Amy Anderson

My organisation supports families and carers looking after someone with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities. I cover Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire and can just respond for my area, but colleagues cover other parts of Scotland so their experiences may be different. Views are my own, not necessarily those of PAMIS but informed by my work.

- **Do you know how and when you can get involved with the Integration Authorities to influence decision making?**

Aberdeen City – via Aberdeen City 3rd Sector interface. ACVO are very good at sharing knowledge and pooling skills
Aberdeenshire – via AVA – they have link workers for third sector which is useful

- **Were you consulted in the preparation of the strategic plans or involved with the work of the Strategic Planning Group?**

We responded to the draft strategy yes for City and Aberdeenshire

- **Have you been involved with the work of the Integration Authority following the publication of the strategic plan?**

Not really, largely due to time constraints and not hearing about things for quite a few months as they are busy setting things up! We have received news updates etc and the emerging organograms for both areas recently.

- **Have you been involved with the work of the localities/ what involvement would you like to have?**

This is really difficult for us. As a small third sector organisation (just me and another part time worker) we haven’t the ‘clout’ that larger local third sector organisations have so we don’t always get asked to be on groups or provide advice on this. Also, we simply haven’t the capacity to engage at locality level. I cover 4 localities in City and around 20 in Shire!! I asked in both areas how a small specialist organisation supporting our people can meaningfully work in these structures but no-one could really give me an answer.

A lot of the structures are either very new or not yet in place so it’s probably too early to say. I also perceive anxiety in H and SC (and tension between them) around what their responsibilities and roles are going to be, so third sector are remembered after the balance of power has been settled.

The structures have been fairly well been decided up on by H&SC bodies and we are having to fit in to their structures and priorities. They are including us but in terms of their own designs and needs and assumptions they have made about how things will be done. With one authority I sense anxiety over working with the third sector organisations direct - so getting across specific needs of our group is hard, as
the person representing us from the TSI doesn’t really understand the needs of our group so the message gets lost in the broader arguments. That’s very frustrating.

There is no obvious channel for third sector to feed ideas, feedback and innovation in to this systemic approach in this area but I am told they will work on this.

The other local authority is OK, but I do think the approach of a Council and third sector are very different, so again, we have to work on their terms, not ours.

• **Do you think that your involvement with the IAs has had an impact on decision making?**

I’d like to think so but in all honesty, not yet really, as things are being defined in terms of the H and SC and at best the big third sector players.

• **What could be done to improve the communication from the IAs?**

For them to get all of us around the table and as what would make things work for us, including systems and priorities. I am realistic to understand we can’t have it all our own way, but if the third sector are to be a true partner and not just a legislative box to tick, they need to really see what we can offer and recognise the layers and specific areas of capability and consider new ways of working, which the 3rd sector is very good at! – I think not much is known about what we actually do! I’m hopeful that in the transformational work in H&SC this might start to happen. However, I think it will take many years for this to embed, like SDS.

• **What could be done to ensure greater collaboration and engagement in the decision making process of Integration Authorities?**

The legislation would need to change. If it’s not a duty, it will be up to the willingness of IJB leadership to involve the third sector in a way that makes the most of how we can complement H&SC services.