

Newsletter May 2016

VAO News & Services

Alexina achieves 200 hour Saltire Award

Alexina Inkster had been awarded the Saltire Award for having completed over 200 hours Voluntary Work. Lindsey Johnson, Connect Project Coordinator said, *'This is a major achievement, clearly demonstrating Alexina's commitment to the community.'*

Alexina, who is already well on her way to the next milestone of 500 hours which Connect confidently predict will be reached before the end of the year, said, *'I am delighted to receive this award and would like to thank all those at Connect who have supported me.'*



Get Ready to Volunteer

The aim of the 4 week Get Ready to Volunteer Course is to build confidence, identify what volunteering is, explain what roles and responsibilities come with volunteering and successfully plan, deliver and evaluate a volunteering project as a team.

If the young person wishes to continue as a volunteer and be placed in an individual placement they are given the support to do so. All young people who complete the course are given a Saltire Challenge Award and encouraged to move onto the next stage of the Award.

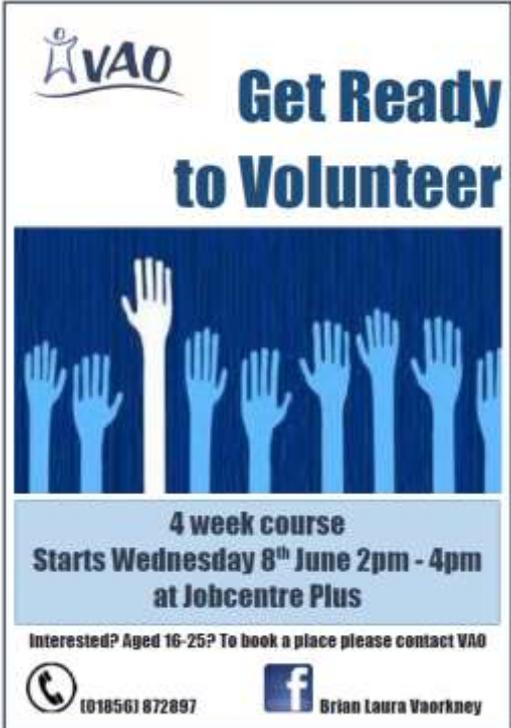
The course is designed to be flexible depending on participants. The activities programmed each week allow different skills to be identified and encourage different methods of learning – for example craft for those who are creative, Power point for those who like direct instruction, team games for those needing support in working with others as well as practical volunteering sessions.

The course will be delivered at the Job Centre and Voluntary Action Orkney. All participants will be encouraged to attend each week in order to complete the course.

The course will be held on the following dates:

- Wednesday 8 June 2-4pm
- Wednesday 15 June 2-4pm
- Wednesday 22 June 2-4pm
- Wednesday 29 June 2-4pm

For more information please contact [VAO](http://www.vao.org.uk) on 872897.



VAO **Get Ready to Volunteer**

4 week course
Starts Wednesday 8th June 2pm - 4pm
at Jobcentre Plus

Interested? Aged 16-25? To book a place please contact VAO

 018561 872897  Brian Laura Vaorkney

Volunteers' Week 2016: The Big Celebration



So the countdown to Volunteers Week 2016 is almost done! Volunteers Week this year remember has been extended till the 12th June, the first time ever this has happened. These extra 5 days give more time to celebrate this event and the end will also coincide with the Patron's Lunch on 12 June, a celebration of Her Majesty the Queen's lifetime of service to more than 600 charities and organisations to which The Queen acts as a Patron, on the occasion of her 90th birthday.

This annual national celebration of volunteering provides an opportunity for all organisations who are managed by or whose work is delivered by volunteers to say 'thank you' publicly. It also presents an opportunity to promote the fantastic work of local volunteers and organisations.

Orkney's volunteers are a shining example of how people can make a huge difference to individuals and communities every day; from improving the environment, spending time with those who may otherwise be lonely and contributing to a range of other essential services and enjoyable activities.

The week is also an opportunity to inspire others to get involved in volunteering, and this year VAO would like to encourage groups to showcase the range of volunteering opportunities they have available. There's a huge choice out there but sometimes people aren't aware of them or they may have a particular perception of what volunteering is about. It would be great to get the word out there and to challenge these perceptions. People are increasingly looking for flexibility in their volunteering, so that they can fit it in around work and other commitments and your Volunteers' Week 'Big Celebration' may just be the thing to attract them.

So why not create a few short term opportunities that will enable people to give volunteering a try? VAO is happy to support your organisation to develop and promote existing and new volunteer roles.

We look forward to hearing what ideas and plans you may already have for celebrating Volunteers Week in 2016, but if you'd like some help and support in coming up with ideas, then please do get in touch with Fraser or Rob on 872897 or email enquiries@vaorkney.org.uk. You can also download certificates, logos and fliers from the Volunteers Week [webpage](#). For an up to date list of volunteering opportunities in Orkney, visit the VAO [website](#).

Thank you Daniel



We were delighted to welcome Daniel Clough, who wanted to get hands on experience of Reception work, as part of his college course. Daniel came in on Tuesday mornings for five weeks and learned about all aspects of the role including proofreading, welcoming a wide range of visitors to VAO, answering the telephone and photocopying. Daniel was cheerful and enthusiastic throughout his placement and we wish him all the best for the future.

Pictured (back) Rob McGregor, Karen Learmonth, (front) Daniel Clough, Pete Donald.

VAO AGM

The VAO AGM will take place on **Monday 13 June** at 7pm in the Picky Centre. As well as normal business there will be presentations from both the Adults' and Children and Young People's services.

Please come and join us for a coffee and chat following the formal business.

Local Third Sector News

A message from Zelda Bradley, Development and Support Worker, Orkney Rape Crisis

Although Orkney is one of the safest communities in Scotland, those who experience sexual violence need discreet and private support. Orkney Rape Crisis provides free, confidential, information, support and advocacy to anyone (age 13 and over) affected by any form of sexual violence, whether that was recent or a long time ago, and whether or not it was reported to the police. We understand that it can be difficult to be anonymous in Orkney. If you want to meet us, we can do this at a place or time which is safe for you and protects your privacy.



We are part of Rape Crisis Scotland and the network of rape crisis centres across Scotland. There are centres in all the main cities. We can arrange for you to get support from another centre if you prefer to speak to someone out with Orkney. If you are a friend, partner or relative of someone affected by sexual violence you can be a good support to them. Please phone us if there is anything you would like to talk over with us. We work with staff in other agencies. If you come into contact with survivors of sexual violence in the course of your work, we can give you advice and support. We also accept referrals.

Please phone us on 01856 872298. You can also email: contact@orkneyrapecrisis.scot. You do not need to give your name. If we are not able to answer the phone, and you want to speak to someone urgently, you can ring the Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline for free on 08088 01 03 02. It is open every day from 6pm to midnight. You can also access our resources and information on our website www.orkneyrapecrisis.scot.

One Digital story!

May 3 and 4 saw [digital training](#) being offered in the county free of charge by [SCVO](#) under their Lottery funded programme and facilitated by VAO.

10 different organisations and 20 people over the two days received this training here in Kirkwall and SCVO were delighted with the response of the participants, their willingness to share and collaborate and their enthusiasm! They particularly enjoyed the delicious sandwiches prepared by the Blide Trust and the bird's eye view of the poppy display outside Kirkwall Cathedral as they were based in the Town hall!



For more information about the project, please click [here](#).

Eilidh Little, One Digital Development Officer, said

'Working with such a well-connected organisation like VAO allowed One Digital to reach many third sector organisations across the Orkney islands who were looking to get more digital themselves and support those they work with in their local communities to get more digital too. It was great to engage with a wide range of participants at our Orkney One Digital sessions in May. We look forward to continuing to work with VAO and the participating organisations as we continue to build the One Digital network across Orkney.'

Meet the Charity Regulator events

OSCR is visiting the county again! They will be at the Orkney Hotel on Victoria Street in Kirkwall on the evening of 7 June – accompanied by the Pensions Regulator and on the following morning at the same venue.

To book a place at the events please click on the links below:

[Orkney evening surgery \(OSCR + Pensions REg\) Tuesday 7 June @7pm](#)

[Orkney MTCR event Wednesday 8 June @ 10am](#)

Are Ewe Okay?

The Scottish Association of Young Farmers' Clubs unveiled their new mental health campaign "Are Ewe Okay?" to an audience at Ayr Show on Saturday 14 May. The association will focus on raising awareness of mental wellbeing over the next twelve months by encouraging rural youth to listen, talk and share.

The campaign will be delivered regularly through social media with the aim of specifically targeting the association's audience of young people living in Scotland's rural communities. By raising awareness of poor mental health triggers and conditions, the association hopes to aid members with the knowledge they need to recognise the signs, and how to seek help if someone is suffering.

You can follow the campaign and pledge your support via the SAYFC website [here](#) or keep up-to-date via social media using [#AreEweOkay?](#)



First meeting of the Orkney Self Management Network

We would like to invite you to join us to celebrate the start of a self-management network in Orkney. This event will be held in late August. It will be an opportunity for people living with long term conditions to come together and learn from one another about what keeps them well.

Self-managing a long term condition does not mean being left to manage on your own. Being supported to self-manage by health workers, carers and by other people living with long term conditions can be key to helping you live a better life on your own terms. We can work together to make sure that everyone living with a long term condition in Orkney is supported to self-manage.

In order to make this network the best it can be, we want you to tell us:

- What are the benefits of creating a self-management network in Orkney?
- Who are the key people you would like to see join the network?
- Who could lead the development of the network?
- What sort of activities and information should be available at this event?
- Where and when should this event be held?

Please contact [Edwina](#) at Voluntary Action Orkney to register your interest and share your views on how this event can best help you. If you have any questions about the Self-Management Network Scotland, please contact [Lara Murray](#).

This event will be hosted by Lara Murray from the Self-Management Network Scotland. This national network has been created to:

- Champion supported self-management for people who live with long term conditions
- Share information and learning about self-management across Scotland
- Strengthen local links around self-management to help improve support and care for people living with long term conditions

Who's behind the Blue Door?



Riding for the Disabled	30 May – 4 June
Orkney Traditional Music Project	6 June – 11 June
Orkney Climbing Club	13 June – 18 June
Papa Westray Guild	20 June – 25 June
Age Concern Orkney	27 June – 2 July

Also in the News

Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equality outlines commitment to Scotland's Third Sector

Angela Constance, the new cabinet secretary for communities, social security and equalities, spoke to Third Force News this month and outlined her commitment to Scotland's Third Sector.



'It's clear the third sector plays a crucial role in tackling inequalities, supporting people and communities, and delivering public services. As the new cabinet secretary with responsibility for the third sector I am looking forward to working with these organisations to create a fairer and more inclusive Scotland.'

Click [here](#) for the full article.

Volunteering opportunities

Orkney Athletic Club offer three great opportunities to get involved in local athletics

Orkney Athletic Club have offered three great opportunities for people to get involved with their local athletics club.

The first opportunity is for a 10k Run Co-Ordinator, who will be responsible for organising arrangements for the annual 10k Orkney Run Series.

The second opportunity is for a Welfare Officer who will be responsible for the club's Child Protection and Complaints Procedures.

Lastly they are offering any budding athletics coaches the opportunity to take part in a two day Coaching Assistant course. The course will be free of charge for participants who are willing to coach regularly with OAC for up to a year after qualification.



If you are interested in any of these opportunities and would like to know more about them please contact [Anthea Hume](#)

Third Sector Forum

The Third Sector Forum met this month and discussed, among many other topics, the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act [consultations](#), an upcoming [adults services inspection](#) and a discussion on the structure and remit of the Third Sector Forum and the Third Sector Working Group. A small short life working group will be established to plan a programme of consultation and engagement with Forum members and the wider sector. If you are interested in joining the group please contact Caron at caron.jenkins@vaorkney.org.uk.

If you would like to join the Third Sector Forum or would like more information, please contact [Cecily](#) on 873937 or visit the VAO [website](#).

The next meeting of the Third Sector Forum will be on **21 July 2016**



Have your say.....

OACAS/PubWatch partnership education programme – survey monkey

As part of the OACAS/PubWatch partnership education programme, data is being collected regarding alcohol pre-loading (drinking before heading out for the evening). Please take a few minutes to complete this [short survey](#) and if possible, disseminate the survey to colleagues/staff/service users/students (where appropriate)

OACAS/PubWatch are trying to get a wide range of responses, to represent all ages and walks of life in Orkney. The survey will close at 5pm on Thursday 30 June 2016

Dates for your Diary

Getting Ready for Investment – 9 June

The aim of this event is to equip social enterprises and community organisations with the capacity, knowledge and confidence to invest in their future and build stronger, more resilient communities. Alongside workshops delivered by Social Investment Scotland, Local Energy Scotland and Community Shares Scotland, Andy Makin, from Westray Development Trust will talk about their experiences of establishing trading subsidiaries, their governance and the overall social impact on the community. For more information or to book a place, please click [here](#).

The event will be held on **Thursday 9 June** from 10.30 – 4.00 at the Picky Centre.

ATTUNE project – 14 June

We would like to invite any groups or individuals who work with children to attend a presentation by Imogen Kerr on the proposed ATTUNE project, which will be held at 10.30am on **Tuesday 14 June** in the VAO Board Room.

The ATTUNE project would introduce strengths-based video feedback methods such as Video Interaction Guidance for use with children and families. This method has been successful elsewhere and your views are sought on whether or not this approach would be beneficial in Orkney. Additional information on the project can be found [here](#).

Please confirm your attendance with [Karen Learmonth](#) on 872897 by Friday 8 June.

VAO Service of the month

HR Employment Enquiry Line

Due to the increasing demand for HR/Employment information, VAO has created an HR Employment Enquiry Line to offer organisations access to unlimited calls and queries. Often a concern can be resolved fairly easily and chatting it over with a qualified and experienced HR professional can provide the reassurance you need to deal effectively with your problem. Taking early and appropriate action prevents situations escalating and can save a great deal of time and expense in the long run.



What other services do we offer?

- Recruitment Support Service
- Policies and Procedures
- Employment law, assistance with Redundancies, Grievances, Disciplinary procedures etc

'We would recommend the service which was of high quality and good value for money' – Employment Enquiry Line service user.

If you would be interested in signing up for the HR Employment Enquiry Line or any of the other HR services please contact [Hannah Ker](#) on 872897.

Focus on.....Relationships Scotland Orkney

'Relationships Scotland Orkney is a kind of one-stop-shop for relationship issues', explains Kevin Denvir, Family Link Worker and Relationship Counsellor at RSO. 'Whether you want to improve your relationship, whether you want to save your relationship or whether you want to negotiate a relationship separation so that you ensure the best outcomes for your kids, we have a range of services and a core project that helps you find what you need'. In this, our seventh interview with members, we spent a morning chatting with staff at RSO to find out more about the services and support they offer.

Relationships Scotland Orkney, formed following the merger of Family Mediation Orkney and Couples Counselling Orkney, is jointly managed by June Anderson and Renate Andrews. June and Renate have been in post since 2015, having previously been involved in the service as sessional workers (both are counsellors and Play Therapists) and in June's case as a Board member. Since taking up her managerial role, June tells us that she has been amazed at the richness and complexity of the organisation, at the sheer amount of work done by the practitioners (some paid, some voluntary) in meeting the needs of clients. Part of a 22 member service network, [Relationships](#)

Scotland, RSO employ 13 salaried staff, 8 sessional workers and 5 volunteers (not including the 10 volunteer board members). During the last 12 months, RSO directly supported 223 adults and 23 children and young people, over 1% of the population of Orkney!

One of the key areas of work for RSO is around family breakdown and they have a number of services to support parents, and ultimately their children, who are separated or in the process of separating. *'When families are distressed, when they're breaking up, children are often the unnecessary victims'*, explains Kevin. *'When adults are caught up in their own emotional turmoil kids generally aren't getting their needs met in a way that they'd like or need. So what we as a service do is scaffold sensitive support around the family to help meet these needs and help parents refocus on their children.'* The family support services offered at RSO are Family Mediation, Parenting Apart, Child Contact Centre and a dedicated Family Link Worker.

Barbara Smith, one of RSO's volunteer mediators, gives an overview of the **Family Mediation** process. *'Family Mediation is a confidential, impartial, child focussed process for parents who are separated or in the process of separating. When communication has broken down it can be very difficult for parents to come together to discuss matters relating to their children. The role of Family Mediation is to bring parents together and support them in exploring options and making mutual decisions about their children.'* Mediation, she explains, is entirely voluntary and is not a legal service - unless parents specifically request it, no information is passed on to the court or lawyers. Barbara explains that during a mediation session parents are given an opportunity to discuss issues that are important to them and to explore options to resolve them. *'The mediator is totally impartial and neutral, we're not there to put in our opinions or to offer solutions. Our role is to keep the process and dialogue going, it's really the parents who do all the work.'* For some parents the mediation process is short, while for others longer term support is provided, but *'usually family mediation has positive outcomes for parents and their children. It gets them over a time in their life where things feel out of control and enables them to be able to come together and make decisions'*.

June explains that the Mediation service is growing rapidly, both in terms of the number of clients using the service and thankfully in the number of practitioners available to provide it. Two trainee mediators have recently joined RSO which, June explains, is enabling RSO to actively promote Family Mediation – in the past it has been difficult to promote the service as there hasn't always been the capacity to meet demand. *'When separating or separated couples approach us for Family Mediation, they often need that support immediately'*, explains June. *'It's great that we are now in a position to offer that support when parents need it most'*.

A more recent addition to the suite of services RSO provides for separating families is **Parenting Apart**. Unlike mediation which is generally an ongoing process, Parenting Apart is a one-off session designed to help parents refocus on their children and help protect them from the inevitable difficulties that arise during family breakdown. *'The session is mostly information sharing'*, explains Kevin, *'helping parents understand what their children might feel and more importantly what they need'*. The informal sessions are run monthly and are designed to be attended by a group of parents (though the separating/separated parents are not encouraged to attend together). Although initially some find discussing personal feelings in a group quite difficult, Kevin tells us that *'most find the process really, really useful. It's a way of normalising what's going on for them and gives them a feeling of not being alone, that other families are going through the same thing.'* For parents who feel unable to participate in group sessions, RSO can provide individual sessions. Both Kevin and Barbara explain that Parenting Apart is a great pre-cursor to Family Mediation, by setting a positive tone before mediation starts the mediation process can be made much easier.



L-R: Hannah Stanger, Substance Misuse Worker; Kevin Denvir, Family Link Worker; Renate Andrews, Service Manager; June Anderson, Service Manger

For families who find it difficult to manage contact without conflict, or where supervised contact is needed, the **Child Contact Centre** is available. The Contact Centre, Renate explains, provides a relaxed, friendly and safe environment for children to spend time with the parent/other family members they do not live with.

The most commonly accessed services at RSO, June explains, are **Individual and Relationship Counselling**. Individual therapy is available for people from the age of three years upwards: from ages three to eleven in the form of Play Therapy; from twelve to eighteen with a specialist Youth Counsellor; and from eighteen with one of the team of RSO counsellors. For clients experiencing issues with drugs or alcohol, a specialist Substance Misuse Worker is available to provide tailored support and advice.

While the majority of clients attending relationship counselling are couples working to save their relationship, Kevin explains that there is much more to it than that. *'Relationship counselling is not just about saving relationships, it's also about having a better relationship regardless of what the future may be. For example, you can have relationship counselling to make yourselves better parents while living apart.'* And it's not just couples, or ex-couples that RSO bring together: *'We've had a father and his grown up child, we've had three generations of a family in a room working together. Any relationships people are finding difficult to manage or cope with, we would encourage them to come and explore the underlying issues in the safety of a confidential room'*, says Kevin.

Despite the number of counsellors employed at Relationships Scotland Orkney, due to an increase in demand there is unfortunately a waiting list for counselling at present. This is something that June and Renate would very much like to address and encourage counsellors or would be counsellors to get in touch.

With such a wealth of services on offer, how do people know which one would be most useful for them? All new clients are offered an individual intake appointment, explains June, part of whose role is to conduct these sessions. At this initial meeting the client's issues and concerns are discussed along with the services that RSO offer. The intake process is really very careful and thorough and, adds Kevin, *'is therefore more likely to lead people to support that is really going to make a difference'*. Kevin's role as **Family Link Worker** (which along with the Child Contact Centre and Parenting Apart is part of the five year Big Lottery funded Family Connections Project) is also designed to help people access the right support for them. Alongside providing tailored family support himself, Kevin also directs people to other RSO services, for example Family Mediation, the Child Contact Centre or individual counselling. *'There's a real breadth of skills and knowledge in the organisation,'* says Kevin, *'a real range of approaches, therapeutic stances and skill sets. Because no one thing works for everyone, nothing is a panacea, it's more likely in a service like ours, with that really broad church of approaches, clients can find the support that's really going to help them.'*

Helping clients to access services outside of RSO is also important, explains June: *'while we have a wide range of services here, we don't have all the services that clients may need'*. The work of RSO goes beyond signposting to other services, June tells us. Kevin, as Family Link Worker, not only helps clients identify what support they need but helps them make and establish those contacts: *'it's about helping vulnerable people who don't feel they have the autonomy to go to these other agencies, to make that connection and help them build a relationship there, whether that's with Advocacy Orkney, HomeStart or Social Work'*, June explains.

Having spoken to a number of staff at RSO it is clear that client confidentiality is of utmost importance to the organisation. Given the size of the Orkney community and the number of people using the service, it is unavoidable that some of the practitioners and clients will know each other. The fact that a relatively large number of counsellors and mediators work/volunteer for RSO is vital in ensuring that clients can be seen by a practitioner who doesn't live next door to them.

RSO are, like most organisations in Orkney, based in Kirkwall though they have recently expanded the Child Contact Centre and Family Connections Project to the West Mainland and have plans to expand to the outer isles. Visiting the Kirkwall office, it is clear just how busy the organisation is: the phones are continually ringing and the counselling rooms in constant use. It is also clear that the

staff and volunteers at RSO are committed to providing a first class service for clients and very much value their role in the organisation.

Relationships Scotland Orkney are holding their AGM on 5 July at 5.30pm at the St Magnus Centre. If anyone wants to come along and find out more about the service, or is interested in joining the Board, they would love to see you there.



www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/rso

enquiries@rsorkney.org.uk

01856 877750

