
West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board

7 October 2021

Sussex Wide Covid19 Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Review

Report by Jess Sumner CEO Community Works and Chair of West Sussex Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Alliance.

Summary

According to the [NCVO UK Civil Society Almanac 2020](#), West Sussex has 2168 general charities with an income of £835m, with a further estimated 3143 'below the radar' organisations.

This review was produced on behalf of the Sussex Health and Care Partnership (SHCP) as part of NHS England funded work to explore VCSE Leadership and Integrated Care Structures (ICS) working collaboratively. The Review Oversight Group comprised representative members of SHCP, including local authorities and NHS organisations from across Sussex along with VCSE organisations.

The review sought to explore and understand how the VCSE in Sussex responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and to draw our themes, learning and recommendations for future work.

It calls on leaders from across the statutory and VCSE sectors "to build on lessons learnt during COVID-19, to strengthen existing partnerships, and build new ones, to support the health and wellbeing of communities across Sussex".

A range of different approaches were used as part of the review, including surveys and reports, 15 in-depth interviews, and 37 case studies. It provides a chance to reflect on local learning with health, public health and wider local authority partners and stakeholders, to act through experimentation to develop joined up approaches within our communities, and to widen local partnerships around the shared agenda of tackling inequalities at every level.

Examples of achievements or impacts of COVID included;

"Extend[ing] the help lines to seven days a week, to set-up a befriending service as well as a shopping and prescription delivery service whilst making welfare calls to 150 customers and sending out activity packs to all daybreak customers within the first week of the pandemic" VAAC and Healthwatch West Sussex case study on Sage House, (p.56)

"There were two distinct but inseparable aspects to their response to the pandemic: their organisational approach to infection control across internal services and their contribution to a systems leadership response in collaboration with cross-sector partners drawing on their homelessness pathways expertise." Turning Tides (p.71)

“ In Horsham, for example, the loss of older volunteers meant the closure of the volunteer-run Community Transport Scheme. Although many new volunteers were available, not having the correct licences prevented them from driving during lockdown, which meant residents were unable to attend GP and hospital appointments and other essential services.” (p.18)

The review found;

- strong and effective collaborations between VCSE and statutory services developed at speed, identifying and coordinating responses to protect and support communities.
- VCSE supported statutory services to provide early support to hyperlocal need – thanks to their unique characteristics, agility and connectedness to their communities
- Covid-19 has provided an opportunity to demonstrate VCSE organisation’s value as innovators and partners in improving health and wellbeing and addressing wider inequalities.
- There is an opportunity to involve the VCSE sector as a key system partner building on existing and new collaborations to improve health and address the wider multipliers of inequality.
- Investment in maintaining existing partnerships and making new ones is essential to build the long-term sustainability and resilience of the sector.

The survey can be found here; <https://www.sussexhealthandcare.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/COVID-19-Sussex-wide-VCSE-review-full-report.pdf>

The recommendations in the report are intended to support leaders across statutory and VCSE sectors to advance existing and encourage new and wider collaborations that will sustain the early responses to Covid-19, to improve the population health and tackle wider inequalities across Sussex.

We know many systems leaders are examining how they work collaboratively, and the recommendations can be used to reflect on progress and stimulate further discussion for future development.

Recommendations are grouped under these opportunity headlines:

Opportunity 1: Create more opportunities for VCSE and public sectors to work together at all levels of system transformation

Opportunity 2: Engage as equal partners

Opportunity 3: Make better use of data

Opportunity 4: Strengthen preventative approaches to health and care

Opportunity 5: Create accessible and diverse volunteering opportunities

Recommendation(s) to the Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to;

(1) Note the report

(2) This review calls on leaders from across the statutory, funding and VCSE sectors to build on lessons learnt, to strengthen existing partnerships, and build new ones, to support the health and wellbeing of communities across Sussex by:

- Sharing this report within and across their organisations
- Reflecting on the recommendations within the report
- Seeking opportunities to promote/enhance/build upon the recommendations to strengthen future collaboration
- Taking actions to progress recommendations in a collaborative and solution focussed way
- Examining, within current planning processes and frameworks at all levels and places within the SHCP, how recommendations and associated actions are (or may be) supported and developed in order to embed collaborative working to address health and wider inequalities.

1 Background and context

- 1.1 This review was produced on behalf of the Sussex Health and Care Partnership (SHCP)¹ as part of NHS England funded work to explore VCSE Leadership and Integrated Care Structures (ICS) working collaboratively. The lead voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisation in the NHS England bid was Community Works with Jane Lodge, Associate Director of Public Involvement, Sussex NHS Commissioners, also SHCP leadership. SHCP comprises 13 organisations across Sussex, the NHS and local councils, which work together to improve health and care.
- 1.2 This review both highlights and celebrates the extraordinary achievements of the Sussex Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) in its response to the coronavirus pandemic and presents recommendations for future collaboration and how it can capitalise on the learning acquired from that response. Through this research and discussions with, VCSE and public sector leaders across Sussex, we have taken a snapshot of the diversity of ways in which the VCSE has supported and protected communities and worked in partnership with health and local authority partners. We draw attention to the changing nature and flexible structure of the VCSE and the ways it can contribute to improving health, social and economic recovery in our localities as a key systems partner.

2 Proposal details

2.1 This review calls on leaders from across the statutory, funding and VCSE sectors to build on lessons learnt, to strengthen existing partnerships, and build new ones, to support the health and wellbeing of communities across Sussex by: -

- Sharing this report within and across their organisations
- Reflecting on the recommendations within the report
- Seeking opportunities to promote/enhance/build upon the recommendations to strengthen future collaboration
- Taking actions to progress recommendations in a collaborative and solution focussed way
- Examining, within current planning processes and frameworks at all levels

and places within the SHCP, how recommendations and associated actions are (or may be) supported and developed in order to embed collaborative working to address health and wider inequalities.

3 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 3.1 Organisations across Sussex provided the reports and summaries of data collected, we conducted interviews to inform and draft detailed case studies and spoke with VCSE and statutory sector colleagues to reflect upon the impact of the pandemic and how to preserve the collaborative relationships created.

A range of different approaches were used as part of the review, including surveys and reports, 15 in-depth interviews, and 37 case studies.

Contact: Jess Sumner, CEO of Community Works and Chair of West Sussex Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure alliance.

Appendices Presentation Papers (Presentation attached)

Background papers

The survey can be found here; <https://www.sussexhealthandcare.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/COVID-19-Sussex-wide-VCSE-review-full-report.pdf>