trying to change impressions of statutory services towards DV and encourages them to look at relationship dynamics and the linkages between poverty, race and DV. There is often a divide in the type of support women will access when leaving an abusive relationship – refuge services tend to support poorer women and/or women from BME backgrounds, whereas counselling services tend to have more middle-class service users. Providing any kind of support can disrupt offending behaviour.

Changing Cultures

Prevention, provision and partnership working are the core beliefs at Solace. The organisation also places an emphasis on early intervention. Solace believes in changing the culture of professionals and that this will encourage more referrals and women coming forward.

National surveys have shown that sexual health is considered an issue for young women in particular and 2/3 young women have talked about feeling controlled at some point in a relationship.

Big Lottery Funded Solace’s Young Women and Girls project – ‘Hear to Change’ working with groups of young women to outreach and talk about violence and abuse within their communities, as well as to build resilience. Another project ‘POW’ trained young people to be champions in a school setting and create ‘champions’, helping to raise awareness of the issue and signpost to support and help. This project worked with boys as well. Solace Women’s Aid’s projects do not have a top-down



approach and engage with CYP who have experienced abuse to create an environment of support.

The CSA Hub in North/Central London is an example of partnership funding. Mary reiterated that it is important that funders support organisations which do partnership work and believe in a coordinated community response. Family support work is key, alongside school support work to facilitate support change.

Mary finished her presentation by reminding funders that play is vital and that children learn and can gain new experiences through this medium. There is also a need for professionals to understand safeguarding more.

4. Olu Alake – Buttle UK

Olu Alake explained that Buttle UK is an organisation which mainly provides emergency essentials to families and young people who are at 'crisis point', and works with referral agencies across the UK.

Buttle has amassed a lot of data on the picture of poverty in the UK, and has found that there is a correlation with domestic violence and the need for Buttle's grants. It also started to look at how its grants go beyond help and change lives. This aligned with research which City Bridge Trust commissioned on whether larger grants could have a longer-term sustainable impact for families fleeing abusive situations. With this in mind City Bridge Trust invested £1 million over three years to Buttle UK for larger grants to individuals through an Anchor Fund.

Anchor Fund grants came mainly through referrals from charities (including Solace Women's Aid) and statutory services. To receive grants families had to have a child who was 18 years or under, fleeing domestic violence recently and in a re-housing stage. Essentially families needed to be on a journey/'moving on' from a situation where they have experienced domestic violence. The Anchor fund was for London residents only, but could be given to families originally from London who were being re-homed outside of the capital. This fund aligned with Buttle UK's Theory of Change which aims to have families' tangible needs supported.

The Anchor fund doesn't have a 'menu', but with broad categories and guidelines. It is up to support workers/referees to help gauge what families need. Support could be more holistic, and things such as after-school activities and room decoration could be purchased from the Anchor Fund, as well as things like white goods. The average grant from the Anchor Fund was just under £1,400, well under the maximum of £2000. One of the reasons for this may be that support workers feared that larger applications would get rejected.

The evaluation of the Anchor Fund can be found on Buttle UK's site. Towards the end of the Anchor Fund programme money could be deposited onto pre-paid cards which helped to reduce bureaucracy. The evaluation showed that there was lots of qualitative evidence of the positive effect that grants had for recipient families. There were solid outcomes on the benefits for young people's education in particular – a sense of allowing children to be 'children again' was seen to be powerful. It was also found that Buttle's grants helped to improve relationships between agencies and families. However the new ways of working needed for the Anchor Fund are resource intensive.



5. Q&A

- Charities referring to Buttle UK for the Anchor Fund tended to be a mixture of refuges and support organisations such as Solace.
- At Solace building partnerships with other agencies has to have a foundation of trust and good communication. Fundamental change for individuals and society needs a coordinated community response model (including relationships between charities and corporates). Solace Women's Aid has a range of different partnerships including with 30+ other voluntary sector agencies.
- Solace Women's Aid is part of a couple of collaborations which are led by smaller BME organisations – it is important to acknowledge expertise rather than size. Solace also has partnerships with statutory bodies – an example of this is in Southwark where it is working with the Local Authority on homelessness and abuse, and in partnership with Commonweal Housing to provide accommodation for women. It also works with the CSE North London Hub on its advocacy service which helps children to re-integrate into the community.
- Multi-agency support is essential alongside community knowledge.
- The efficacy of Buttle's grants partly lies in that they show that people 'care'. The impact of the Anchor Fund's referral process was evaluated by Buttle. Processes changed significantly in the three years of the programme to simplify applications and release money quicker (this included the introduction of staged grants). Cheques were particularly difficult to process. Process changes will apply to all Buttle UK grants.
- Mary fed back that Solace has found it difficult to get funding for its core CYP work and it tends to rely on funding for projects. She is trying to build a 'mosaic' of funders. Big Lottery Fund's 5 year reaching communities grant for Solace has been useful to address long term need and has helped to provide family support workers for all of its refuges.
- It's difficult to get funding for therapeutic work in particular, although LB Camden has therapeutic support for women and children leaving advocacy services.
- Mary also stated that she faced the challenge of funders wanting 'innovation'. It is important that innovation shouldn't be completely about changing ideas but adapting and refining existing proven solutions. Funders also need to not be too restrictive about outputs and outcomes.
- In Waltham Forest Solace works with several grassroots organisations on Violence Against Women and Girls. This partnership has created a foundation of mutual understanding.
- Buttle has mapped its referrals for the Anchor Fund with that of borough referrals to the police for domestic violence. This showed an inverse trend with areas having the highest number of incidents often having the lowest number of applicants. Practitioners and peer leaders are often unsupported and underfunded.
- Solace is developing a violence against women and girls social media project, training on how to safely intervene on social media when abuse is perpetrated.
- Staff support is budgeted at Solace Womens Aid and funders in general look at the staff wellbeing of their grantees.
- Developing relationships of trust across genders can also be difficult to fund.
- There is a huge issue of staff retention in London, charity workers are often paid significantly less than similar roles in statutory services – this is difficult to equate with funders wanting value for money. Charities must have clear pay structures and should be encouraged to pay the living wage. Solace also has a x4 policy. Solace also tops up salaries with restricted funds.



- The change in welfare benefits and universal credit will bring difficulties for many women fleeing domestic violence because men are often the lead claimant for families. The 6 week gap can force women into poverty – there is a need for bridging immediate support.
- In difficult times funders need to be flexible and provide space for conversations on how delivery can be developed.

6. Group Updates

John Lyons Charity has approved funding The YMCA George Williams College have put in a 3 year grant request into us (going to grants committee next week and likely to be approved) around running a 2 year training and upskilling programme across our beneficial area in Supervision (as described by the Munro report) and then producing a report at the end of year 3.

The College will be working to create 2 new cohorts of trained external supervisors from the CYP voluntary sector. These practitioners will act as the start of a Supervision Bank so organisations can 'swap' supervisors to act in this role. Each cohort will take part in a Level 6 training course, as well as being supervised by professional supervisors the YMCA already hold, and will be supervising junior staff themselves (to embed practice).

The College will track the cohorts and be running research supervision with practitioners to see what organisational change happens, if any, during the 2 and half year process, and how much of it can be attributed to supervision. As you know supervision was highlighted as being one of the key factors in best practice in safeguarding by Munro.

The College will then be writing up a report by the end of the third year so the CYP sector has a tangible piece of research to show what Munro describes in the Social Work sector as being imperative in adding an extra layer of safety for children and vulnerable people.

Project Oracle will be hosting a series of workshops on ethical evaluation – especially on how to deal with difficult questions and triggers.

Big Lottery Fund and others are taking part in an early years peer network – email Sara to link into the group.

The Big Give will be launching its summer campaign.

Date of Next Meeting: 10am-12pm on April 25th