

## **HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BOARD**

### **24 MAY 2022**

## **UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR (VCS) ALLIANCE**

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### **Board Sponsor**

Jonathan Sutton

### **Author**

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### **Priorities**

Mental health & well-being

Being Active

Reducing harm from Alcohol

Other (specify below)

(Please click below  
then on down arrow)

Yes

No

No

### **Safeguarding**

Impact on Safeguarding Children

If yes please give details

No

Impact on Safeguarding Adults

If yes please give details

No

### **Item for Decision, Consideration or Information**

Information and assurance

### **Recommendation**

**1. The Health and Well-being Board is asked to note progress on the development of a new Worcestershire Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance in line with national requirements.**

## Background

2. So why is the Voluntary and Community sector important in Worcestershire? The county has a well-established and diverse VCS – a Worcestershire Voices report into the sector in 2013 identified 2750 organisations, ranging from very small ones with no paid employees to those with large workforces, including volunteers. In addition, there are many unregistered community and mutual aid groups who contribute to improving society on a daily basis and who have been especially active in the response to COVID-19.

3. The following extract from NHS England 'Voluntary Partnerships' guidance summarises the rationale for involving the VCS

*'COVID-19 has acted as a catalyst for even greater integration of VCS services and time and resources are progressively being directed towards facilitating access to employment and education, reducing loneliness and social isolation, intervening on the drivers of fuel poverty and delivering preventative interventions for crime reduction.'*

*VCS organisations are often embedded in neighbourhoods and have a unique advantage when it comes to engaging the most at risk and rarely heard communities. They play a key role in facilitating dialogue between the system and its residents, making sure that services are co-produced with purpose, with residents at the heart of service provision.*

*For the VCS to achieve its full potential in the delivery of integrated care, it needs to be recognised fully as a part of the system.*

## A new Alliance for Worcestershire

4. NHS England Guidance requires Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) to work with local Voluntary and Community partners:

*'By July 2022, ICBs are expected to have developed a formal agreement for engaging and embedding the VCSE sector in system-level governance and decision-making arrangements, ideally by working through a VCSE alliance to reflect the diversity of the sector.'*

*These arrangements should build on the involvement of VCSE partners in relevant forums at place and neighbourhood level.'*

5. In Herefordshire and Worcestershire, the Alliance arrangements are being developed at 'place', with a small steering group at ICS level including VCS strategic leads from the two counties and the ICS who will meet to share knowledge and learning and avoid duplication.

6. Whilst in Herefordshire there was an existing partnership that has been able to become their 'Community Partnership', there was a recognition by VCS partners that although there were some forums within Worcestershire, they did not fulfil the requirements set out in the guidance. In addition, Worcestershire County Council were keen to improve their engagement with the VCS to support Health and Well-being Board

priorities and the 'Being Well In Worcestershire' approach (including Integrated Wellbeing work and Here to Help).

7. Both Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and NHS partners recognised that funding would need to be put into building the necessary partnerships and forums. WCC made initial funding available for the employment of a VCS Strategic Lead for a period of 3 years and agreed that this post should be hosted by the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce. The new VCS Strategic Lead started in post in January 2022 and since then has engaged extensively with statutory and VCS partners to work towards setting up a VCS Alliance in the County. The NHS has also made funding available to support this work in recognition of the importance of this development.

8. The next stage of development is as follows:

- May: Locality and thematic leads/representatives agreed
- June: Workshop with VCS to discuss and agree Memorandum of Understanding
- July: First official meeting of the VCSE Alliance

9. On VCS Representation on the Health and Well-being Board, it is expected that the VCS Representative will be nominated by the VCS Alliance, but in the meantime, the existing nominee and deputy will remain in place.

### **Legal, Financial and HR Implications**

10. There are no legal, financial or HR implications resulting from this report.

### **Privacy Impact Assessment**

11. There are no privacy issues to report.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

12. There are no privacy issues to report.

### **Contact Points**

#### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

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#### Specific Contact Points for this report

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### **Supporting Information**

- Appendix - diagram of emerging Worcestershire VCS Alliance

