

Agenda item 5

For information - Update on the development of Frome Welcome Hub and the Community Hub

Author: Nikki Cox, Partnership Lead

Summary

Council received a progress report on the Reduce Poverty programme in the Council Plan in June. This report provides a further update on the Welcome Hub and the concept of the community hub and brings together many of the elements in the Reduce Poverty programme in the Council Plan. It also provides an update on the Connect Somerset funded work.

The Welcome Hub and the Community Hub

Background

FTC are currently contracted by Somerset Council via CHARIS to deliver the Welcome Hub until March 2025. This includes the provision of a physical hub space to offer bespoke signposting, advice and support for Displaced Persons in the Frome Area.

FTC host the Frome Area Connect Somerset Champion (Melody Hunter Evans) and, alongside the emerging Frome Community Hub at the Town Hall, will support the Frome Area Connect Somerset Hub at the Library to further provide signposting, support and advice to families, increase access to statutory services and the VCFSE sector for a universal early help offer to CYP's and Families.

Citizens Advice and Somerset Council contact centres are trialling a face-to-face drop-in service in the Frome Area which started in September 2023, increasing access to support and advice. FTC have offered space within the town hall to do this.

The Frome Community Hub, which includes the Welcome Hub, brings together existing and new services being offered by various agencies and voluntary groups across the town into one place. It is not something new, more a case of packaging a group of services to make them more accessible to the community.

Aim of the hub

The aim of the hub is to reduce the requirement for targeted (relatively expensive) services, this is often termed early intervention, and support the community by triaging and enabling them to tell their story without the need for multiple referrals and re-entry. This work is ongoing.

The Welcome Hub combining to form the Community Hub, are being managed together, and will provide a welcoming, universal first point of contact in a central place for all residents to access advice and signposting as well as triaging to Statutory/VCFSE services if needed.

It will be based at the Town Hall (focusing on the café) and in the Library too. Combined there will be a 6 days per week service.

In addition to the services listed above they will include Prosper Frome, ESOL Language lessons and other VCFSE organisations. It could expand into offering and/or promoting other services too, such as youth work sessions, arts events, play sessions, Mental Health support sessions.

Scheduled activities will take place throughout the week in universal spaces alongside private drop in space and pre booked meeting rooms for individual appointments with scheduled services such as housing support, SEND services and others including the green and health futures warm homes advice delivered by FTC.

The combined hub will also be able to run detached sessions in villages and other community centres through effective use of trained staff and a coordinated activity programme.

As the Hub develops and if external funding from sources including Connect Somerset is forthcoming, further staff resources may be required but at this time, this is unknown.

The Connect Somerset work:

- Continue to facilitate, coordinate, increase the capacity of wider targeted and universal services through networks and increase agency and representation.
- Identify gaps in services and work with partners to address them – for example Early years and childcare, play and holiday provision for 8 – 12 yr olds, young parent’s groups etc.
- Continue to build qualitative and quantitative data to underpin the development of services.
- Gather and collate a broad understanding of the lived experience of Children, Young People and Families, through a participative approach, in the Frome area to inform the development of services.
- Build links between business, VCFSE and statutory services and Education to consider a community approach to meeting Social, Economic and Environmental needs.
- Connect communities, residents and services.

Nikki Cox, Partnership Lead oversees the Frome Hub Model Service delivery, including Connect Somerset Work and the Welcome Hub staff. Melody Hunter-Evans' and Iryna Ladyzhenska's roles are described in the table below.

Connect Somerset	Welcome Hub
Melody Hunter Evans, Children and Young People’s Project Officer/Connect Somerset Champion will focus on Connect Somerset with a Children and families focus.	Iryna Ladyzhenska, Social Facilitator for the Welcome Hub will focus on service delivery of the Welcome Hub for Displaced people.
New Project Officer Post at 18.5 hours to enhance the capacity to support and	We are recruiting now for an 18.5 hour Welcome Hub Advice Worker to focus on

signpost in Hubs and enhance FIND. (Funded through Connect Somerset)	support and signposting for our Displaced Community alongside VCFSE partner organisations (as part of the CHARIS continuation contract).
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