

## Director's report for March 24<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting

It has been a busy few months since Christmas assessing the young offender applications. This has, as I hope you will have seen from the reports, been an inspiring activity – meeting incredibly dedicated people who are trying to create real change for young people who have experienced really dire starts to their lives. I'm looking forward to seeing how the cohort develop both as a group and in terms of delivering their projects.

The work that we have been doing with the Cranfield Trust has really grown in momentum since the new year. The young carer grantees who were awarded funding in October have taken part in their first series of Peer 2 Peer Exchanges and the feedback from this was really good. We are currently looking at opportunities to keep this going to ensure that they continue being able to network and collaborate. We are in the process of identifying a facilitator for the young offender Peer 2 Peer exchanges which are likely to have a different feel to the young carer ones.

I am very hopeful that we will be able to visit the next round of young carer applicants in person and I plan to spend some of the summer catching up on visiting grantees who have never had a face-to-face visit. We can hopefully get some Trustee visits booked in as well. We also launched the next young carers round at the end of March so are looking forward to what we hope will be another high-quality round of applications. We've already had enquiries from what sound like some interesting applications from exciting organisations.

We are also moving office at the end of May/early April – the new office is just round the corner, but our current lease was terminated due to under occupancy, so we have been able to secure a nice office close by again with Ethical Property Company.

I attended the Sarasin Spring seminar in mid-March which was really interesting and was also interesting to hear about the evolving approach to ESG that Sarasin has. I have also been talking to a wide group of people involved in the social investing space as I begin to build our knowledge around this area. I'm looking forward to seeing how this might all fit into the new strategy for the future.

The final NCVO Barometer has been published and a round up report will also be published pulling together the findings from each report. This will provide a really useful picture of how organisations managed the challenges thrown at them during the pandemic. The final report shows a continuing picture of ongoing stability and some recovery from organisations but still many issues that will take time to recover from. Needs remains significantly higher than pre-pandemic and the demands on services continue to rise. Improved financial stability does seem to have been achieved for a growing majority and current challenges about from growing demand for services seem to be focused around volunteer recruitment etc.

As things open up there is a definite energy within the sector to start running events and providing opportunities for funders and organisations to come together. Again, I look forward to the opportunities that this will present, especially as I embark on the beginning of developing the new strategy.