| **Optional Template– Interim and Final report for Health Equity Fellowship** |
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| **Project Details** |
| Project Name  | Asthma Friendly Charities |
| Mentor | Jack Lewis |
| Start Date | 01/04/2024 |
| **Summary/Abstract – FINAL REPORT** |
| The summary / abstract provides the reader with an overview of all covered in the project report. Even though a summary is placed at the beginning of a project report, you can only write it once your entire report is complete.  |
| Introduction | This programme of work is to further embed a preventative programme to tackle the harm that can occur from poorly managing asthma. Asthma is considered a preventable disease and as a system we should work collectively to ensure we support our population to understand the condition, its risk factors and how to prevent exacerbation. However, the VCSE sector is currently being left behind and this programme looks to bring the sector up to speed with what is happening elsewhere.As part of my role in leading the connection between heal and the VCSE sector, I plan on working with system leads for asthma and the VCSE community to provide guidance and tools enabling them to support their communities. This work also ties in well with our system wide effort to reduce health inequalities, as many VCSE organisations are trusted within their community and often engage with families who struggle to connect to statutory organisations. Therefore where schools may no be able to support children and young people with asthma, the VCSE sector maybe best placed to pick this up. |
| Central aim of your project | To create a version of asthma friendly schools for the VCSE sector, to provide CYP organisations with the tools and guidance to support young people and their families living with asthma |
| Methodology, results, conclusion | This programme will look to take an existing programme of work that supports one part of the system (schools) and look to expand this across the wider system. This will require engagement with the VCSE sector to co-design guidance that connects and works for the sector, it will also require an element of testing of the current asthma friendly school’s guidance, to ensure it meets the needs of organisations.Through the work of this programme, it is clear that there is an appetite from both the sector and system to ensure the VCSE sector is included and can be connected to all system work but in this case asthma specific work. There is a commitment to create a separate guidance and checklist for VCSE organisations and their settings, which does need to be different to the guidance for schools, and there is a desire from the sector to have support for a condition that they can support CYP to manage.Overall, although more time is required to formally put in place the guidance for the VCSE sector, the programme and work to date has raised awareness within the sector about asthma and also within the system as to the contribution the VCSE sector can have. I believe these connections created have already had an impact but will be more prominent as we continue to work across the system to implement the preventative work.  |
| **Introduction: Purpose and Overview of the Project Brief – INTERIM REPORT** |
| Provide background, context, and an outline for your chosen project  |
| Problem the idea is seeking to solve or address (if any) and population group | To expand the Humber and North Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership’s (HNY HCP) Asthma Friendly Schools Programme to include Children and Young People (CYP) related charities.Asthma is a common long-term condition in children and is a manageable condition where those living with asthma can effectively and safely manage the condition. The Asthma Friendly School programme aims to work through schools across HNY to engage CYP and their families to effectively manage the environment CYP are regularly in and champion the need for effective asthma manage and upskill those living with the condition and their families.In some parts of HNY, educational attendance is not as high it could be and some of our families and young people in our more deprived areas are not always trusting towards statutory organisations, however, are quite often supported by VCSE organisations. Therefore, this project looks to expand the programme and target CYP charities that are supporting some of most vulnerable families, so messages could be received in a different forum. |
| Key assumptions and interdependencies | * School absenteeism is more prominent in areas of deprivation – for Free School Meals (FSM) the absentee rate is 11.1% across England compared to 6.1% for those not eligible in 2022/23. (House of Commons Research Briefing - <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9710/CBP-9710.pdf>)
* Asthma has a correlation with deprivation, with a higher prevalence of asthma in children for the most deprived quintiles. For HNY, North Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire and Hull have the highest rates of asthma and are home to our more deprived communities. (NHS England – Population & Persons Insight Dashboard – August 2023)
* VCSE organisations are quite often a trusted source of support for some of our more vulnerable communities compared to statutory organisations, anecdotally we see this for a number of population groups.
* Attendance rates at UEC for those with asthma consistently identifies those from the most deprived areas (IMD 1) to be the most frequent attendees. (NHS England – Population & Persons Insight Dashboard – August 2023)
* For HNY, this identifies North Lincolnshire as the areas with most attendees at UEC for asthma related causes.
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| What is the overall purpose of this project? Aims? | To expand the Asthma Friendly School programme to include VCSE organisations, to achieve the following:* Widen the reach of the programme by organisation and by people it can reach. It will be able to target organisations that are within our more deprived communities and also to where data is suggesting our highest rates of asthma are.
* Support VCSE organisations and upskill them to be able to support CYP and families living with asthma
* Ultimately to support more people to live with and effectively manage their asthma condition
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| Why it needs to be done? / Why it should be done now? | The programme is already supporting many of our communities through the targeting of schools, however some people, particularly from the deprived communities, are either not engaged or lack trust through schools, therefore this provides another source of support.The Asthma Friendly School programme is relatively new in HNY, therefore doing this now means we can take the learning from its early implementation and use the momentum gathered to expand the programme slowly into other areas.A 2025 review of the Asthma Friendly School guidance is underway and due to the work on this project, that will include producing the checklist for charities as well. |
| Opportunities and Challenges? | There are opportunities to work with existing school links to implement the programme and gain greater understanding of the issues in making it operational. In addition, there are great links to the VCSE sector through the VCSE Collaborative and this programme will support organisations to support their communities and is likely to be well received.Challenges will exist around capacity to land this and manage within the HNY Asthma team, therefore this will be rolled out slowly amongst the VCSE sector through a targeted approach.Many VCSE organisations will not have had this direct support before, it is expected it will be met positively, however their needs to be a commitment from them to meet the standards expected in the guidance.As with any piece of work, the intention at the outset and the path taken to get there, has multiple twists and turns and we have adapted along the way to manage these. As anticipated capacity became a challenge and the work with the HNY Asthma team was paused for a period of time, as a restructure of the directorate was taking place, this has since concluded and we can continue this work through existing contacts, which helps move the work forward, but means the programme has not concluded at this point.The other challenge which is also an opportunity is the parallel conversations this work encountered. Whilst the goal still remains to create Asthma Friendly Charity guidance, it has led to conversations in North East Lincolnshire where Asthma prevalence is high. These are a collaboration between the Local Authority, the Asthma team and VCSE representatives, this collaboration is looking at what plans can be put in place collectively to support children and young people and families.Overall this piece of work remains a priority and the opportunity to ‘get the work over the line’ is current. A review is now taking place of the Asthma Friendly Schools guidance to update the guidance based on current practice and policy, and this provides the opportunity to create a separate checklist for charities. To enable this a group has been created of a specific CYP charity and a number of sports clubs that provide activities for CYP, supported by myself and the HNY Asthma team. This group will form the sounding board as to what would be useful in a checklist and how we should circulate across the sector. |
| Desired results of the project? | The Asthma Friendly toolkit has an amended version that is relevant to VCSE organisations, this will slightly differ from a school version and that is has been tested with a small number of VCSE organisations.Longer term it is hoped this resource will be available to all schools and VCSE organisations and that an increase in uptake is expected. |
| Brief description of methodology used? | Engagement, initially a single school will be taken through the programme and they will achieve the kitemark.Further engagement and co-design to amend the current programme to be relevant to VCSE organisations.Finally initial support provided to take a small number of VCSE organisations through the programme. |
| **Theory of Change – OPTIONAL: INTERIM REPORT** |
| A Theory of Change is a way of mapping and visualising the future goals you want for your project which is fundamental to its design. It helps to set out; A clear link between the activities you want to do to achieve your goals; What needs to be in place to ensure your activities link to your goals; how you will know whether you have achieved your goals. It helps to test how plausible and feasible are your goals and provides a framework from which you gather data, learning and insight on your journey to prove how you are achieving your goals |
| Outcomes | 1. Thorngumbald Primary School to become an Asthma Friendly School
2. Increase awareness of VCSE sector amongst the Asthma leads in our ICB
3. Amended resources aligned to the VCSE sector
4. VCSE organisations signed up to become Asthma Friendly
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| Inputs | 1. Engage school leaders, work through current guidance and implement the recommendations, apply to become asthma friendly school
2. Engage asthma team, discuss opportunities for future collaborative work, showcase the work of the VCSE sector, identify relevant VCSE organisations linked to CYP, create case study for any VCSE organisation that apply to be asthma friendly
3. Review the current Asthma Friendly Schools resources and guidance through a VCSE lens, make suggested changes to the current guidance, discuss these with VCSE organisations, agree amends and create a suite of resource for Asthma Friendly charities
4. Identify 2-3 VCSE organisations that support CYP, and work with them to implement the guidance and apply to be Asthma Friendly
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| Activities undertaken | 1. School engagement taken place, agreement at Full Governing Board to undertake the kitemark, identify school leader to work with. Future activity to work through the guidance in the September 2025 term.
2. Discussions have taken place, some data looked into to identify hotspots within HNY for where VCSE could target support, initial identification of VCSE activities. Future activity to include, identify key contact within 2-3 VCSE organisations and discuss the guidance and intent with them, with the aim to sign them up to apply for the kitemark.
3. Guidance has been looked at through a VCSE lens and suggested changes identified, these need to be agreed with the ICB team to ensure any changes still keep the guidance effective. Once agreed these need to be discussed with the above organisations
4. Alongside the above, record the learning through the process, to make any final amends from a VCSE sector before making the guidance live via the ICB website.
5. Wider conversations followed and engaged with, resulting in the VCSE sector being part of the plans in areas such as North East Lincolnshire
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| Impact | This work will look to repeat what is seen through the Asthma Friendly Schools programme:* Reduced absenteeism due to asthma related incidents
* Reduced episodes of severe asthma related incidents
* Better self-management of asthma

Within a VCSE setting, the absenteeism will not be as profoundly seen as within schools, however its important to note many of our VCSE organisations will have different relationships with children and families compared to schools.From a VCSE context the impact will be seen through the increased skills and confidence in enabling VCSE colleagues to talk about and support people living with asthma. |
| Outputs | Currently there is a suite of resources all aimed at schools, the intention is to replicate these for the VCSE sector, the key document to produce being:* Guidance document
* Checklist
* Asthma policy
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| **Body of the report INTERIM REPORT and FINAL REPORT** |
| This section provides the detail of your work analysis, data, and graphics |
| Provide the evidence and theory behind your project | Noted above in the assumptions around data of asthma and prevalence in more deprived areas.The VCSE organisation prioritised for this work will be those in areas of deprivation, where there is also a correlation between lower aspirations in schools and lower attendances, usually VCSE organisations placed in these communities are a trusted source of support and can in theory pick up where the school cannot. |
| Explain your key findings, results,  | Early discussions with Asthma Friendly School team suggested this was a useful route to take to expand the remit of the programme, albeit a risk around capacity, if there was a significant increase in numbers going through the scheme. However, it was felt this was an additional reach that goes beyond what is available to schools.Conversations have been had with the Full Governors Meeting at Thorngumbald Primary School. This was received well, and it was felt that it would add value to the school as a whole and also enable the teaching staff to support the pupils further. It has been agreed the school will look to gain the kite mark in the 2024-25 academic year. Through this process we will understand the commitment needed to achieve the kitemark and any barriers and challenges that arise. This will help inform how we approach charities, who will likely face similar challenges as well as additional ones related to their charity.Once the school learning has been gathered this will enable discussions with identified charities that will be a testbed to trial Asthma Friendly Charities. In testing this with a small selection of charities we will also capture the learning to detail the approaches taken and any additional challenges and solution that arise. Once complete we will make a final review of the outputs created and amend to suit, this will allow for the kitemark to then be an option for other VCSE organisations to complete the kitemark as well.All of this can then be captured in a case study and news article so that we can publicise and promote widely across the VCSE sector.From this work, a clear need has been established, and the relevant parts of the system are behind the work, but clearly greater time is needed to enact the outcomes intended. It has taken a great deal longer to complete activities as outlined in the timeline, for various reasons out of my control, however the effort input has led to a commitment to amending the Asthma Friendly school guidance to suit charities and will be delivered as part of the current review. A small group of VCSE organisations have committed to come together and work through a VCSE guidance and this will lead them to be front runners in achieving the kitemark, creating a case study for the wider sector that will hopefully kick start VCSE roll out.In addition, the primary school has worked through the checklist and is putting in place the necessary processes to achieve the kitemark. |
| Describe achievements, changes and difference made, impact | Achievements at this stage are limited, due to needing to take action to produce the guidance for the VCSE sector, however the following are considered as positive steps taken:* Agreement from the Asthma Friendly team at Humber and North Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership to expand the reach of the programme to include VCSE organisations
* Guidance has been reviewed to enable VCSE organisations to access
* Annual review to take place of the Asthma Friendly School guidance that will include the additionality of charity guidance.
* Steering group created to co-design the guidance and test from a VCSE perspective
* Wider conversations taking place around asthma and the VCSE are integrated into the work that is to take place
* Thorngumbald Primary School have agreed at a Full Governors Meeting to pursue the kitemark. The school are underway in implementing the practices and processes in achieving the kitemark, this means that there has been a review and updates made to out of date policy and practice, consideration has gone into the school environment and children at the school identifying those with or at risk of asthma and plans are in place to continually review the programme through the governing board.
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| Provide any recommendations | The following recommendations are set out to inform the next steps from this work:* Create the VCSE checklist as part of the Asthma friendly suite of resources
* Ensure the inclusion of VCSE organisations in the work around asthma at each place
* Create a network of sport and physical activity providers that are ‘asthma friendly’
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| **Conclusion – FINAL REPORT** |
| This section brings the entire project report together, summarising your argument and why it is significant |
| Restate original ambition | To create a version of asthma friendly schools for the VCSE sector, to provide CYP organisations with the tools and guidance to support young people and their families living with asthma |
| Summarise the key themes | * Asthma friendly schools programme is valuable, easy to implement and provides a prevention programme that directly reaches young people and their families
* Good VCSE appetite to contribute to reducing the risk of harm from asthma and have the tools to support the young people and families in their communities
* There is a challenge to move at pace with work like this, due to the need to create relationships and build partnerships and to contend with other priorities both internally and with stakeholders
* In addition to the asthma friendly schools work, there are many conversations that are taking place around asthma, managing the condition and supporting those living with asthma and their families. These largely welcome VCSE input but there is a need to know about these conversations in order to connect organisations
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| Summarise your thoughts | Overall this programme has been successful despite not realising the full intended outcome at this point. The HNY VCSE Collaborative aims to ensure the VCSE sector is seen as an equal partner within the health and care system, and it feels like being able to take existing programmes and adapt them to suit the sector validates this and there is a commitment from system partners to include the VCSE sector.It was never expected that delivering this programme would be simple or that we wouldn’t have to adapt along the way, however the challenges around time and capacity have ultimately been disrupting in bringing the programme to a conclusion.I believe the work we have done to date and the following discussions and actions that are still to come, will have the desired impact of supporting people living with asthma and also reducing the severity of asthma attacks that may occur without this work being in place. |
| Describe any future actions or work needed | As per the recommendations within this report, further work is required realise the overall aim set out at the outset of this programme and the immediate work to conclude includes:* Co-design what a check list and guidance would look like from a VCSE perspective
* Create the checklist as part of the current review into asthma friendly schools
* Create a network of VCSE organisations that are asthma friendly, this may need sub networks such as sports clubs
* Create case studies both from a school perspective and from a VCSE perspective about adopting the asthma friendly checklists and the impact this can have on individuals and organisations. This is to be widely communicated to set a path for other schools and organisations to adopt god practice and policy.
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