

## **Northumberland VCS Assembly Strategy and Action Plan 2019/20**

A key role for the Assembly is engaging and influencing public sector partners and strategic partnerships to shape and respond to the challenges and opportunities facing the sector and work together to ensure the best outcomes for individual and communities.

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 and provide a meaningful contribution to partnership boards/forums/consultations etc.
- Provide a credible voice for the sector - increase understanding of the value of local VCS organisations – nature/role/quality and capacity with public and private sector and role in delivering services.
- Identify sector issues and advocate on behalf of the sector.
- Progress joint working with NCC through VCS Liaison Group on key issues focused on delivering outputs and outcomes and active involvement in work plan and agendas.

In addition, continue to:

- Increase membership and understanding of VCS Assembly role and knowledge and range of VCS support across the county.
- Provide the main source of contact and conduit for information to and from the sector
- 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.
- 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 regularly publicised in the e-bulletin, on the website and wider media e.g. press releases, social media
- Ensure regular feedback to the Assembly on activities
- Increase current membership level by promoting the value and benefits of being an Assembly member

### **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.

- Identify and deliver on actions identified from the State of the Sector report December 2018.
- Inform stakeholders and VCS liaison Group of issues and trends affecting the sector.
- Contribute content for the fortnightly e-bulletin and obtain feedback from local groups on how national/regional issues impact on them.

### **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.

### **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.
- Develop strong partnerships with VCS organisations wanting to work collectively to enable the sector to respond to future opportunities.
- Produce a report for Health and Well- Being Board focussing on health, sharing issues and celebrating the contribution the sector makes to delivering the HWB Strategy and the health and wellbeing agenda more broadly.
- 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.

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

#### **Actions**

- Respond to consultations and attend meetings on issues of concern to the sector to ensure that the voice of the Assembly is represented.

- Keep abreast of developments in relation to NCC, ACO, North of Tyne Combined Authority Devolution, Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal 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