

Working with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector to deliver the NHS Long Term Plan

The Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE), which includes charities and community groups, is a key partner in the delivery of the NHS Long Term Plan and system transformation. The sector can help connect NHS England and NHS Improvement to people and communities and deliver integrated care.

Our organisation's ambition for working with the VCSE sector is to:

- increase the level of partnership working with the VCSE sector;
- work with more diverse organisations; and
- optimise the value and impact of working in partnership with the VCSE sector.

To help achieve this, we co-produced the Principles for VCSE Engagement with the VCSE sector (see overleaf).

VCSE organisations can help you by...

- Increasing your understanding of the needs of service users and communities
- Delivering outcomes that the NHS cannot do on its own
- Providing innovative solutions
- Reducing health inequalities
- Supporting co-production and connections with diverse communities
- Being a key provider in delivery of integrated care

HW Alliance members

- Age UK
- Complex Needs Consortium
- Carers Partnership
- Citizens Advice
- Clinks and Nacro (criminal justice)
- End of Life Care Consortium
- FaithAction
- Friends, Families and Travellers
- Homeless Link
- Maternity Action
- Men's Health Forum
- Mental Health Consortia
- National LGBT&T Partnership
- National Voices
- NAVCA
- NCVO
- Race Equality Foundation
- Young People's Health Partnership
- The Valuing People Alliance (learning disabilities)
- Win-Win Alliance (led by disabled people)

The Principles should be used by our staff and partners in the development of plans, policies, guidance, programme design and delivery.

How can you work with VCSE organisations?

The VCSE Health and Wellbeing Alliance (HW Alliance) is an accessible and effective way for you to engage with the VCSE sector, and working with the HW Alliance can help you implement the Principles for VCSE Engagement. HW Alliance members are funded to support the work of NHS England and NHS Improvement and can:

- connect policy leads with VCSE organisations to support co-production
- gather insight from and share information with VCSE organisations and seldom heard communities
- be involved in programme boards and advisory groups

Further information and support

If you would like further information on how to apply the Principles, working with the HW Alliance or more general information on the VCSE sector or volunteers please contact the Voluntary Partnerships team:

england.voluntarypartnerships@nhs.net

The Principles for VCSE Engagement

Principle	Our organisation will...	VCSE organisations will...
1. Be inclusive and reach into communities	Ensure that its engagement with the VCSE sector is inclusive, engaging with organisations interested in the life course and whole person as effectively as those working to improve the treatment of individual conditions. We will also avoid being too focused on our main national locations of London and Leeds.	Work inclusively with others committed to achieving the same goal. Identify and work with other organisations, including members of the VCSE Health and Wellbeing Alliance, to address the different ways that health conditions affect people's lives and identities.
2. Challenge inequalities	Work with VCSE organisations to prioritise the voices of those who are otherwise seldom heard.	Build a diverse user base and in engagement with NHS England prioritise those whose voices are otherwise seldom heard.
3. Demonstrate impact and build the evidence base	Advise and support the VCSE sector to demonstrate how their involvement achieves greater impact and value and use the evidence presented by the VCSE sector.	Evaluate and measure the impact of interventions, beyond user satisfaction; extend our collective knowledge base by sharing, presenting and publishing data.
4. Adopt co-production	Work with the VCSE sector from the outset of programmes as equal partners, following the agreed approach to co-production.	Build a diverse user base and in engagement with NHS England prioritise those whose voices are otherwise seldom heard.
5. Be transparent	Be open about our ambitions, aspirations and any constraints in how and why we are engaging with the VCSE sector.	Be transparent about how they can support user involvement, the diversity of those they represent, and the scope of their involvement.
6. Challenge and be a critical friend	Provide the opportunity to engage throughout strategy development and delivery of programmes and be receptive and open to supportive challenge.	Challenge our thinking, identify ways in which our programmes could inadvertently disadvantage communities, highlight good practice, and help to identify solutions together
7. Working for the same goal	Recognise that the VCSE sector are essential partners in helping us to meet our obligations through the Equality Act, address health inequalities and ensuring that our programmes meet the needs of the most disadvantaged at the sharp end of the inverse care law*.	Recognise that NHS England are working for similar goals – better health and care for all communities. We can achieve much more in partnership.

*The inverse care law states that those who most need medical care are least likely to receive it and those with least need of health care tend to use health services more.