

The Braveheart Association - Strategic Plan, 2015-2018

The Objects of the Association are:

to provide a framework of active support and encouragement for adults with a long term health condition and those at risk of developing chronic health conditions, and to promote their current and future wellbeing.

Our main objectives and activities continue to focus upon providing support for adults living with or are at risk of developing a long term condition. This is in two main areas:

- Self-management programmes, where people come together to learn and support one another
- Encouraging people to take gentle exercise by offering a variety of supported walking groups across Forth Valley.

Braveheart promotes healthy lifestyles with a focus on preventing the development of long term conditions and has developed a number of different self-management programmes and an extensive network of weekly and monthly walks. We can also offer longer term support through our Braveheart Plus groups. All those programmes also address a significant and emerging health need relating to social isolation. Poor health can contribute to a decreasing interaction between individuals and the society in which they live.

All our services are friendly, welcoming and run with the help of community volunteers, who we train as Health Mentors and Walk Leaders. We rely on our volunteers to deliver much of what we do, and we aim to train and support our volunteers to the highest of standards.

Vision

Our vision is to see the burden of long terms conditions reduced, to the individuals who might develop them, to those who are already living with them, and to wider society as a whole.

The aim of this strategic plan is to ensure that the organisation can continue to deliver on its aims and objectives and to work towards the realisation of this vision.

It has been informed by three major factors:

- An internal evaluation of what we have done well in the past
- An extensive review of the local and national environment affecting health and wellbeing.
- A comprehensive consultation involving staff, volunteers, service users, community groups and other stakeholders, including the NHS and other partnership agencies.

More about the consultation

- Our aim was to gather the views and opinions of all our partners and those who are, or who have been involved with the organisation in the past. Our findings helped us to recognise what we do well, what we might be able to do better and in particular to help us with planning the future direction of the organisation.
- Our consultation project saw over 100 people engage with Braveheart. We ran 5 focus groups which included volunteers, staff and Board members. Service users were involved in some of these, with their views also being recorded in questionnaire format. Liaison and partnership working with the NHS and other voluntary sector organisations is considered important for Braveheart's future and hence the project saw us consult with NHS Forth Valley, Falkirk Local Medical Committee, local general practitioners and Falkirk Council for Voluntary Services (CVS).
- The specific results from the consultation are available on our website www.braveheart.uk.net

The strategy is best described as having five interlinked pillars. Each pillar supports the organisation in its journey over the coming years and each pillar is equally important in helping Braveheart fulfil its commitments. These pillars are:

- 1. Partnership Working**
- 2. Communication**
- 3. Development of Services**
- 4. Funding**
- 5. Evaluation**

1. Partnership Working

The delivery of efficient, useful, sustainable and cohesive services across Forth Valley to those with an existing, or at risk of developing, a long term condition, depends on partnership working and collaboration between a range of service providers. This is needed both because of the pressure on public funding, and the positive impact of offering co-ordinated services to those in need.

Braveheart has a proven track record in partnership working and has much to offer other service providers in offering services which are welcoming, open and which complement clinical interventions. Braveheart's services are predicated on being user led, thereby assisting people to gain a greater degree of self-management of their condition and ensuring that services are more sustainable in the long term.

To achieve partnership working Braveheart has a focus on coordination and working collaboratively with other organisations to ensure that the activities developed address key health needs, and to ensure that the implementation of activities are as

effective as possible. Current partners include NHS Forth Valley, other third sector organisations, local employers, our volunteers and possible funding organisations.

Braveheart has developed strong links with a range of community organisations and other community partners, including Community Learning and Development, in addition to having positive relationships with various health services. These links have ensured:

- There is a range of ways in which people can access Braveheart's services (through self-referral as well as formal referral routes)
- Braveheart's services are open to a broad section of the community
- Braveheart is able to offer support in the communities in which people live.

Continued positive partnership working is crucial to Braveheart in that it brings referrals to Braveheart services, supports the sustainability of these services, helps develop new services and brings funding. It is important that a range of referral pathways are maintained – from clinicians and GPs to support those who may be viewed as most 'medically' in need, and from other community partners to support those at risk of developing long term conditions or those unlikely to accept a formal referral.

To support partnership working, Braveheart will:

- Maintain and develop relationships with a range of partners
- Actively promote the quality and value of the services it provides.

2. Communication

Communication is core to the further development of Braveheart and its services. Communication promotes the benefits of the work which Braveheart undertakes, raises the profile of the organisation and encourages wider participation. Braveheart's services are developed through listening to the views of users, volunteers and partners, thus ensuring that they feel they have a stake in the work of the organisation, and that the services which are delivered meet their needs. The target audiences for communication are therefore both internal and external:

- Current users and volunteers
- Potential and future users and volunteers
- Partners
- The general public
- Funders.

Braveheart will develop a Communication Plan which:

- Identifies target audiences
- Develops the key messages which the Board wishes to convey
- Uses a range of media, including social media, to convey the message
- Engages with volunteers, users and partners in the development of services.

3. Development of Services

No organisation wants to standstill. The Board of Braveheart believes that the services which Braveheart offers are effective, respond to the needs of those with a long term condition or at risk of developing one – and are efficient and sustainable at a time of increasing pressure on public expenditure.

Set beside the increasing pressure on public expenditure and the need to deliver services in a more sustainable fashion, is the growth in the number of older people and the pressure this will put on core NHS services. It is noted that partnership working as a key imperative is identified in the strategic plan for Forth Valley (NHS Forth Valley, Annual Plan and Local Delivery Plan, 2020).

Health inequalities are an ongoing priority within Scotland which the third sector is well placed to address. The third sector is closer to the communities that they serve and are more agile in the way they might deliver those services to meet local needs.

Braveheart will develop new services which respond to need and are creative in the way in which they are delivered through:

- Researching the unmet need which Braveheart could meet
- Piloting interventions to meet this need and show the value of the intervention
- Develop longer term provision and the funding to sustain it
- Search for and be ready to react to funding opportunities.

4. Funding

Braveheart, as with any third sector organisation, relies on external funding for its survival. Funding allows the organisation to employ the staff it needs to deliver and develop its services, allows volunteers to be supported and adequately reimbursed, and allows training and development activities to take place for Board members, staff and volunteers. Lastly, it is impossible to develop and deliver new services, projects or programmes without adequate resourcing.

Braveheart will develop an approach to funding which:

- Resources current programmes
- Sources and utilises resources to allow Braveheart to communicate effectively and efficiently with its target audiences
- Resources evaluation as part of core delivery
- Supports staff and volunteers
- Sources new funding opportunities to allow the development of new services
- Enable piloting interventions as a means of testing new ideas.

5. Evaluation

Braveheart is committed to providing quality services which support those with a long term condition or at risk of developing one, are sustainable and of value to

those taking part. It is also important that Braveheart can evidence to funders and prospective funders that the services it provides are cost effective, efficient and effective. Lastly, as an organisation committed to the delivery of quality services Braveheart needs to have information which supports the continuance of good practice.

The need for evaluation within Braveheart

The needs for conducting evaluations across the services of Braveheart are;

- A necessity for producing consistent services that will allow Braveheart to deliver services to identified clients
- A necessity to ensure that services provided are carried out to a high level of quality
- To collect information and data that can be used as evidence to enhance practices
- To ensure that service delivery is cost effective
- To collect information that can be embedded in reports to funders and drive further developments.

The Board is therefore committed to ensuring that evaluation is an intrinsic part of service delivery. The Board has developed an Evaluation Strategy which sets out the ways in which evaluation will be undertaken and embeds evaluation into the design of its services. This will enable the Board to demonstrate whether the resources invested in projects are well used, valuable and hence activity which should be maintained. This will support the partnership working and communication priorities outlined above.

Braveheart will develop an evaluation strategy to ensure:

- All that we do is evaluated using meaningful outcome measures
- The results of our evaluation will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders
- Where possible the impact of our activities on service users will be captured using qualitative and quantitative methodology.

Outcomes

The Board has identified four outcomes which it believes can be achieved through the delivery of the Strategic Plan and the five supporting pillars. The Board will be working towards these outcomes over the three year period of this Strategic Plan and will report on action towards meeting these outcomes on an annual basis.

- Braveheart values its core business and is recognised for its core business
- Braveheart is an organisation which has grown and expanded its activity
- Braveheart is recognised as an organisation which delivers quality services
- Braveheart is an organisation which puts partnership working at the core of its business and through this will generate new and effective activities and projects

The Braveheart Association Board
October 2015