

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN THE TIME OF COVID

INSIDE

07

Mental health, inside and out

Jan Hutchinson shares how her charity is working to look after the mental health of staff, as well as beneficiaries



10

Meet our Members

Adrian Lance of the Mental Health Foundation talks about understanding the impact of Covid on mental health



13

All change!

Hannah Kearthland and Kevin Waudby set out how charities can and should change in the face of sector disruption



07 COVER STORY

Charity staff, mental health and the pandemic by Jan Hutchinson



REGULARS

- 02 NEWS
- 04 MEMBERS MATTERS
- 05 CARON'S COMMENT
- 06 POLICY UPDATE
- 11 TEAM TALK
- 15 EVENTS

FEATURES

- 09 Navigating the 'new norm'
- 10 Culture trumps strategy
- 10 The five ways to wellbeing
- 11 CFG's Mentoring Scheme
- 12 Finding a mentor
- 13 How charities need to change
- 14 IFR4NPO update

Production and editing: Emma Abbott
Design: Steers McGillan Eves

If you have any queries about *Finance Focus* or are interested in writing for us, please contact **emma.abbott@cfg.org.uk**

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The healing power of nature

Last summer, four in 10 adults in the UK said they were close to breaking point at work. This startling figure was shared by the Chartered Accountants Benevolent Association (CABA) who polled 2,000 professionals working across multiple sectors in the UK.

CABA also found that the average working adult feels stressed for almost a third of their entire working day. Around half of those acknowledging this stress hadn't approached anyone to talk to about it – they hoped the problem would just go away.

According to Centre for Mental Health, mental health problems in the UK workforce cost employers almost £35 billion in 2016. Fast forward to 2020 and more recent research by the charity shows that at least half a million people may experience mental ill health as a

result of the pandemic. This could mean that an estimated 8.5 million adults in England will need support for mental health difficulties in the coming months and years.

With Mental Health Awareness Week less than two weeks away, there's never been a better time to raise awareness of these issues.

On page 7, we talk to **Jan Hutchinson from Centre for Mental Health** about how the charity has continued to deliver services during the pandemic, whilst simultaneously leading by example and supporting staff. And in our 'Meet our Members' column on page 8, we speak to **Adrian Lance of the Mental Health Foundation** about how the pandemic is affecting the nation's mental health.

On page 9, we report back from the March meeting of the Large Charities Discussion Group who met to talk about 'navigating the new norm' – a fascinating conversation steered by Chair Alan Sharpe that covered a lot of ground (too much to fully report!). And on page 10, **Amanda Ashworth of**

Skills for Care shares some great tips on how to boost our wellbeing.

Finding a mentor can empower us in ways we can't always predict, as Jessica Meddick explains in this month's Team Talk column (page 11). Jessica reflects on how **CFG's Mentoring Scheme** has grown from a simple idea into a supportive community in less than two years. If you're thinking about finding a mentor, please take a look at the scheme which is free to join this month, and read **Nicki Deeson's brilliant tips** to finding the right person (page 12).

It's thanks to the indefatigable enthusiasm of members and volunteers like Nicki and Alan that the CFG community is so supportive. During these uncertain times, it's hard to put a price on that and we are grateful for that awe-inspiring energy and commitment.

On a personal note, I was delighted to see that the theme of this year's Mental Health Awareness Week is 'Nature'. If there's one thing that helps me cope, it's getting outside these four walls to dig, weed, plant, walk or just sit. Nothing beats noticing how effortlessly nature does her thing after months of the harshest of conditions. I'm sure there's a lesson in there somewhere, but for now I'll just quietly celebrate the fact that spring has finally sprung.

Take good care,
Emma Abbott,
Communications Manager



How is your charity coping? Last chance to tell us!



The deadline for our quarterly **Charity Tracker Survey** is fast approaching! With just five to 10 minutes of your time, you can help us to tell the government just how much the pandemic has impacted charities like yours.

With charities left out of official statistics, the survey – led by Probono Economics, CloF and CFG – has been the sector's

leading source of economic analysis throughout the coronavirus crisis. Your responses have helped to calculate the £10 billion funding gap charities are experiencing, as well as to estimate that 60,000 jobs may be at risk.

Complete the survey by Sunday 2 May.

[Read the results of the most recent PBE/CloF/CFG Tracker Survey here.](#)

Calling all overseas development charities!



The Small International Development Charities Network (SIDCN) is **urgently collecting data** in order to understand and present the impact of the government's cuts to UK Aid.

Please complete this survey if you are a small UK-registered charity, working overseas and are affected by UK Aid cuts. If you have applied to Small Charities Challenge Fund (SCCF) round 6, 7 or 8, or to Community Partnership grants, [please click and complete.](#)

The **deadline for survey completion is 10am BST, Monday 3 May.** Thank you.

Returning to in-person events

The Fundraising Regulator and Chartered Institute of Fundraising have published new guidance to support charitable organisations as they plan their return to in-person events and community fundraising activities in a safe and responsible way. The guidance has been written in line with the Code of Fundraising Practice and government guidance in place for each UK nation.

[Read the guidance.](#)



Racial Equity funding available for small and local charities

Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales has launched Racial Equity funding for small and local charities that are led by and that support Black, Asian, and ethnic minority communities. Charities can now apply for two-year unrestricted grants of £50,000 alongside development support. The funding will be open year-round.

The Foundation is looking to support charities where more than half of their Trustee Board self-identify as Black, Asian or minority ethnic, with an annual income of between £25,000 and £1m, and with a strong track record of helping people from minority communities across 11 complex social issues.

Over the last year, the Covid-19 pandemic has shone a light on existing deep-rooted and systemic inequalities in society, with minoritised communities disproportionately affected by the crisis. These inequalities are present across the complex social issues the Foundation funds such as homelessness, domestic abuse, mental ill health and the criminal justice system, with Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities less well served by mainstream provision, and disproportionately affected.

Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales is committing at least a quarter of its £9.5m grants budget in 2021 for small



Attendees at The Angelou Centre's Rethinking Conference in 2019.

charities led by and for Black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities.

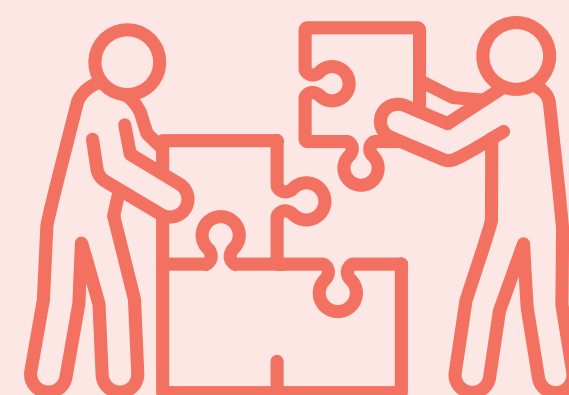
In December 2020, the Foundation awarded a £50,000 grant to The Angelou Centre in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, which empowers Black and minoritised women and children to rebuild their lives free from violence and abuse. In the past year alone, they have supported more than 850 people through their advocacy work.

The charity's Executive Director, Umme Imam, said: "Through the pandemic our referrals across services have continued to increase by 50% and referrals into our refuges increased sixfold as mainstream public and voluntary agencies failed to accommodate destitute migrant women. Core funding from the Foundation has enabled us to continue our support to the most deprived and disadvantaged survivors of violence and abused women with no recourse to public funds."

Find out more about the Foundation's funding criteria and eligibility.

CFG Mentoring Scheme

Are you interested in connecting with sector peers and developing your leadership and mentoring skills? We have a few spaces left for the next mentoring scheme webinar series which kicks off next week.



Free to CFG members, the dates for your diary are:

- **Wednesday 5 May** 16.00–17.30 – Introduction and Matching
- **Wednesday 12 May** 16.00–17.30 – Building Skills
- **Wednesday 19 May** 16.00–17.30 – Get Ready for Mentoring

Over the course of the webinars you will network with sector peers, establish meaningful mentoring connections and build essential mentoring skills – along with plenty of time to practise! To secure your place please contact Zoe.

Turn to page 11 to read Jessica Meddick's reflections on how the scheme is supporting CFG members.

Come on board!

Could you be a CFG Trustee?

We are looking for individuals from our member charities to step forward and nominate themselves to become a member of our dynamic Board of Trustees.

As a CFG trustee, you will be in good company and at the heart of strategic decision-making at CFG. You'll also be helping to shape the future of the wider sector.

Chair of the Board of Trustees, Gary Forster, comments: "Being on the CFG board is a privilege. This is partly because of the extraordinary people that make up our board, but also because you get to work with an executive team at the top of their game."



The deadline for applications is Tuesday, 1 June. Find out more!

SAVE THE DATE!

Gift Aid Awareness Day 2021 will be held on Thursday, 7 October.

The CFG team is looking for members to join our 2021 Gift Aid Awareness Day steering group to help plan this year's Tick the Box campaign. If you'd like to help shape this year's campaign and toolkit, please email the team for further information. We look forward to hearing from you!



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WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

WE'D LIKE TO WELCOME OUR NEW CHARITY AND CORPORATE MEMBERS!

[Blood Cancer UK](#)
[Clean Break Theatre Company](#)
[Farrer and Co](#)
[Forum for the Future](#)
[Fuel Productions Limited](#)
[Hackney Council for Voluntary Service](#)
[Hewitsons](#)
[HW Fisher](#)
[Institute for Employment Studies](#)
[Link Age Southwark](#)
[PMCL Consulting](#)
[Primary Science Teaching Trust](#)
[Relief International](#)
[Teach First](#)
[The Audience Agency](#)
[The Northam Care Trust](#)
[Voscur Limited](#)

Spread the word about your membership with your [teams and trustees](#) – they can [register on your membership account](#) for free.

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW AIM MEMBERS!

We're delighted to welcome all our new Association of Independent Museums joiners over the past few weeks, who have joined us through our partnership with arts and heritage membership organisation AIM.

[Aardwolfe Associates](#)
[Imperial War Museums](#)
[Kids in Museums](#)
[Manx National Heritage](#)
[The Charleston Trust](#)
[The Powell Cotton Museum](#)
[Transport Museum Wythall](#)

AIM members – login to myCFG to add new contacts to your account, or email our [Membership Team](#).



MAKE THE MOST OF THE CFG COMMUNITY AND YOUR BENEFITS THIS YEAR!

Whether you joined CFG to meet other finance professionals across the UK, stay up to date on the latest sector news, or build your skills and knowledge through our events and training programme, we encourage all our members to make the most of being a part of the CFG community!

What you receive as a member

- The opportunity to have your say on vital policy work and CFG campaigns to support a sustainable sector
- Expert practical advice through our [CFG corporate community helplines](#)
- Discounts on [events and training](#) including the largest charity finance event of the year the CFG Annual Conference

- Member-only access to [monthly meetings](#) and [special interest groups](#)
- Member-only access to exclusive publications including one of our top-rated member benefits – [Finance Focus!](#)
- Access to CFG's free [mentoring programme](#)
- And much more. Your membership gives access to your whole organisation, from your trustee board to your HR team members.

Read more in your [membership brochure](#) which you can share within your team members.

Your colleagues can register for free at www.cfg.org.uk/registration

Ensure your membership details are up to date through our online members' area MyCFG including the option to [select your preferred communications](#).

HELP US TO SUPPORT OTHER CHARITY FINANCE PROFESSIONALS

We're here to inspire a financially confident, dynamic and trustworthy sector. Everything we do is led by our goal to enable charities to deliver more impact to their causes.

Tell us about the best bit of being a CFG member and help us to spread the word and connect with your sector colleagues across the UK. Your support is hugely appreciated.

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CFGTestimonials

Thank you.

SHARE YOUR STORY AT THE CFG ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2021

DEADLINE
FOR SUBMISSION
10 MAY

Following the success of our first online Annual Conference in 2020, we're delighted to be returning with our fully online four-day event 11–14 October. Each year the CFG Annual Conference offers a range of speakers from the corporate and charity sectors.

Do you have a case study, learning or tried and tested best practice to share, inspired by this year's theme [Leading the way – Effective, Inclusive, Resilient](#)?

It's been a tough year for the sector, and small or large we want to hear about your experiences in the context of one or all of these areas in our event theme; and how you're utilising your learnings to forge ahead. Whether it's how you're making your finance processes more effective, or taking a fresh look at your EDI strategy, we encourage all our members, no matter where you are in your career journey, to apply.

For this year's Annual Conference, we are looking for charity finance professionals and leaders from a variety of backgrounds and organisations to share their experience so that others can learn from them. This year we are looking for a wide range of sessions that all levels, from junior to more experienced finance professionals, can benefit from.

This year's theme: [Leading the way – Effective, Inclusive, Resilient](#)

We've faced a time of significant challenge and change, as finance leaders and as a sector. This has influenced not only how we work, but how we see ourselves as individuals and organisations, and how we decide on the direction of the path ahead.

The CFG Annual Conference 2021 will empower you as finance teams and charity leaders to feel supported and confident in making the best decisions for your organisation and its culture for long-term strength. We want to equip you to be the best you can be in an environment that continues to test us, so you can focus on your role supporting the people and causes you serve.

To submit a session

Complete our [online form](#) and email it to events@cfg.org.uk by the end of 10 May 2021. The sessions will be reviewed and shortlisted and we might get back in touch to ask for further details before making a final decision.

Lastly, make sure you pencil [11–14 October 2021](#) in your diary, we can't wait to see you there!



Rainy days and reserves



Caron Bradshaw OBE
Chief Executive, Charity Finance Group

The relationship between risk and reserves has been widely acknowledged. Recent events; reporting on the collapse of Kids Company and subsequent failed directors’ disqualification proceedings and the (yet to report) Charity Commission investigation, have got me thinking about the potential impact on the ‘rules’ around reserves.

Additionally, how charities have fared over the last 12 months of the pandemic and the relationship with reserves (or lack of them) feels timely to reflect upon. There is the potential to overreact in applying, and setting, the rules for the future. As [Gird Gigerenzer highlighted in his TED talk, Risk Literacy](#), there is a danger when we’ve witnessed significant risk play out that we react irrationally,

taking decisions we believe on an emotional level are safer, but which inadvertently increase our overall exposure in the process. The law does not require charities to keep any reserves, in fact the presumption works in the opposite direction; one should *only* keep reserves if there is justification for not spending the money immediately. Nor are there a minimum

number of months of operating costs which the Charity Commission requires you to keep or even views as best practice. I’ve recently been reminded this myth persists. There is no straightforward ratio or percentage you can apply to all charities to arrive at the ideal sum. The answer to the question ‘how much should a charity keep in reserves?’ must be ‘it depends!’ But on what does it depend? And have the last 12 months shattered our perception of those dependencies? What should we be thinking about, now that we are a year into this crisis, potentially starting to find our rhythm for new ways of working and as we think about transitioning to life post Covid? The starting point for me is captured in the oldie but goodie publication [Beyond Reserves](#) that applies notwithstanding Covid. Reserves are an asset which needs to be actively managed, the levels of which

should be set as part of the strategic planning you do. And, recognising the purpose of funds held, you need to be cognisant of current and future beneficiaries. The resources available to the charity, the robustness or predictability of the income, the business model, the committed expenditure, the speed with which something can be paused or stopped or conversely the need to move quickly and invest resources in new activity, are all things which determine how much you should keep in reserve. Some charities choose to focus on liquidity – the frequency and ease with which assets can be released, the management of cash flows and the balance of opportunity costs of holding cash in reserve versus holding less and borrowing against assets if required. Back when *Beyond Reserves* was published, the talk was of accommodating [black swan events](#) – those risks which, whilst remote, could be catastrophic to the organisation’s financial wellbeing. You would be forgiven for thinking that the last year was less of a single swan and more of a flock as we faced income from all resources being interrupted, demand

Reserves are not there to be protected and preserved, but to protect and preserve the delivery of charitable impact.

spiking and uncertainty in the wider economy and society. How do we react to this? Do those who had black swan provision in their reserves calculation now conclude the reoccurrence of such events, with profound impact on all areas of activity, is reduced? Do those who did not make provision for a global pandemic now entirely rethink their policy and retain sums to withstand another year of disruption? If we do determine we require more in the tank to safeguard against future crisis, how do we go about generating reserves when we may have depleted what we hold, reduced our staff and are facing uncertainty for the foreseeable future? I regret that I have no quick or easy answers. However, I would caution against knee jerk reactions.

The Charity Commission revised its reserves guidance in the time following the demise of Kids Company. Whilst there are undoubtedly lessons to learn (for example, whether it is prudent to rely on the fundraising prowess of a single individual) their focus on avoiding unplanned closure felt more about perception than balanced reflection. It left contradictions within the guidance and a confusing picture for charities to consider. We must avoid doing the same. The considerations we should explore in reaching our policies, on retaining rather than spending resources, have not changed. The adequacy to withstand what we’ve just experienced is not a reliable predictor of what would be required in the face of a future disaster.

ONE TO WATCH
Watch Helena Clayton's interview with Caron Bradshaw on love in the context of leadership and organisational development.



Reserves are an asset which needs to be actively managed, the levels of which should be set as part of the strategic planning you do.

Indeed, now might conversely be the time to reduce the sums held, releasing funds to adapt to new ways of working or to meet need arising from the fallout of the pandemic. Reserves are not there to be protected and preserved, but to protect and preserve the delivery of charitable impact. Life is going to be uncertain and challenging for some time to come. But with our skills, knowledge, experience and financial leadership, I am confident that charities can do what is right for the short, medium and longer term – provided we remain rational in our assessment of risk and reserves.

On Our Radar



Roberta Fusco
Director of Policy & Communications, CFG

Richard Sagar
Policy Manager, CFG

The conversation about data in, of and for the charity and social change sector continues to rumble along as it always has and doubtless always will. It has become the hot topic again in the wake of the impact that the Covid pandemic, coupled with the international aid budget cut, government procurement practices, reductions in Local Government spend and EU funding following Brexit has had and will continue to have on our sector.

In an era where information and data is top currency, the accusations levelled against the sector for not being more successful in making the case to government for additional targeted support include the lack of robust and timely data on the sector's impact, financial health and operation.

And yet, as we see through the IFR4NPO project, the financial data required from charities in the UK through the charities SORP is held as somewhat of a beacon where such standardised reporting does

not yet exist. However, the timeliness of that data and the ability to hold up a mirror to the sector in real-time is something that has eluded us to date. And it's a moot point whether that would be the holy grail that would answer all our prayers.

As part of the Law Family Commission on Civil Society, ProBono Economics is investigating the role and potential for better data about social sector organisations, with a particular focus on charities, and CFG were one of a number of organisations and data experts who participated in a workshop for organisations to discuss what the data gaps are, their implications, and why these are challenging to address. The discussions and the conclusions were summarised in [a report](#) and [a blog](#) and will inform the Law Family Commission on Civil Society's work on a data mapping exercise to identify the various sources of data about the social sector, which will be published as an open-access tool in partnership with the Data Collective. We hope to share more details of that work with our members in due course.

G7 and Civil Society priorities for tackling global injustice

The UK has taken over presidency of the G7 in 2021 and in June, the G7 will meet in the beautiful surroundings of Cabris Bay, Cornwall. Bond has been appointed as lead of the C7, a group of organisations responsible for engaging with the G7 on urgent civil society issues, to coordinate dialogue between UK government and civil society organisations. CFG participated in the C7 Engagement Roundtables which directly informed the [communique for the C7 Summit](#) and the wider G7 work. CFG will continue to engage and participate in the discussion. If you'd like to find out more, please [visit Bond's website](#).

Restoring Trust in Audit and Corporate Governance

Government has published a 16-week consultation on wide-ranging reforms to the audit and corporate governance regime. The proposals contained in this white paper could have far-reaching

implications and could impact some of the largest charities in England and Wales by imposing stricter reporting duties and extending the 'Public Interest Entity' regime to more charities.

The potential changes to what constitutes a Public Interest Entity has to be understood in the context of large charities' duty to deliver public benefit and of charity Trustee duties and responsibilities.

CFG will be working with partners to respond to the consultation and would like to hear from members interested in contributing to our submission. [Please email the team](#).

Launch of Consultation Paper for IFR4NPO

CFG is proud to be the UK Country Champion for the initiative to develop the world's first Internationally applicable Financial Reporting guidance for Non-Profit-Organisations (IFR4NPO). This will improve the clarity and consistency of non-profit organisation financial reports, resulting in greater credibility and trust in the not-for-profit sector globally. In the UK we of course have the SORP, but IFR4NPO aims to create a global standard and we must

“

CFG is proud to be the UK Country Champion for the initiative to develop the world's first Internationally applicable Financial Reporting guidance for Non-Profit-Organisations...

take this opportunity to shape the future for domestic and international charities.

There are two elements to the consultation paper, with Part 1 closing in July 2021 and Part 2 closing in September 2021. CFG will be holding seminars and sharing more information soon, but in the meantime, please take a look at the website and turn to page 14 to find out more about the consultation. Take your opportunity to shape the future of not for profit financial reporting standards.

Charity Commission Consultation on Responsible Investment Guidance

The Charity Commission is consulting on updating the sections of their responsible investment guidance, otherwise known as CC 14. The commission is seeking “views on the clarity of draft revised guidance for charity trustees about adopting a responsible (or ‘ethical’) approach to investing their charity’s funds”.

Part of the justification for the Charity Commission updating the guidance is that they believe that some trustees felt they are unable to make responsible investments, because:

- They perceive they have an overriding legal duty to maximise the financial returns when investing, regardless of any other consideration.
- That there is insufficient assurance that trustees can decide to take a responsible approach to investment.
- A perception that the Commission does not accept that trustees can comply with their duties fully if they adopt a responsible investment approach.
- That some felt that the guidance lacks practical advice.

They are therefore consulting on the draft revised guidance to understand whether it will provide greater clarity about the discretion trustees have to make responsible investments, and reassure

trustees that they can decide to adopt a responsible investment approach in most circumstances.

Based on conversations with members, it is generally welcomed that the Commission is taking the first steps to allow charity trustees to decide to pursue investments they consider more responsible without worrying that they are in breach of charity law. It states that charities “can take a responsible investment approach even if there is no apparent direct conflict with your charity’s charitable purposes, if you can show this is in the best interest of your charity.”

The consultation also mistakenly frames responsible investment at odds with maximising financial return. It is increasingly apparent that there is not a trade-off between maximising financial return and investment in companies which qualify as ESG. As numerous financial bodies have pointed out, all firms need to give consideration to how they will be able to meet climate targets, set out in the Paris agreement, and beyond this the UK governments more ambitious decarbonisation targets.

Companies are at risk of having ‘stranded assets’ if their business model cannot adapt to these changes, and so should be considered as being increasingly risky investments. This is why evidence from Deutsche Bank now suggests that ESG investments are providing stable returns comparable with their counterparts.

However, there is a feeling shared by CFG that the guidance does not go far enough, and is largely follows what many in the sector, and investment firms, are already doing, rather than showing a bold new approach.

CFG will be responding to the consultation, and if you wish to feed into our response, please do [get in touch](#).

[Find out more on the consultation on the Charity Commission website.](#)

Charity staff, mental health and the pandemic



Jan Hutchinson
Director of Programmes at Centre for Mental Health



It’s no surprise to anyone that our mental health has in the main been adversely affected by the pandemic. Most charities have had to furlough staff; charity shops and ‘non-essential’ services have been forced to shut. The workload of some finance staff has dropped as a result of reduced transactions and diminished income. Staff have concerns about the security of future employment in an increasingly digital workplace where automation may replace traditional posts.

Centre for Mental Health is a policy and research charity, we didn’t *have* to cease or reduce operations because our staff (it turns out) can all work from home. But we didn’t escape a significant loss of the funding we had been promised. We took all our work online, including research interviews and our IPS training.

We knew our wellbeing was affected, and as a mental health charity we were adamant that we would provide exemplary support to our team of 22 people – half of whom work two or three days per week. We took practical steps; we:

1. Ran internal and external staff surveys to understand the feelings, concerns, ideas and opinions of our staff since the start of the pandemic.
2. Checked in with each person to see what equipment could be provided to improve their home-working set up.
3. Ensured that everyone took the annual leave they were due in 2020, and had a break away from the desk.
4. Established twice-weekly staff drop-in tea break times.
5. Appointed an informal wellbeing lead, to provide a listening ear.
6. Allowed extra paid time away from work, for exercise during lockdown.
7. Organised 5pm social activities.
8. Moved our regular associate onto a permanent contract.

9. Sent monthly FAQs about our finances, support available and expectations.
10. Posted out Easter chocolates to thank staff for their efforts.

The staff surveys showed we agree with a report from the Institute of Employment Studies which found:

- 64% of workers rated the ability to work flexibly as the best feature of working from home.
- But 82% miss the informal contact with their colleagues – it’s this ‘social deficit’ that workers feel is the worst aspect of working from home.

Our Trustees stepped up alongside the staff, meeting more regularly via zoom, encouraging staff and sensibly quantifying the reserves that we could spend this year, to avoid stringent cuts or redundancies. We reduced our rent by 30% through downsizing our office space, but we decided not to lose the office at this stage. The main reason for this was our commitment to provide a kind of retreat for staff who need to work away from their home environment occasionally or feel the need of the physical presence of a colleague to reduce their isolation.

It was a deliberate choice for us to bring together the complementary strengths in our team for the benefit of the mental health sector. We worked on a series forecasting mental health need and we engaged with people living through the effects of the pandemic on their mental health by launching the Year in Our Lives research project.

Neither of these pieces of work was externally funded, unfortunately the applications we made were unsuccessful, but we took a gamble on our belief that relevance and effectiveness in a time of crisis would lead to the wider recognition of the quality of our work and future



It was a deliberate choice for us to bring together the complementary strengths in our team for the benefit of the mental health sector.

commissions to return us to financial balance. Staff salaries were paid, in part from our reserves. We furloughed some finance staff for short periods, but we decided against kneejerk redundancies, which would be unsettling for the whole team, and would do very little in the short term to reduce our fixed costs.

Our duty at this time, as leaders of charities, is to estimate, plan for and meet the costs of the pandemic. Each cost and saving is likely to have a positive and negative effect on the future performance of the organisation and on the wellbeing of our staff. One of the best initiatives that Centre for Mental Health has introduced is the ‘green hour’ – this was written into our contracts of employment before the pandemic and remains a much appreciated staff benefit.

One paid hour each week (pro rata for part-time workers) can be taken from normal working hours for personal wellbeing. It might be an extended lunch break to see a friend, a hair appointment, a long walk, or time with children, etc. We are

not overly prescriptive, within reason – if it helps wellbeing, and doesn’t involve alcohol, it is allowed.

We see this as a chance to invest to save. Staff needs are acknowledged, and they are supported. It contributes to staff retention. In practice hardly anyone takes all their lunch hours and their green hour every week, so we lose nothing in productivity and gain by supporting staff in those simple things in life such as a quick dash to the post office with a birthday card.

The next few years will continue to challenge us, not just financially. We don’t yet know how anyone will be able to combine a return to a full and busy office, hold zoom meetings with a range of external partners and have space to concentrate on writing a piece such as this. We will need ideas and input from all our staff, and we will need to support staff to upskill and have the resilience to work flexibly, which can only be achieved by a commitment to prioritise those things which create and support mental wellbeing at work.

About the author

Jan Hutchinson is Director of Programmes at Centre for Mental Health, overseeing operations and supporting the staff team with HR functions, internal policies and a wide range of governance and practical issues. Jan trained as a social worker and has managed mental health services in charities, a Local Authority, NHS Trusts, and a not-for-profit care provider. She is looking forward to the full return of live theatre and to finally attending RunFestRun which has been postponed three times.

Q&A with Adrian Lance

Director of Finance & Systems at Mental Health Foundation



This month, we talk to Adrian Lance, Director of Finance & Systems at the Mental Health Foundation, about good mental health for all.

► What does the Mental Health Foundation do?

Since 1949, the Mental Health Foundation has been the UK’s leading charity for everyone’s mental health. With prevention at the heart of what we do, we aim to find and address the sources of mental health problems so that people and communities can thrive.



► The past year has been a challenge for the nation’s mental health and wellbeing. What has your organisation achieved during the pandemic?

One of our biggest achievements has been to produce our ongoing significant research project, Coronavirus: Mental Health in the Pandemic. We have led an ongoing, UK-wide, long-term study of how the pandemic is affecting people’s mental health, working with the Universities of Cambridge, Swansea, De Montfort Leicester, Strathclyde and Queen’s University Belfast. Since March 2020, the study has gathered responses from more than 36,000 UK adults, giving us a picture of the pandemic’s emotional impacts over the last year.

Inevitably, it’s complex, with some trends going in the ‘right’ direction – anxiety is dwindling, for instance – while others show things getting worse. The prevalence of loneliness is sharply up, which matters because connections with others help people cope with adversity.

Perhaps our most striking finding is that while everyone is caught in the storm of the pandemic, some people’s boats are much better than others. Among those having the hardest time emotionally are 18 to 24 year-olds, people who are unemployed, single parents and people with disabling physical health problems.

► What’s the biggest wellbeing issue for charity finance professionals right now?

Being a charity finance professional brings its own particular stresses and strains, much like other professions and probably the funding challenges due to the combination of Covid-19 and Brexit, combined with the extra stress and time it takes when trying to navigate and understand the new rules and regulations, is the main one.

However, realistically, the challenges have been in line with those felt across the country and world in all different walks of life during the last year; stress, isolation, lack of connection and overwhelm, amongst others.



► If the government could change one thing that would make your charity’s life easier, what would it be?

Increasing the profile of and importance placed on mental health, so it is on a par with physical health and genuinely addressing the prevention agenda. The Mental Health Foundation has been calling for a cross-governmental mental health recovery plan, as actions taken across all government departments can help people protect and recover their wellbeing. This is especially true during and after the pandemic and this can prevent more severe mental health problems from taking hold as a consequence of the crisis.



“The resilience of the population has been amazing, the way people have been helping each other get through speaks to a fundamental positive trait in humanity.”

Half of UK adults

who had experienced stress because of the pandemic said visiting green spaces, such as parks, helped them cope.

Research from the Mental Health Foundation and collaborating universities, 2020.

► What positive changes has your organisation seen in health and wellbeing over the last year?

It is hard to focus on positives when there has been so much pain, suffering and hardship in society, but like all great challenges facing society there is always a hope that something better can come from it.

The resilience of the population has been amazing, the way people have been helping each other get through speaks to a fundamental positive trait in humanity, that they want to be part of a caring and inclusive society that cares about everyone, that can rise above being some imagined economics textbook homo-economicus person, who is solely interested in themselves.

In addition, the sudden move to remote/home working has actually shown that a new way of working is possible, and it can provide an improved work/life balance and increased wellbeing amongst other benefits, if adopted and supported correctly.



► What is the largest source of support your organisation has gained from CFG membership?

Probably knowing our organisation isn’t alone. There are other professionals who face the same and similar issues and who genuinely care and want to support the sector in totality.

Thank you for sharing!



www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Navigating the new norm

Learnings from the Large Charities Discussion Group meeting



Navigating the ‘new norm’ was the subject on everyone’s lips at CFG’s Large Charities Discussion Group’s meeting in March. Attended by leaders from more than 20 of the UK’s largest charities, the meeting took an in-depth look at the many issues surrounding the return to the office following the pandemic, vaccinations and flexible working.

Working from home (WFH)

Members kicked off the meeting agreeing that the most imminent and important post-pandemic issue to navigate was the safe transition back to the office and how flexible working could and should continue. The switch to home working is proving good for productivity, work/life balance and the pocket, with thousands saved on commutes and coffees. But the bigger picture is still far from clear, say some charity leaders. Just how much time will be spent in the office this year and next is largely unknown. To what extent will the office need to alter to accommodate new working patterns and

ensure, as far as it practicable, safety? Should office space be reduced and if so, by how much? A new study by National Bureau of Economic Research in the USA polled more than 30,000 US workers to find out if their WFH arrangements would continue after the pandemic. The research found that 20% of full workdays would remain at home, compared with just 5% before the pandemic.

Despite significant gains in the switch to homeworking, not everyone is a fan. Earlier this year, the boss of Goldman Sachs declared WFH an ‘aberration’ despite evidence that for many organisations it has improved productivity. Charity leaders are taking a more balanced view. One finance director pointed out that where large teams are concerned there are both advantages and disadvantages to ongoing flexible working away from the office. Home working, they said, had become “irresistible” and that to make it work effectively, greater structure, trust and transparency would be needed.

For many large charities, increased home working and hot desking had been a goal pre-pandemic, but Covid-19 had taken them there harder and faster than they could ever have imagined. One finance director commented: “It’s worth thinking back to where we wanted to be before Covid, which was getting more people working from home. But now we’ve gone to the extreme of that.”

“When we move back into the office, the challenge will be setting the framework of when some people have got to be at home or work. The challenging bit is how best to give flexibility. For example, when we have a team meeting, do we strongly encourage people to be there?” The logistical and communication challenges also needed to be worked out, they added, asking: “How do we chair a meeting with half our people in the room and half at home?”

Onboarding new staff remotely had proved tricky for many, but there were advantages for recruitment. One finance leader stated that they’d been able to hire people attracted by the lack of commute, and that it had “opened up the pool of candidates”. And acknowledging that Covid will remain a risk

“For many employees, particularly younger staff, it has been impossible to work in a dedicated or separate working space.”

for some time, it was agreed that a blend of online and classroom learning was now “far from being a nice-to-have, but an essential requirement”.

Inequalities

Crucially, it was pointed out that the home working set-up did not suit everyone. For many employees, particularly younger staff, it has been impossible to work in a dedicated or separate working space. Obtaining reliable broadband is also an ongoing problem.

There has been very little research into home working during the pandemic, but one member of the group pointed to recent research by Stanford University which showed that ‘more educated, higher-earning employees are far more likely to work from home. These employees continue to earn, develop skills, and advance careers.

‘Those unable to work from home – either because of the nature of their jobs or because they lack suitable space or internet connections – are being left behind. They face bleak prospects if their skills erode during the shutdown.’

If Covid has taught us anything, it’s that although we are all in the same storm, we’re not all in the same boat.

Keeping teams motivated and the team spirit alive during the pandemic has been difficult for most large charities. Many have tried to counter this by holding fun events and get-togethers. However, according to one member of the group: “This was more of a challenge for finance. It might be a generalisation, but finance tends to attract introverts and so some were uncomfortable with this.”

Others in the group pointed out that it is difficult to have informal, side conversations and join in, and therefore difficult to prevent the formation of silos. Introducing more regular one-to-one meetings worked to some extent, but most of those taking part in the discussion felt they hadn’t yet cracked remote culture and communications.

“If Covid has taught us anything, it’s that although we are all in the same storm, we’re not all in the same boat.”

Back in the office

Many large charities have already put in place policies and procedures to make the office as safe and welcoming as it can be. One charity leader said that the majority of their employees were happy to return to the office, with only a minority reluctant to head back.

It was noted that younger people and those who live close to their offices were among those who were most keen to get back to the office – some were “desperate to return”, partly because they wanted to enjoy the social side of work once more.

As more people return to the office at once, the logistics of safely accommodating workers will become more challenging. However, as one member of the group pointed out: “The greater challenge is learning to live with the virus, rather than just trying to stop the spread of it.”

Health and safety while working from home was also front of mind. Many large charities have covered many or all the costs of setting up a comfortable and safe home working environment, and acknowledged they still had a duty “keep on top of that”.

Navigating the ‘new norm’

Charity finance leaders agreed that there were many practical solutions to the issues raised by WFH and the return to the office, but for the most part it was still work in progress. Below are the ten tips from CFG’s Large Charities Discussion Group meeting on how to navigate the ‘new norm’:

1. Develop robust policies, procedures around working from home (WFH).
2. Establish and clearly communicate expectations around WFH and office returns.
3. Support continued WFH set-ups – stay on top of the health, safety and wellbeing aspects.
4. Ensure you have effective performance review and onboarding programmes in place.
5. Create time and make space for more informal gatherings and one-to-ones.
6. Plan ahead and set aside budget for ongoing office adaptations.
7. Split the week into ‘shift’ patterns to accommodate safe office working.
8. Seek ways to have face-to-face time, especially for creative or project-based work.
9. Don’t assume that we can predict what the new normal will look like!

Culture trumps strategy



James Taylor
Audit Senior Manager, Cooper Parry

When you hear ‘accountants’, what’s the first thing that pops into your head? Ill-fitting grey suits? Wooden bureaux? Jargon-laden drivel? We won’t take offence because that was us at the start of the Millennium.

Something had to change. We decided we didn’t want a business like that and that the industry didn’t need to be like that either. So, we set out on a mission to transform a negative, divided culture into a positive, electrifying one, smashing every accountancy stereotype to smithereens. It wasn’t easy but cultural change never is because your culture is made up of so many ingredients but, ultimately, brought to life by your people. Back in 2004, when our wheels of change started to turn, we created three cultural cornerstones: high performance, entrepreneurial and fun. We were competitive and hugely ambitious but, above all, we wanted to enjoy the ride. Turning those words into reality took tough decisions. Some were gut-wrenching but we slowly started to chisel away at the shackles and red tape of the corporate world. We set out to make a dent in the market, with colourful branding and a tone of voice that other business advisers shied

away from. It was a projection of the personality and energy our people shared each day. The results were plain for all to see and we started to grow. Fast.

Lessons learnt

So, what could possibly go wrong? The global financial crisis in 2008 had our whole industry keeled over. We’d overstretched, lost our focus and tried to dabble in too many areas. Just to survive we had to go through some heart-breaking restructuring, losing a lot of incredible people. Licking our wounds, we bought some time to rebuild. It was a brutal period, but we survived, and we made sure the lessons we learnt would shape everything great about Cooper Parry and our culture today.

We knew we’d lost the good will of our team, post-recession, and we realised that our relationship with them didn’t just need repairing but needed to become stronger and deeper. So, we created four

more cultural cornerstones: trust and accountability, transparency, strengths-based and, finally, ‘living our values’. We focused on creating one Cooper Parry culture across our locations with one purpose: to Disrupt, Lead and Make Life Count. So, what does that culture feel like?

It’s an ever-burning belief that to achieve our ambitions we need to create a business that our people love being a part of. We need to become the place to work and that’s never rung truer than in our Not for Profit team. That’s why we always say ‘culture trumps strategy’.

When our people are happy and engaged, we know we’ll attract and retain top talent. We know we’ll deliver a remarkable service and we know we’ll have ‘fans’ – people who will not only like working with us but who will also recommend us. Then, we will keep working with more and more likeminded people along the way.

Lockdown has re-shaped our approach to culture again and we’ve had to find new, exciting ways to take everything our people loved about our physical space – the interaction, the collaboration, the community – into the digital one. Microsoft Teams has been an irreplaceable part of that.



There are many benefits of our work ethos that can be applied to the charity environment, such as shout-outs, individual and team celebrations, and virtual social activities, creating an environment that people are happy to engage with and work in.

Lockdown also created a culture change where we demonstrated more empathy and sympathy, and where we connected virtually more than physically. It developed opportunities for flexible and remote working which had previously been limited. As we begin to work in a post-lockdown environment, there is no reason for this to change.

“
Lockdown also created a culture change where we demonstrated more empathy and sympathy, and where we connected virtually more than physically.

The Five Ways to Wellbeing



Amanda Ashworth
Project Manager, Skills for Care

Wellbeing at work relates to every aspect of working life, from the physical environment and its quality and safety, to how the workforce feels about themselves, the work they are doing, the place they work and their organisation’s culture.

Below Amanda Ashworth of Skills for Care shares five ways to help improve your and boost your wellbeing.

- 1) Connect:** Feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need. Strong social relationships are supportive, encouraging and meaningful. Broader relationships are important for feelings of connectedness, familiarity and sense of self-worth associated with an individual’s position in a community.
- 2) Be active:** Essential for people at all ages, both as a mechanism for slowing age-related cognitive decline and for promoting wellbeing. Activities, like walking, can have the added benefit of encouraging social interactions.
- 3) Take notice:** Savouring a positive experience can help to reinstate life priorities. Heightened awareness enhances an individual’s self-

understanding and allows an individual to make choices aligned to his or her own values and intrinsic motivations.

- 4) Keep learning:** Feelings of satisfaction are associated with both progress and goal attainment. Learning enhances an individual’s self-esteem, encouraging social interaction and a more active life.
- 5) Give:** Giving and sharing are important for defining a sense of purpose in the community and a sense of self-worth. Giving can lead to new and stronger relationships in the future.

We know that stress and burn-out are real issues for charity sector professionals, and this is especially true in the adult social care sector where there have been additional challenges and restrictions during the pandemic.

If you work for a social care charity, come along to our new event dedicated to the adult social care sector, the CFG Social Care Conference 2021, held on 10 June. We’ll be joined by Amanda and more sector leaders, and your peers from across the UK, to explore the key issues affecting the landscape for social care organisations.

BOOK NOW

Mighty oaks from tiny acorns grow



Jessica Meddick
Senior Member and Insight Officer, CFG

When we first set out to develop our mentoring scheme for members two years ago, the first place we started was by fully understanding what mentoring is. The first definition that a quick internet search came up with was: ‘Mentorship is a relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person’.

This definition felt out-of-date and confusing, not least because it assumed that people could only become mentors if they themselves assumed to have some greater knowledge or experience than someone that hadn’t otherwise met. We didn’t want this limiting definition to shape who stepped forward to volunteer as a mentor and we didn’t want those interested in mentoring to doubt their own

abilities or potential. We wanted to ensure that all members feel empowered and capable of mentoring. Our early vision was to tackle this definition head-on and move away from the traditional hierarchal mentor and mentee relationship. We were inspired by the different approaches adopted by other organisations, such as reverse mentoring and peer-to-peer mentoring. Peer mentoring is particularly exciting

because it offers the opportunity for both parties to reach their goals and to also build confidence through practising key mentoring skills.

Breaking down barriers

We began by acknowledging that people bring many different personal qualities, skill sets and experiences to the table, and *all* have the potential to be great mentors. Not only did we want to challenge accepted notions of what makes a great leader, we also wanted to find ways to empower and inspire younger people in the sector, challenge hierarchical structures and drive improved working relationships. A lofty goal, but one worth shooting for!

That was our starting point, and fast forward to March 2021, we are approaching the second birthday of the CFG mentoring scheme and our third successful cohort is in full flow. Our initial scheme took place

“*It’s hard not to be enthusiastic when we hear positive anecdotes from both mentors and mentees.*”

through an informal, relaxed event with mentoring myth-busting, ice breakers and a matching workshop. From this initial event, we successfully matched 10 pairs, with seven peer relationships established who then received formal mentoring training.

Since then, our approach has changed due to the pandemic. The scheme was converted to a digital matching event, with a three-part webinar series to skill the group in mentoring. We now also run monthly mentoring sessions where all our cohorts are invited to check in with each other, as well as take part in practical exercises to brush up their mentoring skills.

It was a challenge to recreate the informal nature of our mentoring scheme online. For many, the ability to connect and be oneself whilst sat at a screen is not always easy and we were concerned that it would change the dynamics of what we were trying to achieve, and how. It can take a bit of time, but our concerns were, for the most part, unfounded.

There is also one clear benefit of moving the scheme online during the pandemic. With many now working from home, it’s easier than ever to find time to check in and connect. The scheme has never been more accessible because geographical

barriers no longer exist. This has enriched the match-making process and supports our vision in ways we could never have imagined.

Thriving in difficult times

These are turbulent times, but I really believe that comfort and support has been found in this small mentoring community. I can speak for myself when I say that I have absolutely found comfort in the group. We get to know each cohort and we take great pride in their mentoring journey. It’s hard not to be enthusiastic when we hear positive anecdotes from both mentors and mentees. Some truly meaningful relationships have developed through these sessions and this has opened up a wide range of conversation topics. We are reminded often of the power of communication and how important it is to have a safe space to talk.

Looking ahead, we plan to continue our work and are currently preparing for our next cohort. The webinar series is booked

in for 90 minutes, three Wednesdays in a row commencing the 28 of April. There are a few places left, so if you’d like to get involved, please email the team for further information.

I was excited, nervous and enthusiastic to take on this project two years ago. Even though I bought into the concept straight away, I could not predict how the CFG Mentoring Scheme would grow in strength and success. Hearing the feedback from participants and witnessing their thriving working relationships is truly fulfilling.

Zoe and I have felt extremely supported in this, and that’s thanks to those open, honest and sometimes raw conversations we’ve been able to have with all those who’ve been involved. Two years on, we’re now ready to take the scheme to the next level and welcome even more of you to this exciting new community!

If you'd like to join CFG's Mentoring Scheme, please get in touch!



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I want a mentor!

How can I go about identifying someone and how do I contact them?

Nicki Deeson
Leadership coach and business mentor



When I first got a mentor, I wasn't sure what it was and how it would help me. Within the first session it transformed my motivation for work, and then my impact – I recommend you try it! In surveys, 100% of managers receiving mentoring report higher job satisfaction, 20% more maternity leave returners stay, and a 25% increase in general talent retention is reported.

So, how do you get a great mentor? This ten-point plan leads you through the process:

- 1

What are the key things you want from a mentor, if this person could be whoever you want them to be? Is it someone with experience of a role you are aiming for in a certain type/size of organisation, or someone who has overcome a personal challenge you face (e.g. working with a protected characteristic), or a specific style of leader?
- 2

Who do you know who may fit the bill? Who has inspired you when you have seen them at events, in articles they have written, or in relation to their job? If you can identify two or three people yourself, go straight to step 5. If you need help identifying potential mentors, go to next step.

- 3

Who can help you find your mentor? List three people you know well and feel comfortable speaking to: your manager, peers at work, friends, family – anyone you click with.
- 4

Speak to each of those people to pick their brains. Tell them you are looking for a mentor, and the sort of person you are looking for (referring to step 1 above). Then ask, “Who do you know who I might be able to sound out?” Be open to the idea that each of them will likely know a potential mentor who fits your needs. From each conversation, get someone’s contact details, who you can then approach as a mentor.
- 5

Once you have their details, look up your potential mentors on LinkedIn. What it is about them that inspires you? Send them a short message which:
- a.

Explains how they have inspired you, i.e. one or two things you admire about their work.
- b.

Mentions anything/anyone you have in common.
- c.

Gives a flavour of your challenges and priorities at work/for your career.
- d.

Requests an informal interaction that explains what you would like to learn from them, eg ‘I would love to pick your brains about [eg their journey, tips they may have]. Could we have a 15–30 min chat, at a time convenient to you?’
- 6

If they say yes, then send them a few alternative dates/times. They may not have time to check their diaries and find a good slot to offer you – it’s much easier for them to pick from a list of options. This will hopefully lead to a time in your diaries.

- 7

If they don't reply, wait a week and then send them a follow-up message including your suggested dates/times. This often encourages a reply.
- 8

If they still don't reply, you may have to let them go – in which case hopefully by having approached a few people you will have success from one of the others.
- 9

Once you have scheduled the zoom meeting, prepare for the conversation:

a.

Think of open and curious questions to ask them. Start by taking the time to connect by asking what they like to do at weekends or in the evenings, what books they read or how things are for them at the moment. Then lead into work questions, e.g. “I would love you to tell me how you got to where you are.” “What is important to you?” “What do you enjoy?” “What tips do you have for me, to get into this area?”. Be ready to also briefly tell them where you are at, and where you want to get to.

b.

During the conversation, go with the flow. Give them space to reflect on their thoughts. Try to step back and gauge how well you feel you click with them.
- 10

When you wrap up:

a.

Summarise any useful stories, advice or tips they provided, to show that you value their input.

b.

If you feel it has been helpful, ask whether they would be happy to have a coffee again in a few months’ time – and make sure you pin down a date. It’s all about asking in a non-threatening way – and then making it happen. Remember that when people hear the word “mentor”, they may worry that they aren’t skilled enough, or that it may take too much of their time, so make your request in a way that feels easy for them to say yes to. Later, when your relationship is more established, you can say you think of them as your mentor, at which time they will take it as a big compliment!

c.

If you aren't sure whether you click with them, try someone else. It is very important to have rapport with your mentor – to trust them and be honest with them, in order to benefit from the relationship.

d.

Remember to follow up with a thank you message within a week. Use this to share a few key things you learned during the conversation, and to remind them you'd like to follow up. Then schedule a reminder to yourself to book in another call and make it happen.

I hope these tips have been useful. Give it a try – you've nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Email me to tell me how it works or to ask any questions.



How charities need to change in response to charity sector disruption



Even pre-Covid, more forward-thinking charities were diversifying away from traditional fundraising products. The shock of the pandemic has made the need for new funding streams more acute. The number of people donating to charities has been steadily decreasing. And GDPR regulations also restrict charities’ ability to communicate with the public.

And the world outside the sector is changing. A new generation of supporters are looking for a different type of value exchange. Younger generations of supporters are more likely to engage with charities through “volunteering, buying ethical products, petition signing and protests” rather than by donating. And there is competition from commercial entities

which are increasingly stepping into the ‘purpose’ space, giving people the opportunity to ‘do good’ through their day-to-day spending. We are seeing the charity sector starting to respond – Arthr, and Crisis Ventures (see opposite) are both examples of more integrated business models which deliver mission whilst also bringing in income.

Doing this requires a charity to change and be open to changing. Let’s explore what this change might mean for charities.

Shifting to more integrated business models

Many charities follow a traditional model – raise money (fundraising), then hand it over to the part of the charity that delivers the mission where it is spent. These two parts of the charity are relatively distinct with funds being raised through products which aren’t linked to mission delivery. Integrated business models need a different set of skills and capabilities, as well as a different culture and way of operating. Charities which can collaborate, both internally and externally, and create a culture that is adaptable, entrepreneurial and customer-focused will have the upper hand.

ARTHR

Arthr is a social venture, owned by Versus Arthritis. It sells beautiful products which are designed to make everyday living easier for people living with arthritis and there is a focus on delivering a world-class retail experience. Products are co-designed by people with arthritis. Profits are reinvested in the fight against arthritis. The MD of Arthr has a commercial background and experience in scaling ventures – he has a strong social purpose but not a charity background.

CRISIS VENTURE STUDIO

The Venture Studio exists to build and scale ambitious and diverse ventures in Crisis’ mission to end homelessness for good, by investing-in, creating and supporting start-ups working on innovative housing solutions, new pathways to employment or better provision of housing, healthcare or financial services. The Venture Studio provides start-ups with tailored support, co-design & collaboration deep expertise and community connection.

What this might look like

Here are four scenarios you might encounter. For each, we propose questions for you to explore. We’d like you to challenge your thinking and assume that what has worked until now is not necessarily the best solution for the future. Discuss this with people outside your charity, especially those in different sectors – encourage them to challenge your assumptions.

Scenario 1 – deliver mission through social venturing

Your charity is creating a social start-up that both makes a profit that can be returned to the charity and delivers on your mission.

- How might decisions be made about investment into that social venture?
 - How might you structure this in a way that enables the social venture to access external investment (e.g. equity) to scale?
 - How would you establish metrics for measuring progress against your objectives for this social venturing?
- You decide that, to be successful, you need someone with start-up experience to establish and run it.
- How might you set an incentivisation package which is both acceptable to the charity and will attract and retain the sort of person you’re looking for? And for any team members that they subsequently recruit?

Scenario 2 – investing in a portfolio of start-ups

Strategically, your charity has decided to invest in a portfolio of start-ups which are tackling the issue which is core to your mission.

- How might investment decisions be made?
- What additional skills and experience might you need within the charity and at what level? E.g. trustee, senior leadership, management.
- How might you need to change your approach to risk management?

Scenario 3 – collaborating with start-ups to deliver your mission

Your charity is testing new ideas for delivering on your mission in partnership with start-ups. In the first instance this involves rapid testing of an idea (maximum one month duration) to see if it’s worth investing in and progressing.

- How might your usual Finance/ Procurement/Legal processes need to look different?
- How would you establish appropriate metrics for measuring progress against your objectives for these experiments?

- How might decisions be made about whether to invest money into this idea after the first month of initial experiments?

Scenario 4 – establishing new commercial funding streams

Your charity wants to establish new commercial funding streams as a way of generating sustainable sources of revenue.

- What role does the Finance function play in ensuring that the charity’s assets and capabilities reach their commercial potential?
- This may be delivered through commercial partnerships. How do you enable these to be successful?
- What additional skills and experience might you need within the charity and at what level? E.g. trustee, senior leadership, management.
- How might your usual Finance/ Procurement/Legal processes need to look different?
- How might you need to change your approach to risk management?

“Charities which can collaborate, both internally and externally, and create a culture that is adaptable, entrepreneurial and customer-focused will have the upper hand.”

Continued over the page

“
We'd like you to challenge your thinking and assume that what has worked until now is not necessarily the best solution for the future.

Changing your planning approach

In all scenarios there is a higher level of uncertainty than most charities are used to. Whether you are testing ideas internally, partnering with start-ups or investing, you will often have a portfolio of initiatives, many of which will need to stop or change fundamentally within a short time horizon. This can make it difficult to budget or forecast.

- How might your operational and financial planning approaches need to look different?
- How would you establish appropriate metrics for measuring progress against your objectives for this portfolio?
- How do you value the learnings which are achieved (cumulative organisational knowledge) from projects which are stopped?

Next steps

We recognise that this article has posed lots of questions and not given many answers! In reality, the answers will be different for each organisation. The important thing is having people within your organisation who are comfortable with the ambiguity and excited about finding out what the answers to these questions are for your organisation. Discovering what is right for you will be a mix of:

1. Finding out what others have done
2. Agreeing a new approach to try
3. Reflecting on how that approach went – what worked/what didn't work
4. Adapting the approach and trying again
5. Continuing to iterate the approach

The quicker you can move through steps 2-5, the quicker you will establish the right approach for you and your organisation.

This may require different skills within your teams, especially within support functions such as Finance, Legal, Procurement and HR. Those which you might want to focus on assessing during recruitment and developing within your existing team are:

- Ability to collaborate, both cross-functionally within the charity and externally
- Curiosity
- Comfort with ambiguity
- Embrace an approach of experimentation and learning

About the authors

Hannah Keartland helps organisations to deliver innovation that has an impact – it's not just about post it notes and ideas! Hannah draws on her director level experience in both innovation and finance & operations, as well as 20 years of practical experience working on innovation, project delivery and management roles across all business areas.

Kevin Waudby worked at Cancer Research UK for twelve years and in 2005 established Cancer Research UK's innovation programme – the first of its kind in the UK charity sector. In 2011, Kevin established a consultancy, Good Innovation, to help inspire charities around the UK to innovate more effectively by adopting a human-centred approach.

We're raising the standard for international reporting



International financial reporting by non-profits is best described as inconsistent, inefficient and patchy. This absence of international reporting standards means that users' needs often go unmet and costs can be higher for both funders and grantees due to the burden of compliance with multiple formats.

This, together with a lack of transparency and the risk of funding fraud, can quickly undermine trust which is so central to every non-profit organisation's effectiveness. With international guidance, costs can be lowered and more reliable assessments and decisions made.

For these reasons, the International Financial Reporting for Not-for-profit Organisations (IFR4NPO) Project was launched in 2020, led by Humentum, a non-profit organisation, and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

Today, more than 1,000 representatives from 107 countries are signed up to the IFR4NPO Project and together they will develop the first internationally applicable financial reporting Guidance for non-profits.

Consulting the CFG community

Last year, CFG proudly accepted the offer to be Country Champions for the IFR4NPO project in the UK. We strongly believe in the vision to raise standards of financial reporting globally, thereby strengthening trust, accountability and resilience.



The aim is to launch the standards in 2025. To meet this deadline, the project has been divided into three distinct phases:

1. Consultation – identifying issues, engaging and building the international community.
2. Drafting – designing the proposed guidelines, explaining proposed solutions, obtaining feedback.
3. Launch – finalising and launching the guidance, developing and offering training/support.

We're currently at the consultation stage, and it's here that we **invite you to get involved by responding to the recently published Consultation Paper**.

For the very first time, this gives non-profits the opportunity to directly contribute to the development of international standards. As Country Champions, we'd like to see a wide range of views and input, not least because when the standards are drafted in 2023 and launched two years later, we will be able to say, with confidence, that they have been produced '*by the sector, for the sector*'.

Responses are now invited to the questions contained in Parts 1 and 2 of the Consultation Paper. Questions in Part 1 are likely to be of interest to a wide range of individuals and organisations, and the questions in Part 2 will be of interest to those who prepare, use and audit financial reports.

The deadline for responses to Part 1 of the Consultation Paper is 31 July 2021. For Part 2, the deadline is 24 September 2021.

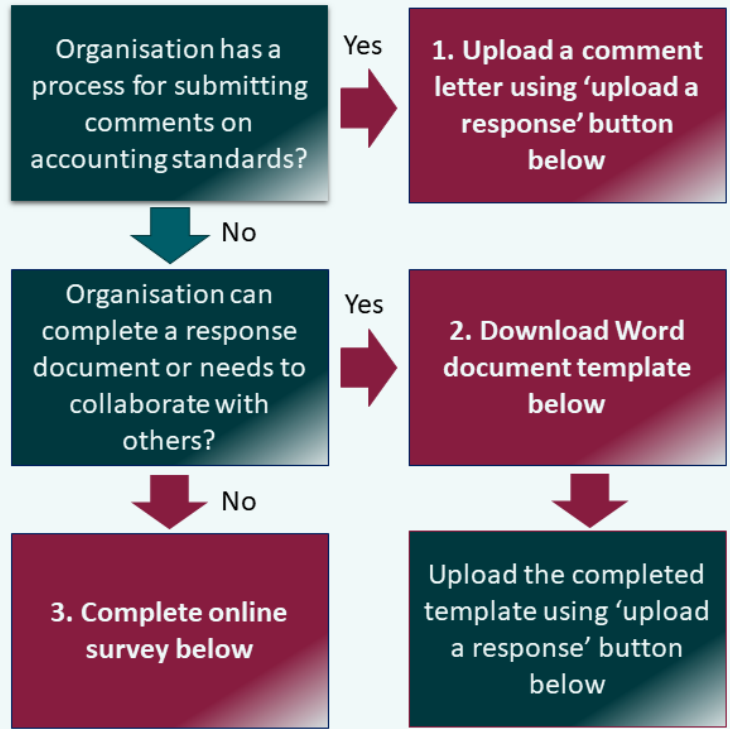
It's vital that everyone with a stake has the chance to feed back. There are three ways you can do this:

1. Submit a comment letter. If you have a process for responding to accounting standards consultations, this is likely to be the most appropriate option.
2. Complete and upload templates. There are separate documents available, one

for responding to Part 1 and one for Part 2. If you wish to collaborate with others or want time to consider your responses this is likely to be the most appropriate option.

3. Complete an online survey. There are separate surveys available to respond to Part 1 and Part 2. The survey does not need to be completed in one session and you can return to it multiple times. Anyone can complete the survey.

To help you decide which is the best method for you, check out the flow chart:



What next?

Respond to the Consultation Paper

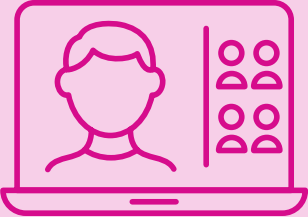
Find more guidance on how to respond to the Consultation Paper. If you'd like to join us in an IFR4NPO roundtable event at the end of May, please email the Policy Team and express your interest.

Check out the project website www.ifr4npo.org and subscribe to the newsletter for more information.

Watch this video about the consultation response.

We have moved our events online so you can keep access to everything you need at this time. Full access details will be provided upon booking your place. We kindly ask that events payments are made online. If you have any questions about our programme contact events@cfg.org.uk.

Free webinars coming soon!



Guide to Converting a Charitable Company to a CIO
Tuesday 11 May


If your organisation is considering this transition, join us for this free, practical webinar where your questions about all aspects of the process can be answered.

Wellbeing: Rediscovering meaning, depth and impact with Craig Goldblatt
Thursday 27 May

As busy charity finance professionals and leaders working in a demanding sector, it's important to take a moment out for personal reflection, and reconnect with our individuality.

Building operational resilience in non-profit organisations
Thursday 22 July

Join specialists Unit4 to explore a new approach with an agile and extensible ERP which enables you to build applications and ensure people have access to critical information when it is needed.



EARLY BIRD NOW ON!

ALTERNATIVE INCOME GENERATION

Date: Tuesday 6 July

Price: Charity and Individual Member Early Bird £80, Charity and Individual Non-Members £160, CFG Corporate Member £250

Where and when:
Online 9.30– 16.00

Join us for our Alternative Income Generation conference for charities and non-profits, equipping you with inspiration, shared learning and specialist insight to help strengthen your financial sustainability in 2021 and on your journey ahead.


This interactive event offers two streams of sessions for delegates and covers:

- Income generation strategies – learning from the pandemic
- Stream A
 - ESG or impact investments
 - Small charities panel discussion
- Stream B
 - Writing effective grant applications
 - Income generation opportunities for medium and large charities
- Corporate partnerships
- Networking sessions

Who should come along to this event?
This event is designed for finance directors and finance managers looking to expand income streams as well as CEOs and trustees of smaller charities.

Your CPD: This event could contribute four hours to your CPD.

Book your member early bird now!



SECTOR-SPECIFIC EVENT

SOCIAL CARE CONFERENCE

Date: Thursday 10 June

Price: Charity and Individual non-member £155, CFG Corporate Member £250

Where and when:
Online 9.30–16.40

Don't miss our dedicated event for charity finance teams working in the social care sector where we'll be exploring funding pressures, staff retention, the latest regulatory updates, and providing a valuable forum to network and share with peers.

We'll be joined by:

- Amanda Ashworth, Project Manager – Recruitment and Retention, Juliet Green, Project Manager, Skills for Care
- Alison Malik, Head of Service – Commissioning (Adult Care), Birmingham City Council
- Simon Bottery, Senior Fellow, Social Care, The King's Fund
- Emma Robotham, Indirect Tax Senior Manager, Cooper Parry

Who should come along to this event?
This event is open to CFG members and non-members, and will be particularly useful for finance managers and heads of finance operating in adult social care delivery, such as professionals from residential care, disability support organisations, hospices and healthcare organisations.

Your CPD: This event could contribute five hours to your CPD.

Book



LAST CHANCE TO BOOK!

VAT AND TAX CONFERENCE

Date: Thursday 13 May

Price: Charity and Individual non-member £155, CFG Corporate Member £250

Where and when: 9.30–15.35

Join us and our expert panel at this essential conference which provides technical updates for those already working with VAT and tax. This event also equips those new to the area with introductory information.

This event will explore:

- An introduction to tax
- Practical update on VAT and developments in tax – with Debbie Jennings, VAT Director, Moore Kingston Smith
- Getting the most out of available reliefs and recovery – with Socrates Socratous, VAT Partner, Buzzacott
- Taxable income from trading – with Kirsty Murray, Partner and Scott Craig, Partner and Head of VAT, Azets
- Troubleshooting sessions

Delegates will gain tips on optimising your tax recovery, registering and administration of VAT and tax, and gain bespoke advice from troubleshooting sessions with the experts.

Who is this event useful for?
Finance professionals with VAT and tax administration remits, and as an introduction to the tax and VAT landscape.

This event could contribute three hours to your CPD.

Book



FREE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

OVERSEAS SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP MEETING (OSSIG)

Date: Thursday 20 May

Price: Free and open to CFG members

Cuts to the UK aid budget, Brexit and the impact of Covid-19 continue to create sustainability issues for INGOs, with many organisations having to adapt to survive in a volatile landscape.

Join us for our next Overseas Special Interest Group gathering, a free meeting for international CFG members headquartered in the UK, where you'll be joined by representatives from Bond, Humentum and CFG to discuss government funding and the impact on the landscape for INGO organisations.

This interactive one-hour meeting will be a valuable way to hear from leaders on the key funding issues right now and how these are affecting sustainability, and there will also be time to meet and discuss issues with peers from similar organisations.

We'll be joined by

- Tim Boyes-Watson, Global Director, Insights & Influence, Humentum
- Graham MacKay, Chief Operating Officer, Bond
- Gary Forster, Chair of Trustees, Charity Finance Group

About OSSIG
If you're a CFG member from an international organisation, contact the CFG Membership Team to discuss joining this special interest group.

Book
Kindly sponsored by Oracle Netsuite

Your next free monthly members' meeting

Wednesday 26 May 2021
14.30–16.00 online

Creating change for effective financial sustainability

Our next monthly members' meeting will be focused on options to ensure organisational sustainability, including restructuring considerations and contingency planning.

We'll be joined by Sam Horne, Interim Finance Director, and Keeley Doughty, Head of Financial Control Operations at Cancer Research UK, and Jacqui Dudley, Director and David Baxendale, Partner of PwC.

Book

Get your CPD on track! Training coming soon.
View full programmes and book on the CFG website.

Introduction to VAT:
Friday 11 June

In partnership with Goodman Jones

Advanced Investment training:
Tuesday 15 June

Kindly sponsored by Sarasin & Partners

Finance for Non-Finance Managers:
Thursday 1 July

In partnership with Bishop Fleming

Foundation Charity Finance:
Wednesday 14 July

Kindly sponsored by BDO

Advanced Charity Finance:
Friday 18 June

In partnership with Goodman Jones.