

VCS Assembly Strategy and Action Plan 2018/19

Stronger Communities

The VCS Assembly will focus its work under the theme 'Stronger Communities'. A key role for the Assembly will be ensuring that the VCS work together and in partnership with key stakeholders to create sustainable and resilient communities.

It is important that support and services provided are meeting local community needs. This includes supporting communities to play a greater role in improving the well being of their communities, helping them to help themselves and create local solutions to issues and concerns. Also working with the public and private sectors across the county to look at opportunities to support and co-produce a range of local support and services aimed at improving the well-being of our communities and sustainability of organisations.

The focus of the work of the VCS Assembly will be to:-

- Engage and work collaboratively with the VCS and across sectors e.g. health, NCC to co-produce new solutions to improve the well-being of communities. Provide a meaningful contribution to partnership boards/forums/consultations etc.
- Provide a credible voice for the sector - increase understanding of the value of local organisations – nature/role/quality and capacity with public and private sector and role of local sector in delivering public services.
- Advocate on behalf of the sector.

In addition work will continue to:-

- Maintain membership and understanding of VCS Assembly role and knowledge and range of VCS support across the county.
- Identify sector issues and potential opportunities for joint working.
- Provide opportunities for voluntary and community groups to come together, share ideas, raise issues, collaborate and discuss strategic issues, through networks, discussion groups and events, improving cohesion and communication across the sector.
- Promote good practice, successes and achievements using a range of media to raise the profile of the VCS from grass roots community groups to larger organisations.
- Progress work with the Council through VCS Liaison Group. Ensure active involvement and contribution to the agenda and work plan and follow up on issues. Review the Statement of Intent and inform of state of the sector and issues affecting the sector. Develop opportunities for joint projects.
- Provide assistance/support to NCVA Support Services staff to deliver Commission

1. Promote and raise awareness of the Assembly to contribute to improved unity within the sector

Actions

- Ensure Assembly activities and achievements are publicised in the e-bulletin and wider media e.g. press releases, social media
- Ensure feedback to the Assembly on activities

- Maintain current membership level

2. Develop a greater understanding of the issues and trends affecting the sector in Northumberland

Actions

- Ongoing collection of information and research on the state of the sector through networks, contacts with individual organisations and comparison with regional and national trends.
- Report and act on the results of the NCC survey of VCS Support Services.
- Inform stakeholders and VCS liaison Group of issues and trends affecting the sector.
- Contribute to fortnightly e-bulletin and review of online resources

3. Provide opportunities for mutual support and learning to build and strengthen the sector

Actions

- Promote and ensure delivery of up to four network meetings in each of the four geographical areas, attend meetings, promote the Assembly and its activities, encourage groups to raise issues/concerns in relation to the sector, share ideas and collaborate. Increase attendance at geographical networks.
- Organise at least one Assembly event during the year dependent on needs of the sector.
- Identify and put in place training opportunities for VCS organisations where need identified.
- Ensure Town and Parish Councils are included and invited to meetings/events

4. There is information sharing, partnership working and collaboration between VCS organisations and the private and public sector.

Actions

- Check agendas and notes of meetings, engage with key contacts and develop new contacts to keep up to date with developments and opportunities for VCS engagement and involvement.
- Review representation and terms of reference of the Executive Committee to ensure members representative of the VCS and well placed to bring to the Committee challenges and issues faced by communities in Northumberland.
- Review and agree Statement of Intent with Cabinet Holder and Chair of VCS Liaison Group to contribute to increased effectiveness of VCS Liaison Group.
- Gather information and identify issues affecting the sector and feed into VCS Liaison Group.
- Improve and develop engagement with the public and private sectors.
- Identify opportunities and ensure Assembly representation on working groups/boards where appropriate and monitor influence.

- Develop shared priorities and actions, promoting and highlighting joint good practice.
- Continue to ensure that opportunities are provided for VCS Liaison Group to be better informed about the VCS across the county.

5. The VCS is represented and influencing planning, policy making, service delivery at a strategic level as a result of infrastructure support

Actions

- Consider how best the VCS can be involved in strategic development, working collectively to develop actions around asset based approaches to health and well-being.
- Respond to consultations and attend meetings on issues of concern to the sector to ensure that the voice of the Assembly is represented.
- Facilitate opportunities for gaining sector perspectives that will influence future strategy.
- Keep abreast of developments in relation to NCC, ACO, Health and Well Being Co-Design Forum, Empowering People and Communities workstream and other public sector organisations and ensure that the Assembly is consulted, represented and has a voice where appropriate.
- Arrange special network events on key policy issues as and when required to ensure that the sector is informed and has a voice

VCS Assembly 2018/19 Performance indicators

Aim – to increase and strengthen the collective voice of the voluntary and community sectors in influencing and shaping decisions that are important to the sector.

Objective: Promote and raise awareness of the Assembly to contribute to improving unity within the sector	
Key Activities	KPIs
Promote, role, activities and value of the VCS Assembly through media, networks and events.	Maintain current membership level.

Objective: Develop a greater understanding of the issues and trends affecting the sector in Northumberland	
Key Activities	KPIs
Ongoing collection of information and research on the State of the Sector in Northumberland and how it compares to regional and national trends e.g at events, networks	Report and disseminate issues and trends affecting the sector to VCS liaison group and other stakeholders. Final report produced.

Objective: Provide opportunities for mutual support and learning to build and strengthen the sector	
Key Activities	KPIs
Continue to attend and increase attendance at geographical networks.	NCVA staff attend 100% of geographical networks. 10% increase in organisations attending networks/events 75% of organisations that respond say as a result of taking part in networks/events they feel more connected with other organisations. 75% of organisations that respond say that networks/events are excellent/good
Organise one VCS Assembly event per year. VCS Assembly to organise other events if a need arises due to a particular concern.	One VCS Assembly event organised. 75% of organisations that respond say that the events is excellent/good
Support other events to ensure VCS	Appropriate events attended by NCVA staff

representation.	
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Objective: There is information sharing, partnership working and collaboration between VCS organisations and the private and public sector

Key Activities	KPIs
Review representation of VCSC Assembly Executive Committee and terms of reference to ensure CS Assembly is representative of the VCS in Northumberland	Representation on VCS Assembly Executive can gather and inform to enable the VCS Liaison Group to discuss the challenges and issues faced by communities in Northumberland
Review Statement of Intent with cabinet holder and chair of VCS Liaison Group	Meeting to review statement of intent and identify issues/discussions for future VCS Liaison Group meetings e.g. challenges faced by both sectors
Gather information and identify issues affecting the sector and feed into VCS Liaison Group	Number of issues raised with Liaison Group Number of issues addressed by Liaison Group
Improve and develop engagement with the public and private sector Develop shared priorities and actions. Promote and highlight joint good practice	Evidence effective partnership working through case studies

Objective: The VCS is represented and influencing planning, policy making, service delivery at strategic level as a result of infrastructure support

Key Activities	KPIs
Identify engagement opportunities with health and other public sector organisations and ensure VCS Assembly consulted and represented where appropriate	Evidence effective influence in policy and planning at a strategic level through case studies. Evidence that VCS Assembly informed, represented and contributing more widely to strategic partnerships
Facilitate opportunities for gaining sector perspectives that will influence future strategy	
Gather information from VCS to address issues that affect all sectors	