

# ‘Working together for a better future’

## Action plan 2025-27

STRATEGY GOALS & OBJECTIVES	Action Owner	Short term actions (Year 1)	Medium term actions (Year 2)	Longer term actions (Year 3)
<b>STRATEGY GOAL 1 - SUPPORT AND ENABLE A VIBRANT AND THRIVING VCSE SECTOR TO PLAY ITS PART</b>				
<b>1.1 Investment in the VCSE sector</b>				
1.1 Investment in the VCSE sector to create resilience and capacity to meet increased demand	ICB	Work with partners to understand where system invests and identify risks to system priorities from gaps in investment with a view to pooling budgets, realising longer funding periods and timeframes for submissions and responses wherever possible	Implementation of a system-wide Compact, accountability model and action plan, that sets out principles and common approaches for how statutory bodies support and fund VCSE organisations.	A framework for system-wide pooled budgets, commissioning and investment is in place
	VSN/CVSs	VSN and CVSs to identify gaps in funding to the VCSE sector - in communities of geography, practice and/or interest	Work with ICS partners to identify sources of funding to fill gaps in, or opportunities from, VCSE funding to support prevention / early intervention / health inequalities, wherever system needs are identified	
	VSN	Collate and share pipeline of collaborative VCSE project proposals with ICB in preparation for future funding opportunities or to address system challenges		

<b>1.2 Align commissioning best practice and support</b>				
1.2 Align commissioning best practice and support	ICB/VSN/CVSs	Work with partners, including local authorities, VCSE, NHS and crime, on the ICB-led Aligning Support programme to develop a Compact including a framework for use of VCSE grants vs contracts and a common approach to understanding impact	Work with partners to undertake commissioning review which includes a shift toward grant funding	A framework / mechanism is in place and understood by all partners around grants vs commissioning, related to size and complexity of activity
	CVSs	Lead on ensuring procurement changes with NHSE Provider Selection Regime drive more collaboration with VCSE sector		
<b>1.3 Build the VCSE infrastructure, workforce and skills for diverse partnership</b>				
1.3.1. Partnership infrastructure, workforce and skills	VSN	Embed a process for conducting an annual strategic review of impact and effectiveness of VSN, using the NHS Quality Development Tool to aid annual update of action plan		Review of ICS VCSE strategy and develop future strategy and plan.
	VSN	Develop a Charter / set of principles for members of the VSN to sign to confirm their commitment aligned to the ICS Leadership Compact		
	CVSs/VSN	Promote consortia development advice and case studies for VCSE organisations looking to deliver services in collaboration		Increased number of VCSE consortia

1.3.2 Diversity of VCSE sector involved in partnership	VSN	VSN membership is analysed, gaps identified and areas targeted for new members	A process in place to regularly refresh VCSE representation for more diversity and engagement	
	VSN/CVSs	Implement findings of CVS research about faith groups to expand reach with new faith groups in VSN	Increasing number and range of faith groups become VSN members	
	VSN	Annual review of the effectiveness of the VSN Steering Group and Terms of Reference		
<b>STRATEGY GOAL 2 - EMBED THE VCSE SECTOR AS A RESPECTED AND EQUAL PARTNER IN THE ICS</b>				
<b>2.1 Develop VCSE Representation</b>				
<b>2.1 Develop VCSE Representation</b>	ICB	New VSN reps and CVS staff members are offered training by the ICB governance team to understand structures, processes and approaches to risk	There is cultural change in the VCSE sector around active engagement - reps show transparency and VCSE organisations proactively engage with reps	
	CVSs	Review representation training course and discuss issues and needs at VSN steering group meetings	The correct infrastructure is in place to support engagement/representation in person	
	VSN/ICB	Joint training opportunities are made available across the sectors, with VCSE input into training development and promotion	A consistent approach to engaging with the VCSE is included in the ICS organisational development programme	

<b>2.2 Influencing change</b>				
2.2.1 VCSE embedded in system governance	ICB	VCSE sector rep is a full voting member on the ICB		VCSE power and influence evidenced within all Accountable Business Units
	CVSs/VSN	Engage with the sector to gather a mandate for this role		
	ICB/VSN	Embed feedback system from VCSE reps on ABUs and ICB committees and survey ICB committee members to understand the value they bring	Increasing number of VSN reps at ICB committees/decision-making groups, systematically use intel and case studies from the VCSE sector to demonstrate impact and drive change	
2.2.2 System partnership reflects good practice and follows the principles of joint working	ICB/VSN/CVSs	Implement the ICS Leadership Compact	Code of conduct detailing the principles of good partnership working and what 'equal partners' means is adopted and regularly reviewed by all ICS boards, committees, business units, groups, programmes	There is consistent good collaborative working across the ICS with participation and offers in both North and South places and at neighbourhood level and an agreed approach to resolving differences
	ICB/VSN	Annual review of VSN/ICB Memorandum of Understanding	MoU expanded to include local government	
<b>2.3 Investment in partnership infrastructure across the ICS</b>				
2.3.1 Investment in partnership structures in VCSE, inc strategic and thematic provider alliances and costs of participation	ICB/VSN	Annual review of ICS VCSE strategy to identify need for ongoing and sustainable investment into VSN and develop a business case for 3 year funding	Resources for VCSE partnership structures are committed on an ongoing basis – i.e. not time-limited	

	VSN/ICB	VSN lead on codesign of a standard system-wide approach for reimbursement of VCSE participation/rep time that covers time and other expenses of participating as an equal partner.	Budget holders across the system adopt and provide consistent funding for VCSE reimbursement for involvement	
2.3.2 Investment in partnership capacity in the ICS	ICB	Contribute toward the development of the ICB impact assessment process to ensure VCSE sustainability is considered	The implications for the VCSE sector is a standard section in all ICB and ICP reports	
	VSN/ICB	VSN works closely with ICB Assistant Director with responsibility for VCSE relationship to ensure impact of partnership is understood and shared through regular reports to ICB committees and wider comms channels		

<b>STRATEGY GOAL 3 - DRIVE CHANGE AND CREATE TANGIBLE IMPACT ON PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES AND TACKLE HEALTH INEQUALITIES</b>				
<b>3.1 VCSE as key partners in Integrated Neighbourhoods</b>				
3.1 VCSE as key partners in Integrated Neighbourhoods	VSN	VSN assess impact made by sector at a local neighbourhood level using the Assura grant scheme, alongside an evaluation of the Healthier Future programme, and use to drive a bottom up approach to local service development	VSN work with Integrated Neighbourhoods, district councils and other partners to explore how VCSE voice is heard at local level and full impact understood	
<b>3.2 Influence and build relationships with Integrated Neighbourhood Teams</b>				
3.2 Influence and build relationships with Integrated Neighbourhood Teams	CVSs	Health and Wellbeing Network sessions to facilitate relationships and learning between the VCSE and local partners		
	CVSs	VCSE experiences of working with local integrated teams are brought into decision-making to influence policy and funding	Funding and referral systems align to VCSE capacity	
<b>3.3 Focus on health inequalities</b>				
3.3 Focus on health inequalities	VSN	VSN includes health inequalities as a regular item at network meetings and invites relevant ICB colleagues from CORE20+5, Population Health Management to discuss VCSE sector contribution to reducing health inequalities	We identify solutions to reduce demand, including identifying and establishing shared funding pots and joint VCSE/ICS plans to reduce health inequalities at all levels	
	VSN/CVSs	VCSE sector continues to feed into strategic workstreams that address health inequalities - including Health Inequalities Strategic Group and Health Inclusion Group		

<b>3.4 Development and sharing of data, impact measurement and outcomes</b>				
3.4.1 Build VCSE data collection capacity	CVSs	Increase the skills, confidence and understanding of the VCSE sector about the use of data including Health Economics	There is a common yet proportional approach to data collection and shared access to data / insight which is utilised for continual development and improvement	
	VSN	Development of a VSN data project led by Cambridge CAB by widening contributing VSN members and increasing ICB support	The data project develops a file sharing resource where VSN members can access VSN and system reports, research and learning	There is system-wide combined data to enable greater insight into communities and health and wellbeing needs
	ICB	Link data project to ICB Involvement and Coproduction Group and promote Insight Bank		
3.4.2 Unblock barriers to sharing data and information	VSN	VSN continues to engage with relevant programmes such as ICB Population Health Management		
	VSN	VSN develop an action plan for identifying priorities, opportunities and challenges to VCSE data sharing, including around data sharing agreements, IT, information governance etc.	VSN works in partnership with ICB to implement more equal ways of accessing IT systems and data which supports improved health and wellbeing	System-wide mechanisms and processes in line with GDPR are developed for sharing data and insight, at a system and local level, that includes soft data and outcomes from VCSE

3.4.3 Develop shared outcomes and impact measurements	ICB	VCSE contribute to the deployment and usage of the ICB Strategic Outcomes Framework platform		
	ICB/VSN	VSN works with ICB to explore how the VCSE can use MYCaW (the system High Intensity User indicators of wellbeing) and other options	There is investment in measurement of impact and outcomes across the system and agreed system measures are accessible to all inc VCSE.	

Draft for consultation



<b>STRATEGY GOAL 4 - BUILD STRONG, INCLUSIVE AND EMPOWERING RELATIONSHIPS</b>				
<b>4.1 Promotion of the value of the VCSE</b>				
4.1.1 Build understanding of VCSE sector and its value across the system	VSN	VSN develops and deploys awareness resources to improve ICS partners' understanding of the nature, value, governance, systems and benefits of the VCSE sector, including through more showcase days	VSN commissioners academic research on value of VCSE sector across ICS (see Yorkshire and BOB ICSs for examples)	
	VSN/CVSs	CVSs and VSN regularly tell the story of the value of VCSE sector - through case studies, on website and at events - to build understanding of the value of community gained qualitative insight and intelligence		
	ICB/VSN	ICB System leadership training includes materials and modules on VCSE sector and are evaluated from a VCSE perspective		Appreciation of the value and knowledge of the VCSE sector is mandatory training for all ICS workforce
4.1.2 Embed VCSE co-production and learning culture in the system	ICB	VSN team, infrastructure organisations and members continue to give feedback on proposals but are increasingly engaged at an earlier stage of ICB planning	ICB endorses co-production with the VCSE recognised as best practice and works with the VSN to embed	Co-production and learning culture is embedded throughout the system
	ICB	Refresh of People and Communities Strategy and drafting of Co-production strategy to include commitment to balance of voice, early engagement and payment policy.		Co-production features in all ICB project initiation plans

<b>4.2 Communications and interactions between and within sectors</b>				
4.2.1 Develop VSN's communications capacity	ICB/VSN	VSN continues to share information about the VCSE sector through a monthly news bulletin, website and social media	A system-wide mechanism, ie a website or portal, enables public sector colleagues more access to VCSE organisations.	Strong, open communication channels exist with all ICS partners including key organisations such as the County, District, Town and Parish Councils and we share best practice and have equal access to information
	ICB	ICB communications and language are developed in partnership – different routes and formats for communication are used		
4.2.2 Position VCSE relationship building as central to system workforce development	Chief People Officer, ICB	The ICS Workforce Strategy and the reviewed ICS VCSE Strategy align	Terms and conditions start to align, facilitated by realistic funding and commissioning	Terms and conditions align further and One Workforce equally includes VCSE partners
	Chief People Officer, ICB	A key part of all new ICS job descriptions and appraisals includes relationship building with partners in the VCSE sector	Relationship building across and within partners in the ICS is recognised and rewarded as essential for career progression of ICS leaders and staff	
	VSN	Job descriptions and appraisals of VCSE leadership roles include relationship building with ICS partners		
	VSN/ICB	Development of VCSE workforce data sets and resources to explore feasibility of combining with ICS workforce data to support One Workforce approach.		System-wide workforce data presents intelligence for the sectors to work together

	VSN	VSN works with ICB to improve how VCSE sector is involved in recruitment of ICS leadership appointments		
4.2.3 Identify opportunities for sharing assets and experiences	VSN	VSN conducts survey to see how many VCSE people have taken up learning opportunities and understand the barriers to greater uptake.		
	VSN/ICB	Build shared experience and understanding at leadership level through a Mentoring Programme, 'A Day in the Life' leadership exchange and learning, sharing skills and attending CVS training sessions		
	ICB/VSN	VSN facilitates relationships between VCSE sector and all ICS partners at all levels		Projects and spaces are co-located