

Know your VSN

A guide to the Voluntary Sector
Network in Cambridgeshire and
Peterborough



What is the VSN



The **Voluntary Sector Network** is here to make sure that local charities, community groups, and social enterprises have a **strong voice in shaping health and care services** across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Our Aims

- **To make sure the voluntary sector is heard**, involved in decision-making, and recognised as an equal partner.
- **To help grassroots organisations thrive**, connect, and make a real difference in people's lives.
- **To build strong, inclusive relationships** that tackle local health inequalities and support healthier, happier communities.



History



In 2022 the [ICS VCSE Strategy](#) was first strategy approved.

VCSE Health Alliances were established aligned to ICS footprints following a **NHSE directive**.

Since then

- Rebranded, restructured and expanded '[Voluntary Sector Network](#)' (VSN)
- Created a membership of **120** members
- Established **VSN Strategy Group**
- **Strengthened VCSE representation** across ICB governance and across Place and Integrated Neighbourhoods
- Increased opportunities to **collaborate and share and learn** across sectors
- **Embedded VCSE voice** further across **strategic programmes** to shape policies and strategies
- **3-year action plan** approved at Board.



What is the purpose of the VSN



Strategy Goal 1

Support and enable a vibrant and thriving voluntary, community & social enterprise sector to play its part

- Investment in the VCSE sector
- Align commissioning best practice and support
- Build the VCSE infrastructure, workforce and skills for diverse partnership

Strategy Goal 2

Embed the VCSE sector as a respected and equal partner in the ICS

- Develop VCSE Representation
- Influencing change
- Investment in partnership infrastructure across the ICS

What is the purpose of the VSN



Strategy Goal 3

Drive change and create tangible impact on people and communities, and tackle health inequalities

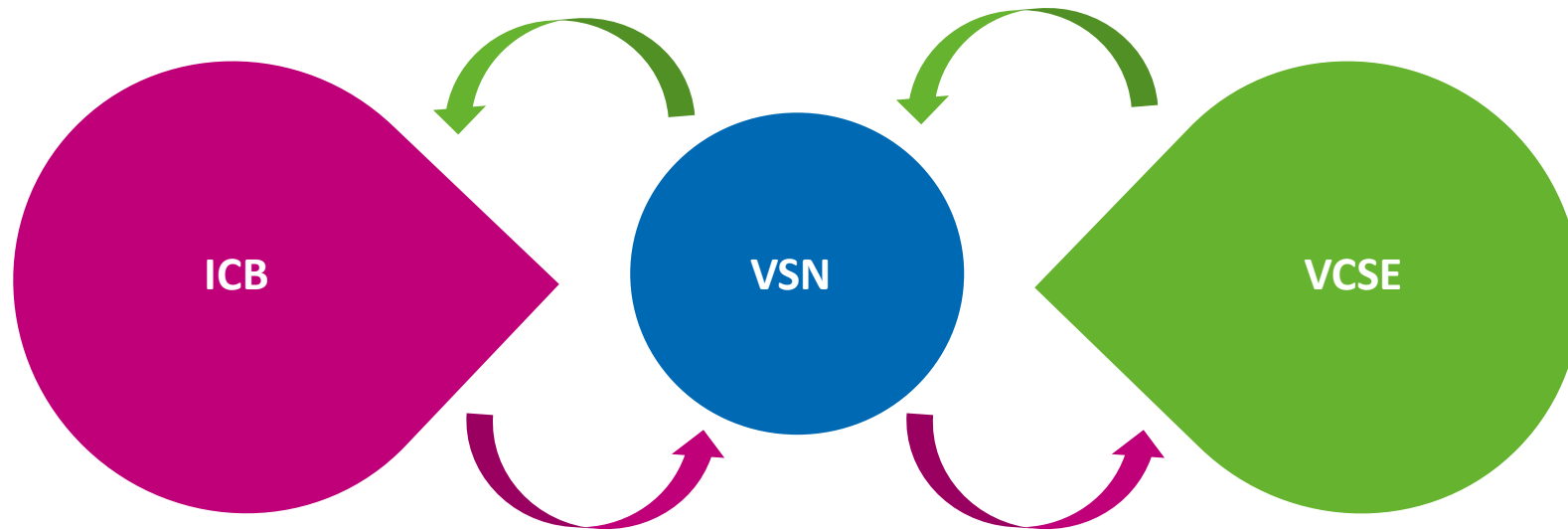
- VCSE as key partners in Integrated Neighbourhoods
- Influence and build relationships with Integrated Neighbourhood Teams
- Focus on health inequalities
- Development and sharing of data, impact measurement and outcomes

Strategy Goal 4

Build strong, inclusive and empowering relationships

- Promotion of the value of the VCSE
- Communications and interactions between and within sectors

Where the VSN is positioned



How does the VSN work



The Strategy Group plans the work and takes key decisions. The group is made up of all of the VSN representative, the two CVSs and the VSN Programme Director.

There are also places for project leads, currently this is Cambridge CAB who lead the **Data Catalogue** work.

The **VSN representatives** have places on:

- The ICB Board
- The Integrated Care Partnership North Place Board
- South Place Board

Reps' reports from meetings are shared with the whole VSN membership.

The **VSN membership** is spread across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough and comprises organisations and group of all sizes carrying out a wide range of health and wellbeing work.

65 member organisations work across the whole, or most, of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Whilst 55 member groups work at a more local community or district-based level.

Highlights...



- **£2million Healthier Future's Fund** supporting 21 projects aligned to ICB priorities
- Secured external funding from Assura plc to launch a joint **community grants scheme** funding projects at integrated neighbourhood level
- **Research project** with ARU to ensure the future sustainability and **enhancement of our volunteering workforce.**
- Convened system partners **to unify VCSE support, funding and processes.**
- Established **VCSE data catalogue** to improve identification of VCSE data
- Completed and evaluated pilot **VCSE/NHS mentoring scheme.** Now planning to make a regular development opportunity.
- Regular **VCSE showcase events** to build understanding of local service offers
- VCSE places offered on **system leadership programmes** strengthening leadership capability
- Supporting ICB work to tackle racism in the workplace
- Promoting use of **JOY and social prescribing** and gathering feedback for further development
- Established system-wide **Participation and Involvement Network**
- Supported **WorkWell** programme development and VCSE involvement
- Leading **EoE VCSE Alliance and linking to national grouping of VCSE Health Alliances.**

Who is on the Strategy Group



Member Benefits



Be the first to hear about health news and opportunities (weekly email, monthly newsletter, adhoc invitations)

Join monthly meetings (across the county and online)

Be heard and help influence change

Explore possibilities for collaborations and partnerships

Membership is free and open to organisations from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Your organisation represented in our conversations with the ICB partners

A network member logo for your website

Member Commitments



Share news and opportunities with the network

Look for opportunities to collaborate with the network members

Use the VSN member logo on our website

Keep the network up to date with our information

Complete questionnaires and surveys to help support data collection

Share stories of success in being a member

Join today by emailing Rachel@supportcambridgeshire.org.uk