



**ANNUAL
REPORT**

2017 - 2018

SUPPORTING PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS
THAT WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO
COMMUNITIES ACROSS NORTH SOMERSET.

Voluntary Action
North Somerset

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CHAIR AND CEO REPORT

Voluntary Action North Somerset (VANS) supports people and organisations that want to make a difference to communities across North Somerset.

Our role is to support and develop effective, sustainable and influential voluntary and community action which brings about positive change in the lives of individuals and communities in North Somerset. We have a large and growing membership whose passion, commitment and resilience is astonishing! They underpin our work and are at the heart all that we do.

Transformation is taking place on an unprecedented scale. The voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE) cannot stand still and VANS have been at the forefront of embracing change and support for the sector. The best infrastructure organisations recognise the challenges, and the opportunities inherent in the newly localised world of public services commissioning. This year has presented VANS an opportunity to play a key role in representing the sector in the Healthy Weston programme and support VCSE leaders to influence the design and delivery of services. VANS has begun building trusted relationships with the emerging Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucester Clinical Commissioning Group as this work continues.

By combining the best of public, private and VCSE sector approaches, we are creating new value for the communities with whom we work. VANS as a Local infrastructure organisation can help forge relationships between communities and government bodies and recognise together that we can achieve big changes.

The need for infrastructure support services is of importance in the area particularly as social prescribing models will need accessible local community services. The demand for all areas of traditional infrastructure support continues. North Somerset Council recognises this need and provides an element of funding to VANS to support our work. There are more than 500 VCSE organisations in North Somerset providing a range of local services to all kinds of people and supporting community action.



The majority of organisations are relatively small, and the current financial environment is challenging for many voluntary organisations who operate with reduced funding streams against a backdrop of increased demands for services. This creates additional support needs.

2018/2019 will see the development of VANS supporting organisations who wish to explore opportunities to partner with others, expand or diversify their services and to be available to those organisations who may come into crisis. In this period VANS is committed to further developing the newly formed North Somerset VCSE Strategic Network. This Network brings together Leaders of and representatives, each with a mandate to represent a substantial section of the VCSE sector, with senior staff from the local authority, health, clinical commission groups and other key authority-wide services to enable an exchange of information and views for the benefit of the people in North Somerset.

We particularly want to thank the Staff and Trustees of VANS who work with passion and diligence for the benefit of VANS and the sector in North Somerset. We have a small and dedicated staff team who offer expertise and support across our range of services. Trustees offer their time to enable the organisation to flourish and develop and bring a range of experiences and skills that enhance and support our staff and the objectives of VANS

The past year has been another special one for us and we are delighted to present this annual report detailing the achievements of which we are immensely proud.



OUR PURPOSE

Voluntary Action North Somerset VANS is a company limited by guarantee and is also a registered charity. Trustees are also Directors of the limited company. VANS is governed by a number of Directors/Trustees whose main role is to ensure that the organisation operates in an effective, responsible and accountable manner.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- 1) to promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community in the area of benefit, and in particular the advancement of education, the protection of health and the relief of poverty sickness and distress
- 2) to promote and organise cooperation in the achievement of the above purposes and to that end
 - a) to advise and support persons willing to volunteer
 - b) to promote volunteering and community involvement and provide a centre
 - c) to promote, advise and support voluntary and community organisations
 - d) to bring together council representatives of voluntary and community organisations and statutory authorities within the area of benefit
 - e) to cooperate and work in partnership with other organisations and statutory authorities
 - f) to represent the interests of voluntary and community organisations

OUR MISSION, VISION & VALUES

Voluntary Action North Somerset (VANS) is both the infrastructure body for the VCSE sector in North Somerset and the accredited Volunteer Centre for North Somerset.

Our Mission

Our Mission is to represent, develop and empower the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in North Somerset to build capacity and sustainability.

OUR VISION

North Somerset: a place where the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector is at the forefront of positive social change and development

OUR VALUES

- Volunteer Focussed – we recognise the value and promote the development of volunteering within local communities;
- Flexible – responding to the needs of the users of our services and the strategic environment in which we operate;
- Collaborative – we recognise the value of working in partnership with other agencies as a means of improving the value and efficiency of essential services to local communities;
- Equalities Based – we endeavour to be accessible, non-discriminatory, fair, inclusive, respectful and non-judgemental;
- Independent – pride and value in our status as an independent organisation which will provide impartial services and advocacy for local Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups;

- Trustworthy and Transparent – recognising that to develop and maintain long term mutually beneficial relationships, our service users and funders need to trust that we will adhere to our values and agreements with openness and integrity;
- Professional and Quality Centred – we are committed to high quality service provision believing that customers and agencies who procure our services deserve our best endeavour;
- Effective – we measure what we do robustly so that we can be sure that our actions are achieving the outcomes expected of us and have a positive impact on the communities around us;
- Passionate – in our beliefs about social justice, empowerment of groups and individuals and the potential of people to improve their communities and lives.

WHAT WE DO

In an average year, VANS achieves the following

Training & Development

Delivers development and training to over 250 VCSE group

1300 volunteers helped

Helps over 1300 people to find the right volunteering for them

Regular E-communication

Provides regular e-communication to over 550 VCSE organisations



- Represents VCSE sector
- Delivers a Leaders Network
- Delivers a Volunteers Coordinators Forum
- Manages project for a number of funders/commissioners

WHAT WE DID

A vibrant and bespoke volunteer centre service

175 organisations have registered a profile on our Volunteer Centre Broker website which has been up and running for a couple of years now and we have published 503 volunteer opportunities over that time period with a total of 810 volunteers being registered with us.

We continue to provide one to one support for people with additional needs or required a little help and guidance choosing the right opportunity for them. VANS is fortunate to be supported by organisations that are willing and able to provide extra support to volunteers who need a little more help.

VANS has a strong network of Volunteer Co-ordinators and we have facilitated four Volunteer Co-ordinator Forum sessions to share ideas and best practice on all aspects of volunteering from recruitment to recognising and rewarding volunteers.

Our enthusiastic staff has provided support and presentations to students and other local groups such as the College, other volunteering groups and Town Council on the benefits of volunteering and signposted them to available opportunities.



Our Support Alliance VANS Volunteering and You (SAVVY) and Buddy Scheme supported young people to gain confidence and self-esteem leading to volunteering as a mentor to other individuals. The impact of the project is detailed later in our report.

VANS is recognised and respected as an organisation that leads and manages successful projects that deliver volunteer programmes and you can learn more about this later. Our organisation is proud to have supported fledgling organisations and projects to develop and grow. Westonworks and Big Worle Partnership are two such projects and we wish them lots of luck in the years ahead. We continue to support Homestart perinatal health project and Bridging the Gap project.

The infrastructure body for the VCSE sector

VANS has represented the sector and played a key role to help commissioners in the review and development of service level agreements and a social value offer and strategy, all designed to remove barriers to the sector and to encourage the sector to offer service and support. Integral to this, is to further support the sector to explore maximising capacity by working in partnership with others.

The Healthy Weston programme has provided opportunities for sector leaders to be involved in co-design discussions with commissioning partners and further work will be undertaken in the following year.

The Leaders Forum which comprises of senior leaders from the sector originally focussed on how best we can work together and shared best practice, but the Forum has morphed into a more strategic group with terms of reference. The Forum will work together to seek to support an economy in North Somerset in which:

- The local Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector is strengthened by providing support and advice to help build capacity and help towards their sustainability
- Local VCSE groups are equipped to attract funding from a variety of sources enabling them to do more
- Public Services engage with the local VCSE both to improve their services and, where possible, to enable VCSE groups to help themselves.



We are confident, committed and excited about achieving our aspirations in the year ahead.

VANS has had a very busy year representing the sector ensuring that we were at the forefront of engaging commissioners for joined up work within the sector. VANS sits on 22 Boards and committees and in 2017 the number of Healthy Weston programme meetings were extremely high and onerous for a small organisation like ours. While this has been challenging and we have involved other VCSE Leaders this has enabled the sector to bring 'real' voices to the table. Our partners have valued our input and recognise our ability to swiftly harness the support of those not just leading sector organisations but also users of local services.

VANS has led a Realising Potential project on behalf of the North Somerset Partnership Board. The North Somerset Partnership (NSP) operates as the overarching high-level partnership for the North Somerset area and includes representation from key public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations. A core priority for North Somerset Partnership Board is:



Voluntary Action North Somerset is working towards delivering a vision and action plan that aims to

- 1) increase charitable giving in North Somerset and
- 2) sets out volunteer involving initiatives that can be instigated to Empower people to contribute to their community and communities to provide their own solutions.

The work includes incorporation of a plan for the development of the Community Resilience service. The project ends August 2018.



OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2018-19

There are six key aspirations that underscore the services we want to deliver in North Somerset.

Strategic Priority One

To create an environment and mechanism to grow volunteering in North Somerset



Strategic Priority Two

Be an effective infrastructure body for the VCSE sector



Strategic Priority Three

Identify gaps and needs in provision



Strategic Priority Four

Support the sector to build and create capability, confidence and capacity



Strategic Priority Five

To develop and maintain a dynamic forward-thinking Board



Strategic Priority Six

Improve and develop efficient and effective involvement



PROJECT REPORTS

Representing the Sector

We strategically represent the VCSE sector and we continue to build our reputation as the leading voice for the sector in North Somerset supporting the sector to navigate, survive and thrive through challenging times. We ensure that the sector is seen to be engaged, active and relevant.

VANS is committed to supporting the sector by ensuring that the sector has a voice and is recognised as being a key mechanism for connecting and engaging communities, particularly those most underrepresented.

With the emergence of the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (BNSSGCCG), VANS has been recognised as a valuable partner representing the sector across North Somerset, and we have been delighted to be invited to participate in key groups and workstreams. The sector looks forward to strengthening our relationship with the BNSSGCCG who recognise the sectors value and uniqueness.

VANS and our sector have enjoyed a positive and developing relationship with North Somerset Council. We have played a key role in developing the Council's Social Value commitment and a Service Level Agreement policy all aimed at ensuring that more local organisations benefit from opportunities to secure income and continue to support local communities.

North Somerset Council and Clinical Commissioning Group have demonstrated their commitment to the sector by investing funds for VANS to facilitate effective communication and collaboration amongst local voluntary organisations and community groups and between different sectors. Without this funding, our sector would not be represented at the numerous key Boards', committees and working groups.



VANS represents the VCSE sector on:



VOLUNTEERING

VANS VC Broker Website

2017/18 has been a very productive year. Our network of partners has continued to grow and we have **partnered with 38 new organisations**, posting over **147 new volunteer opportunities** on our VC Broker site. Our database of **volunteers has grown by 58%** over the past year and we have engaged with an **additional 469 new volunteers** illustrating the strength of our reputation to source and match volunteer opportunities with volunteers.

Partnered with 38 new organisations



147

147 new volunteer opportunities posted on VC Broker site

Engaged with additional 469 new volunteers



58% increase in volunteers



Commented Cristina Barge, VANS Administration and Data Officer, “Our VC Broker website is a user-friendly database of volunteer opportunities available across North Somerset’s VCSE sector and allows visitors to search for the right role based on their specific requirements. We have also piloted drop-in sessions at Weston’s Town Hall that have proven very successful. People who may not have had access to a computer or who needed a bit more guidance and support were able to explore specific roles with us and apply at the session. With the number of volunteer opportunities listed on our database there’s a strong likelihood of there being a suitable role for the majority of people looking”.

Support Alliance VANS Volunteering and You (SAVVY) and Buddy Scheme

The Support Alliance VANS Volunteering and You (SAVVY) Scheme offered focused support to vulnerable Support Alliance clients who wanted to volunteer but may have faced barriers in doing so. Clients participated in group meetings with trained advisers who helped them identify goals and supported them in securing a voluntary role which might be a step towards finding employment or taking up education or training. Clients were also given support with practical tasks such as making contact with organisations offering volunteering opportunities and completing application forms. The SAVVY scheme was also extended to other clients as part of our community learning programme.

In 2017/18 VANS ran five SAVVY courses:

SAVVY = 48 clients

SAVVY = 45% increase on previous year

SAVVY = 65% are now buddies, volunteering or in paid work.

The Support Alliance Buddy Scheme pairs isolated and potentially vulnerable adults with a trained volunteer buddy who offers them companionship and support to take up social, community and leisure activities. Studies have shown that this kind of support can help people to strengthen their social networks, improve their self-confidence and cope better with long-term physical and mental health conditions. In 2017/18 VANS recruited and trained 9 new buddies to support clients with differing needs.



Syrian Refugee Resettlement Project

In 2015 as part of the UK Home Office Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme, North Somerset Council (NSC) pledged to provide homes to four families. VANS played a key role helping NSC realise this ambition by recruiting, training and coordinating an enthusiastic and committed group of volunteers. These inspirational volunteers provided social support and companionship to Syrian adults assisting them to participate in social, community and leisure activities. Friendships were swiftly formed, and our volunteers were vital to helping the families to feel integrated and part of their community. NSC have committed to resettling another 10 families in 2018 and we wish them every success.



CHILDREN'S CENTRE



VANS has a dedicated Volunteer Coordinator who works with the 14 Children's Centre's across North Somerset recruiting volunteers and providing ongoing support.

Over the reporting period, there were **86 active volunteers** in Children's Centres who gave approximately **5,900 hours** of their time and **58 of these volunteers were Breastfeeding Peer Supporters**. **34% had been volunteering** for between 1-3 years and **23% for more than 3 years**. **117 new volunteering enquiries** were received during the period with **38 volunteers starting a new role**.



85%
had made new friends/got to know more people

68%
had improved their skills

64%
had improved confidence

24%
said their mental health had improved

12%
said their physical health had improved

100%
said that they enjoyed the volunteer experience and felt part of the Children's Centres team



COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE VOLUNTEERING

North Somerset Community Partnership (NSCP) provide NHS community health services to the people of North Somerset and in 2015 commissioned VANS to develop the service offered by volunteers. This is a unique partnership and this year we entered an exciting phase of development which will continue throughout 2018.

NSCP has a strong volunteering ethos offering volunteers an array of opportunities to suit their skills, experience, interests and time. All volunteers undertake a robust induction with relevant training and the chance to come together for peer support including a lively Christmas get together.

The volunteering opportunities available, range from volunteers offering a hand massage service, befriending, providing administrative support for NSCP teams, a friendly face in The Little Teapot Tearoom, to patient experience auditors. One popular area for volunteering is Clevedon Hospital which closed for refurbishment in 2016. We are delighted that the Hospital is now functioning, and we are busy recruiting roles based there.



The project is a growing, happy team whose contribution is valued by staff and most importantly the clients. This year we recruited 14 new volunteers bringing our volunteer numbers to 72 which equates to a 47% increase on last year.



**47% INCREASE
IN VOLUNTEERS
IN 2018**

In 2017 the NSCP and VANS team reviewed the project's progress and agreed an ambitious volunteer strategy and we are very excited and enthusiastic about the year ahead. Already we have expanded volunteer opportunities and have created new roles across the service.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Your North Somerset

On 24 September, over 75 organisations from the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector descended upon the Tropicana in Weston-super-Mare to showcase all that they have on offer to the general public.

VANS coordinated the FREE event with the support of North Somerset Council, the team at the Tropicana and The Big Lottery Celebrate Fund.

There was a full programme of entertainment all day on the two stages with dance, drama and music from around the world performed by local groups, artists, choirs and bands. As well as food tasting and activities for all the family, there was a wide range of stalls to view, hosted by local organisations who exist to support the communities of North Somerset. Whilst offering some fun and creative activities for over 3500 visitors, charitable organisations and council services had the opportunity to speak to the public about all kinds of support from care at home to public transport, recycling to learning to use the internet.



Marketing Officer, Janice Saunders said,
"Lots of people have commented how surprised and delighted they have been by the wide range of charities, support services and entertainment on offer at the event and from our perspective we have been able to promote volunteering as a way of 'giving something back to communities' whilst getting a great sense of satisfaction".



THANK YOU



Our sincere thanks to our trustees, staff, volunteers and member organisations that have enabled VANS to successfully support local communities for the benefit of people in North Somerset.

TRUSTEES:

Linda Chan (Resigned 26/4/17)

Kathy Headdon (Co-opted November 17)

Tim Lamb Re-elected October 17

Delyth Lloyd-Evans Elected October 17

Paul Lucock

Rhiannon Prys-Owen (Resigned 15/5/17)

Roy Maguire (Resigned 11/7/17)

Neil Salter Elected October 17

Annabel Smith Elected October 17

Paul Tompkins (Resigned 10/7/17)

STAFF 2017-2018

Laura Argrave

Cristina Barge

Kieran Bright

Laura Hayes

Cara MacMahon

Lorna Muffett

Claire Payne

Caroline Pike

Janice Saunders

Kathryn Walton

VANS was also privileged to support Westonworks and Big Worle Partnership and thanks to:
Keith Bush and Karen Blake - Big Worle Partnership
Dean Marriner - Westonworks
Best wishes and good luck!

”

Cristina Barge, Administration & Data Officer

I love getting involved in the hands-on work we do with learners and volunteers and seeing the progress that the learners have achieved in securing voluntary roles



”



Laura Hayes, Assistant Volunteer Service Manager

Working with adult learners and preparing them to carry out voluntary roles has been extremely rewarding – seeing them grow in confidence and self-esteem and apply for voluntary roles is so satisfying

”



Claire Payne, Children's Centre Volunteer Coordinator

The best thing about my role is watching volunteers grow in confidence, abilities and self-worth. Volunteering is a great way to put existing skills and experience to beneficial use and the Children's Centres value the support they receive from their volunteers

”



Janice Saunders, Marketing Officer

Working with so many different VCSE organisations to promote their volunteering opportunities across our social media platforms means every day is different – it's satisfying knowing that you are supporting worthy organisations in their efforts to secure new volunteers

Funders and Commissioners

Thank you to our Funders and Commissioners

- Big Lottery Celebrate
- North Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group
- St Monica Trust
- Weston Chamber of Commerce
- North Somerset Council
- Quartet Community Foundation
- Support Alliance
- Weston Town Council



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