

Gloucestershire Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Strategic Partnership

Annual Report 2023

Introduction

Gloucestershire VCSE Strategic Partnership was established in 2022 following a series of events about the place of the VCSE sector in the development of better integrated health and care.

Following the first of these events, VCSE task and finish groups were established to look in detail at what was needed to enable VCSE organisations to work more closely with the public sector. One of these groups developed a proposed structure, terms of reference and appointment process for the Strategic Partnership. These were approved at an open meeting of VCSE organisations on 26 April 2022.

Who we are

Representation was sought on the VCSE Strategic Partnership from small, medium and large VCSE organisations. From nominations received, elections were held in June 2022 and the following people were elected:

Tom Beasley	- Active Glos
Chris Brown	- Forest Voluntary Action Forum
Sally Byng	- Barnwood Trust
Kobe Francis	- The Music Works
Pippa Jones	- Create Glos
Vicci Livingstone-Thompson	- Inclusion Gloucestershire
Amabel Mortimer	- Artshape (resigned 6 February 2023)
Will North	- The Long Table (resigned 6 November 2023))
Indigo Redfern	- GL11

In addition:

- Matt Lennard (Gloucestershire VCS Alliance) has a place in the Partnership, as the Alliance is commissioned to support VCSE sector engagement with the public sector;
- Nicola Simpson (Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust) was co-opted on 6 February 2023;
- Meetings are chaired by Jill Parker from Gloucestershire VCS Alliance.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the VCSE Strategic Partnership is to provide the overall strategic direction and governance of VCSE engagement with One Gloucestershire Integrated Care System (ICS). This relationship is based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the VCSE sector and the public sector organisations that make up the ICS. The MoU was developed and agreed through the VCSE workshops in 2022.

The VCSE Strategic Partnership also has terms of reference which set out our responsibilities. These are detailed in the table of **What we have done so far**.

What we have done so far

In our first full year of operation, much of our focus has been establishing the relationships, structures and ways of working that create a flow of information between the VCSE sector and the Integrated Care System and learning how to influence at system level. We are aware that, at times, people in the VCSE sector have felt that they have not heard from us and would like to have known more about what we have been doing. This has been an unintended consequence of being at the start of a new way of working. We are much better placed to share information and to have a more meaningful dialogue with the VCSE sector in the year ahead.

Although we have sometimes been quiet, we have been busy. We have made good progress, but we know that there is still much to be done in developing more collaborative VCSE–public sector relationships. The following table summarises what we have achieved in 2023 against each of our areas of responsibility:

Area of responsibility	What we have done
Overseeing the implementation of the MoU between the VCSE sector and the ICS.	Secured funding for representation. Developed opportunities for more VCSE organisations to engage with and influence the wider system.
Promoting a culture of collaboration both within the VCSE sector and between the VCSE sector and the ICS.	3 meetings with NHS leaders to discuss strategy, infrastructure and commissioning. Workshop to build understanding between the VCSE Sector and Clinical Programme Groups – 102 attendees <i>‘How to lead when you’re not in charge’</i> event on how to influence the wider system – 39 attendees
Setting strategic priorities for VCSE sector engagement with the ICS.	Created space in meetings to hear key issues from the VCSE sector. Identified priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning • Infrastructure • Understanding Community Interest Companies
Representing the VCSE sector across ICS governance and decision-making bodies at system level.	Appointed representatives to Gloucestershire Health and Care Partnership and its working groups, The Health and Wellbeing Board and the Clinical Programmes Board. Contributed to Gloucestershire Health and Care Partnership strategy.
Facilitating communication at a senior level between the public sector and the VCSE sector and ensuring a flow of information between them.	Created a website to share information about partnership working GlosinPartnership.org Strategic Partnership Gloucestershire, UK Made VCSE Strategic Partnership meeting minutes publicly available via the website. Launched a quarterly newsletter. Reviewed the data and analysis for the 2023 State of the Sector report and contributed key messages.
Providing good governance, ensuring that representation is effective and accountable to the VCSE sector.	Development and oversight of the appointment process for VCSE representatives to Integrated Locality Partnerships (ILPs). Two joint meetings with VCSE ILP representatives.

Our plans for 2024/25

Through our achievements in 2023, we have established the foundations that will enable us to represent the sector with increased focus and purpose in the year ahead. Our priorities are:

Infrastructure: Research what infrastructure would best support organisations and community groups and explore how this could be funded.

Commissioning: Explore the potential for developing alliances of VCSE organisations that bid collectively for public sector contracts. Provide constructive challenge to commissioning practices that threaten or erode local civil society.

Representation: Develop better joined up working with other VCSE leaders, particularly those in representative roles. Ensure that we hear from a wide range of voices, including those that are under-represented, and can represent key themes at a strategic level.

Clinical Programme Groups: Create stronger links between the VCSE sector and Clinical Programme Groups, which oversee the development of services in relation to a wide range of health conditions.

Community Interest Companies (CICs): Research how CIC's are contributing to the VCSE landscape in Gloucestershire.

Communications: Improve our communications with the VCSE sector so that you know what we are working on, how you can get involved and what we achieve.

Staying in touch

We will share news and promote opportunities to get involved through our newsletter: ***In Partnership*** which you can subscribe to [here](#). We look forward to working with you in 2024.