

Promising practice: how Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships are working with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector

Introduction and background

This briefing is to share practical ideas on how Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPs) can work in partnership with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE).

The NHS Five Year Forward View stated that ‘a new relationship with people and communities’ is key to closing the three gaps it identified in health and wellbeing, quality of care and treatment, and finance and efficiency. It noted that ‘voluntary organisations often have an impact well beyond what statutory services alone can achieve...these organisations provide a rich range of activities... and deliver vital services with paid expert staff.’ By sharing real life examples of what STPs are doing, it is intended to spread good practice and show what is possible.

Examples given below have come from contact between VCSE and NHS colleagues working in STPs and the national STP engagement and communications team in NHS England. This briefing is aimed at people working on STPs and also at the wider VCSE sector, giving examples to encourage better and more systematic practice in partnership working.

How are STPs and the voluntary and community sector working together?

West Yorkshire and Harrogate

In West Yorkshire and Harrogate the voluntary sector has engaged with the STP using existing network structures and is working to promote the sector as a system leader that can bring significant value in planning and implementation.

The STP has identified an ‘enabling’ programme called ‘Harnessing the power of communities’. This includes working to identify and deliver effective third sector interventions on a greater scale. This is led by two VCS

‘Some of our partners get us – others don’t...accountable care organisation models cite the VCS as a vital partner yet some areas don’t have the VCS round the table.’ *Soo Nevison, Voluntary Action Calderdale*

representatives who have a role in development of the STP. They also attend the leadership and steering group meetings. The voluntary sector is also being included in other ‘enabler’ workstreams, for example technology and workforce.

Find out more: westyorkshire.stp@nhs.net

Somerset STP

In Somerset the Richmond Group of charities is working with the STP to explore how the voluntary and community sector can be mobilised across the county through genuine collaboration and partnership. The aim is to develop practical and collaborative plans that bring VCS insights and experience to the challenges that the Somerset health system faces. This will support transformational service design and delivery by offering people support that is meaningful to them and relieving pressure on health services. The work is currently in an exploratory phase with more detailed next steps and plans for development available from April 2017.

Somerset CCG has made funding available for local existing VCSE networks including the Somerset VCSE Strategic Forum to engage with the STP process. VCSE representatives already attend a number of STP sub-groups with representation agreed by and accountable to the sector-led VCSE Strategic Forum. The VCSE also has a seat on the STP engagement and communications steering group which is developing and driving patient and public involvement in the STP.

Find out more: ask@sompar.nhs.uk

Greater Manchester

Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership has agreed a memorandum of understanding with Greater Manchester VCSE sector, comprising nearly 15,000 organisations. The five-year agreement, is backed up by over £1.1m in investment from the Partnership's transformation fund and is the product of hundreds of conversations over the past year designed to establish a new way for the statutory and VCSE sectors to work together as two equal, complementary partners.

Before this, a Greater Manchester VCSE Devolution Reference Group was established in 2016 and promotes the involvement of the VCSE sector and communities in devolution. It includes individuals from 18 VCSE organisations from across Greater Manchester, organised according to different strands of VCSE work; infrastructure, providers, equalities, faith, Healthwatch and social enterprise.

'This agreement is more than just words – it really recognises the value of equal partnership between the statutory and VCSE sectors with each playing to our strengths. We know that there are significant challenges to overcome and this MoU sets out our ambitions to start moving the focus from fixing problems to enabling people to stay well in the first place. VCSE organisations are best placed to support and mobilise people and communities to do more for themselves and others, and benefit from a better quality of life.' *Alex Whinnom, Chief Executive of GMCVO.*

'We're trying to mobilise the sector so it can make the case for what it does and can do. One of these key messages is that we can devise, develop and **deliver solutions to some of the most challenging problems** faced by Greater Manchester, breaking down barriers and building community confidence and cohesion, and ensure we **move from crisis resolution to anticipation and prevention.**' *Warren Escadale, VSNW*

Find out more: devolution@vsnw.org.uk

Summary of the GM VCSE Devolution Reference Group:

<http://bit.ly/VCSEReferenceGroup>

VSNW's Developing Devolution (and GM's STP) with Communities process:

<http://bit.ly/STPCommunities>

Memorandum of Understanding between the GM STP and VCSE:

<http://bit.ly/STPMoU>

Northamptonshire

The Northamptonshire STP includes a strategic objective that it will build resilience in communities and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. This is underpinned by a detailed vision and approach to community engagement, and a Northamptonshire-specific approach to the six principles for engaging People and Communities¹.

The VCSE is represented in the governance of the STP at the level of strategic direction, decision-making and assurance. It is also part of delivery workstreams, including the orkforce element of the plan.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire

The Herefordshire and Worcestershire plan articulates the different roles and strengths of the VCS as a partner in the system. This STP has identified an enabling

The VCS has a vital role in reducing demand on formal services such as unplanned hospital admissions for example through care navigation/ bridging roles, peer support and group activities. The sector also helps to address health inequalities by contributing to wider social outcomes such as employment and school attendance.

From Herefordshire & Worcestershire plan

Principle 2: carers are supported & involved

- 16,000 known carers are engaged through the Carers Partnership
- Build capacity to reach the 60,000 estimated carers, particularly younger carers (c.6,000 - one of the country's highest) who are more likely to develop health issues.

From Northamptonshire plan

workstream of 'Healthy Communities and the VCS' alongside another two enablers (workforce/organisational development, and digital).

There are commitments in the STP to simplify the commissioning process to enhance the contribution that the VCS can make, and to scale up existing asset-based activities² that support good health and wellbeing, protect against poor health and foster positive communities and networks.

¹ For more information on the six principles, see 'Want to know more' section

² Asset-based development is an approach to the sustainable development of communities based on their strengths and potential

North East STPs

VONNE (Voluntary Organisations Network North East) is supporting VCSE sector engagement in the Teesside, Durham, Darlington, Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby (DDTHRW) STP around the Better Health Programme, which is focussed on developing plans for the reconfiguration and rationalisation of acute hospitals across Durham and Tees Valley.

VONNE has worked with voluntary development agencies to deliver a “100 conversations” engagement programme, asking community groups representing protected characteristics what is important to them about health services and how they may change. This is being followed by a further 50 conversations focussed on maternity and children’s services. VONNE

also represents the VCSE within the Neighbourhood & Communities Strategic Overview Group as part of the DDTHRW STP and on the Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and North Durham (NTWND) STP Neighbourhoods and Communities (N&C) Working Group.

In the Northumberland, Tyne & Wear STP, Newcastle CVS is involved through the Chief Executive’s membership of the Joint Integrated Care Board which is a part of the STP structure. VONNE is also a member of the Prevention Work Stream Group covering both north east STP footprints, which has identified community-centred and asset-based approaches to prevention and self-care within their workstream plan. In both areas.

VCSE network organisations are seeking to build on this partnership work by ensuring VCSE involvement in the full STP development process.

Find out more: <https://www.vonne.org.uk/resources/sustainability-and-transformation-plans-stps>

Key pointers for STPs and VCSE working together

- As a minimum, STPs should provide regular briefings for the VCSE on the STP vision and implementation
- It is important to have a coherent narrative for all STP partners of the different roles of the VCSE in contributing to improved health and wellbeing for local people
- VCSE knowledge of previous engagement, community needs and networks, and existing approaches to supporting a social model of health, is a valuable asset for STPs to draw on

‘The message to VCSE organisations is to check though your local or regional infrastructure organisation if there is any representation within the STP structures and link with that named link person if possible. If there is no VCSE representation raise this with your local Healthwatch who can raise the issue at the local Health & Wellbeing Boards.’
VONNE briefing note on STPs

- VCSE organisations will benefit from networking together across the STP area and coordinating approaches on representation in STP governance and workstreams
- More developed approaches include STPs agreeing priorities, designing solutions and agreeing impact measures with the VCSE. In these scenarios the VCSE is fully engaged as a partner, resourced for its time, and systematically represented in STP governance and workstreams.

Want to know more?

- For a discussion or advice on how your STP can work with the voluntary and community sector, contact england.stpengagement@nhs.net
- NHS England, [Engaging local people: a guide for local areas developing sustainability and transformation plans](#) (September 2016)
- Five Year Forward View People and Communities Board, [Six principles for engaging people and communities: definitions, evaluation and measurement](#) (June 2016). This helps to better understand and measure the impact of engaging with local people and communities.