

**Appendix 1 – Voluntary Action Angus and Angus Council
Communities Team Report – ‘COVID-19 Impact report and
benefits of partnership working’**

COVID -19 Impact report and benefits of partnership working

From 18 March frontline emergency support mechanisms were developed and implemented through real partnership work between the Council’s Communities team and Voluntary Action Angus (VAA) which all stemmed from an initiative that was agreed by VAA and Angus Health and Social Care Partnership. The ability for all partners to embrace and understand the situation, trust and use each other’s strengths to the benefit of delivering a service for vulnerable members of our community, has been key for this successful initiative and continuous partnership.

Systems were quickly identified and developed which enabled area coordinators (from both VAA and communities team working as one identity / team) to access and support the many volunteers to deliver prescriptions, provide shopping and / or emergency food parcels and befriending to those most in need. Within 3 weeks staff (both VAA and communities’ team) were responding to up to 100 requests per day at the height of the pandemic.

This immediate flexibility to respond was created through meaningful approaches in working authentically with communities that required barriers to be removed and supporting new forms of trans-disciplinary working between VAA and departments within Angus Council and Health and Social Care Partnership. VAA also quickly noticed that the wider third sector had to adapt their way of delivering services, it was essential that the third sector had a role within this multi disciplinary team. We started a new initiative - Angus Connect with the Third Sector and partner agencies this brings all organisations together in order to build the capacity of the third sector and actively promote the sector to show we are still here supporting the community even if the work is being carried out slightly differently. This allowed us to reach people most in need of support and ensure no one fell through the gaps.

We were and continue to work with roughly 20 third sector organisations. We all work very well in providing the communities of Angus with services and support.

During this crisis we were working closer than ever to ensure no one in Angus fell through the gaps and everyone received the support they needed. As a partnership we were and still are delivering a range of services, but due to the current situation there are three main themes that are continuously arising. These are: food, prescription delivery and loneliness and isolation.

As the numbers of requests increased and Angus Council started to respond with their COVID 19 access line, the partnership was strengthened through members of the councils Justice team and most recently the council’s Welfare Rights team joining the staff in front line delivery. This has enabled the team to enhance existing knowledge and experience already gained and compliment a personal and holistic approach that people need in order to cope in these challenging times.

As we continue through this new journey it is essential that local workers and managers continue to respect and build on their new and existing relationships with communities and with partners on issues as identified by the community.

There has been a thorough analysis carried out on the amount of support provided by the third sector during the pandemic, the below tables will highlight how much support has been provided which covers the three main themes: welfare and hardship support, mental health and wellbeing and accessibility.

Impact of partnership working within Third Sector

The below tables show the analysed data of what support VAA and HAART have provided with our Third Sector partners.

Welfare and Hardship support

Table follows. Table has 6 columns. First row has headings with 18 rows to follow

Name of organisation	Number of people supported	Type of Support	Figures	Locality	Duration
• Brechin Pantry	35	Food/Meals	857	Brechin	April
• Brechin Pantry	34	Food/Meals	833	Montrose	April
• Brechin Pantry	40	Food/Meals	980	Brechin	May
• Brechin Pantry	101	Food/Meals	2474	Montrose	May
• Citizens Advice Bureau	1013 55% up	Advice: Employment etc.	2763	Angus	March – to date
• Social Supermarket	2000	Food/Meals	25000	Angus	March – to date
• Food Bank	1151	Food/Meals	N/A	Angus	March - June
• Simmer Doon Soup	N/A	Food/Meals	1955	Montrose	
• VAA/HAART	N/A	Shopping deliveries through Soldo	1250	Angus	March - date
• VAA/HAART	N/A	Food Parcels	215	Angus	March-date
• VAA/HAART	N/A	Prescription deliveries	2315	Angus	March - date
• Montrose Community Trust	N/A	Food/Meals	112	Montrose	April -date
• Montrose Community Trust	24	Medical Appointments	N/A	Montrose	April-date
• Home Start Angus	49	Food Parcels	N/A	Angus	April-date
• Deaflinks	N/A	Food/Meals	66 Meals 8 Food parcels	Angus	April - date
• Angus Carers Centre	N/A	Food	12 vouchers 8 food packs	Angus	April - date

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• Angus Carers Centre	N/A	Young Carers - Food & Utilities	£665 (6 households)	Angus	April - June
• Angus Carers Centre	N/A	Adult Carers - Food, Utilities & Digital	£6778 (138 households)	Angus	April - June

Mental health and Wellbeing

Table follows. Table has 5 columns. First row has headings with 22 rows to follow

Name of organisation	Number of people supported	Type of support	Locality	Duration
• VAA	82	Befriending	Angus	March – June
• TCA	13 families (3 people per family)	Kinship	Angus	March – June
• TCA	21	Young people	Angus	March – June
• TCA	30	Adults	Angus	March – June
• Hear Me	495 sessions	Counselling and Support	Angus	April – June
• Kirrie Connections	45	Dementia Support	Angus	April – June
• ADHD Support	631 contacted 69 families direct work	Behaviour & emotions advice/support	Angus	April – June
• CAA	300+	Homehelp & additional services	Angus	April – June
• New Solutions	300+ families	Zoom support project	Angus	April – June
• New Solutions	60 families	Telephone contact through GP	Angus	April – June
• Homestart Angus	70 families	1to1 support emotional & practical	Angus	April - June
• Montrose Community Trust	24	Befriending	Montrose	April - June
• Montrose Community Trust	37	Online mental health group sessions	Montrose	April - June
• Montrose Community Trust	308 young people	Educational packs/free footballs and activities	Montrose	April - June

• Deaflinks	12	High tariff advocacy support	Angus	April - June
• Deaflinks	23	Emotional & practical support	Angus	April - June
• Angus Women's Aid	96 women	Intense domestic abuse advocacy	Angus	April - June
• Angus Women's Aid	10 women	Flee abusive relationships	Angus	April - June
• Angus Women's Aid	111 children & young people	Domestic abuse advocacy – delivered toy boxes, resilience packs etc.	Angus	April - June
• Angus Carers Centre	1356	One to one support	Angus	April - June
• Angus Carers Centre	703 hours	Befriending Service	Angus	April - June
• Angus Independent Advocacy	236 people	One to one advocacy support	Angus	April - May

The above figures give a slight insight to the vast amount of support that's available, due to the complexity and consuming nature of the support work carried out it is difficult to get a clear picture of what has been available throughout the lockdown period. There has been a number of other areas of support and great exemplars of partnership working.

The final analysis will highlight some more examples of how we've all worked so well together.

Accessibility and other support

Table follows. Table has 5 columns. First row has headings with 8 rows to follow

Name of organisation	Type of support	Figures	Locality	Duration
• VAA	Funding sourced & funding support for third sector	£700,225	Angus	March - June
• Angus Carers Centre	Emergency payment	131 payments to 59 carers	Angus	March - June
• Angus Women's Aid	Tablets delivered to children and young people	111 tablets	Angus	March - June
• Angus SEN	Organisational support	86 organisations	Angus	March - June

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• Angus SEN	Events support	13 organisations	Angus	March - June
• Deaflinks	Devices Provided	8 provided	Angus	March - June
• Deaflinks	Emergency mobile top ups	5	Angus	March - June
• Homestart Angus	Mobile top ups fuel top ups	2 5	Angus	March - June

What the figures show is that there is a huge benefit to the fantastic partnership approach which we have all entered into. I believe that although no one could have predicted we would be in this situation with a global pandemic, Angus has really shown what we can do when we break down barriers and work for the community. There are a number of great stories which we will look back on in years to come but the clear message throughout all of this is that we cannot afford to lose what we have created over these past few months.

One major thing I'd like to specifically highlight is in regards to the IFAN:

The Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) connects, supports and advocates on behalf of a range of over 300 frontline food aid providers and envisions a society without the need for food banks. There has been an 175% increase in the number of emergency food parcels distributed by independent food banks across the UK comparing April 2019 to April 2020 (data from 213 independent food banks operating across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) this increase is also consistent with our local independent food distributors. As a result we have a third sector member who has been invited onto the Scottish Governments food and insecurity network group. Having a contact in this group is a valuable source of information on strategic thinking and how best to plan with additional resources which will be made available from the Scottish Government.

Recovery and the way forward

When thinking about recovery and the way forward, I believe it would be a real disservice to the communities of Angus to go back to "normal" what we have to concentrate on now is the new normal and what we can all do collectively. One example of this would be to continue with our multi disciplinary teams and use Angus Connect as the platform to keep these partnerships active. We need to come together to look at how we can sustain this in the future.

We cannot take for granted that things won't be the same:

- People will be suffering from grief and irreplaceable loss .
- Vulnerable people will have been more isolated and lonely than ever before.
- 'Organizations' may struggle with re-engagement, financial pressures and maybe loss sense of purpose.
- Our understanding of partnership, will need to change towards further and more significant respect, solidarity and new ways of working.
- Silos will need to be dismantled as new forms of togetherness need to prevail through 'letting go'.

We know what we have to do in order to support the communities of Angus to ease ourselves into this new way of working, we have already done this without hesitation and without really thinking about it. We all participated in things that have come most natural to us and why we are in the jobs we're in and that was caring, so lets not lose the caring aspect of our work as we enter this new normal. Lets build on an angus that actively cares.