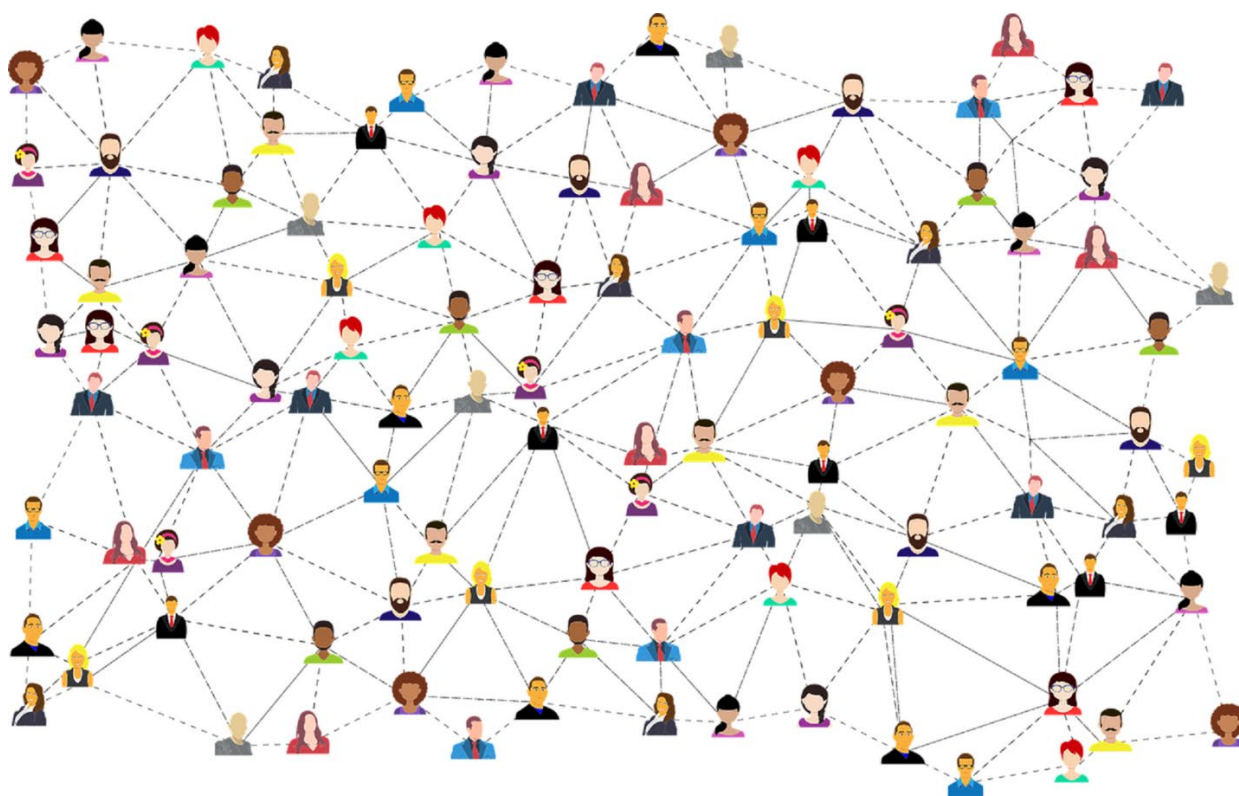


Torbay, Plymouth and Devon's Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Assembly

Constitution and Terms of Reference

Final Copy September 2023



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Introduction

The Torbay, Plymouth and Devon Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (TPD VCSE) Assembly is a broad based inclusive and shared collaborative model where people, communities and organisations can contribute and engage in the way they want to. Everyone from across Torbay, Plymouth and Devon (TPD) from a VCSE who wants to be included will be included.

We provide the network support necessary to create a fluid pool of people and organisations, with a broad range of skills, expertise, innovative solutions and lived experience that can fully engage in, inform, and influence strategic partnership discussions, co-design of services, policy development, co-commissioning and joint leadership and decision making. The Assembly provides a place where anyone can find out what is happening across local partnerships.

Our network encompasses a wide range of different types of organisations (infrastructure, larger County-wide, small community groups, user-led organisations, Healthwatch etc) from across all the geographical areas of Devon (Torbay, Plymouth, North Devon, South Hams, East Devon, West Devon and Mid Devon). We work across all areas of need including health and social care, debt and poverty and all ages.

NHS Devon Integrated Care System (ICS), NHS England, Torbay, Plymouth and Devon County Council have supported the Assembly, thus ensuring that all will benefit from access to local expertise and practice that holds inclusion central to governance and decision making.

We have successfully piloted and developed new ways of working that benefit communities. These pilots take the form of the Health Inequalities and Food VCSE Hubs being established and, more recently a Mental Health VCSE hub. The Health Inequalities Hub pilot has been paused pending further funding forthcoming. The other two are continuing to raise the voice of the VCSE around those issues.

The Assembly has secured three places on the ICS Partnership to promote the voice of the local VCSE. We manage the arrangements for engagements of 3rd sector organisations/community service specialists and people with lived experience for co-design and delivery. Whilst wishing to work collaboratively with partners, we are extremely proud of our independence with our mandate coming from our VCSE network. Recently a new Independent Chair was appointed to provide strategic leadership alongside some dedicated operational delivery resource.

We are fully committed to equality and diversity and we aim to ensure that the relevant VCSE organisations are involved at the earliest possible stage.

Strategic context

NHSE(I) produced guidance in September 2021 titled “ICS implementation guidance on partnerships with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector”. Its key recommendations were that:

- The VCSE sector is a key strategic partner with an important contribution to make in shaping, improving, and delivering services, and developing and implementing plans to tackle the wider determinants of health
- VCSE partnership should be embedded in how the ICS operates, including through involvement in governance structures in population health management and service redesign work, and in system workforce, leadership, and organisational development plans

The voluntary, community and social enterprise sector has a vital role in Devon’s recovery. It is the largest service structure presently delivering early intervention/prevention across all determinants of wellbeing. It is also only through development of improved and more empowered early intervention/prevention capability, that any realistic opportunity for public service transition to sustainability can be achieved.

Our purpose is to support and champion Torbay, Plymouth and Devon’s VCSE sector to:

- Grow VCSE / public sector collaboration, communication, and influence to improve local community outcomes. •
- Be part of strategic partnership discussions, co-design, collaboration, co-commissioning, and joint leadership with county wide strategic partnerships.
- Identify, promote, and share peer learning, training, and capacity building.
- Provide input into the ICS leadership and act as a critical friend at times.
- Create a pool of people with relevant expertise/appropriate organisations.
- Be a key route for Devon-wide public sector / voluntary sector involvement and engagement, including supporting the engagement of people with lived experience into the co-design / co-production of activities.

Our Principles

- Entry point is always kept open - anyone can join the Assembly
- Those with specific interests and strengths will be encouraged to step forward
- Those that feel they need to be heard will be
- Digital systems that support the Assembly will be made open by default
- Collaboration will be encouraged
- Transparency and honesty will be a priority
- To concentrate on engagement and not representation
- To engage with existing local structures and to play a central role in developing new ones where there are gaps
- A place that provides sector peer support and development opportunities

Our network and mandate

VCSE Assembly Network is open to any VCSE organisations based in Devon and those larger UK/regional VCSE organisations that are delivering services and/or support to Devon citizens, to apply. To date over 150 VCSE organisations have asked to be part of the VCSE assembly network and consented to receive information from us about engagement and other opportunities. Our network includes large, medium, small and micro organisations from across all parts of the County of Devon. This includes organisations across all areas of need including Health, Social Care, climate change, debt, poverty, young offenders, Children and Young People, support for the homeless, people with drug and alcohol dependencies and those with protected characteristics (ie BaME, people with disabilities and those from the LGBTQ+ communities).

In addition to our network, we also act as a network of networks as many of the organisations who are part of our network also have large networks in their own right. eg VCSE infrastructure organisations who support 100's of community based organisations, County-wide organisations and a host of other special interest charities. Ensuring that information distributed via the assembly has the opportunity to be cascaded much more widely.

Our network gives us a mandate to identify suitable people and/or organisations to speak on behalf of the sector at key strategic meetings.

VCSE Assembly Associates are those people from the Public Sector who would like to receive updates from the VCSE Assembly to enable them to collaborate and co-design services with the VCSE. To date over 30 public sector colleagues have requested to become associates of the VCSE Assembly. This includes health, social care and others.

We expect these figures to increase significantly as we move forward.

Our Service Delivery Model

In order to keep administration to a minimum, whilst still ensuring good governance and being fully inclusive and collaborative, the VCSE Assembly have a simple structure consisting of:

- 1 Executive Committee
- 2 VCSE network meetings
- 3 VCSE Assembly Themed Hub meetings.
- 4 Annual Conference

An Independent chair (3.5 days per month) has recently been appointed to provide additional Strategic Leadership capacity. She is accountable to the Assembly Executive Committee and ultimately to the wider VCSE Network.

There is a small operational delivery team consisting of 0.2 WTE (1 day pw) Project Manager and 0.1 WTE (half day pw) Marketing and Communications support and

administrative support to service the meetings, The operational team are based within a local VCSE and are accountable to the Independent Chair.

The TPD VCSE Assembly Executive Committee (monthly).

Overview

This group has been in existence from the start of the Assembly eighteen months, ago. Albeit under various names and meeting frequencies. We are a small group of committed local CEOs, their deputy's and other Strategic leaders who have been instrumental in shaping the strategic direction of the Assembly since it's inception.

To date we have taken an open membership approach to encourage as many people to become in engaged and influence the formative stages of the Assembly. We will then develop a more formal process for selection in consultation with the wider Assembly network. We would be looking to ensure we have strong representation from different parts of the sector and types of organisations (ie Infrastructure, County-wide delivery, User Led organisations, smaller charities and social enterprises) as well the VCSE LCP reps (as agreed by LCPs) on this group to ensure joined up working.

Purpose

- ✓ To drive forwards the business of the Assembly thus achieving our overall aims and objectives as set out above.
- ✓ Demonstrate financial transparency on the spend to make the development work fully accountable to both the VCSE, ICS and Local Authority investors.
- ✓ Raise awareness of the VCSE Assembly across and within all stakeholders
- ✓ To ensure good governance, safeguarding, confidentiality and other compliance matters are adhered to.
- ✓ To set up and maintain suitable processes to identify and support Assembly reps
- ✓ To ensure adequate, yet proportional reporting and monitoring arrangements are put in place for the Assembly

Chaired by TPD VCSE Assembly Independent Chair

Membership is open to CEOs, from VCSE organisations based in Devon and those larger UK/regional VCSE organisations that are delivering services and/or support to Devon citizens, to apply. Those organisations who have confirmed they would like to be part of this Committee moving forwards include:

- ✓ Age UK Exeter
- ✓ Devon Citizens Advice
- ✓ Devon Community Foundation (DCF)
- ✓ Devon Communities Together (DCT)
- ✓ Devon Voluntary Action (DeVA)
- ✓ Healthwatch Devon, Plymouth and Torbay
- ✓ Libraries Unlimited

- ✓ Living Options Devon (LOD)
- ✓ East Devon VCSE
- ✓ Plymouth Octopus Project (POP)
- ✓ The Red Cross
- ✓ Torbay Community Development Trust
- ✓ Wellmoor

Frequency of meetings and time commitment: 1 hour monthly remote meetings, or more frequently as required. Preparation time for members is around one hour per month to include reading papers and e-mail correspondence between meetings

TPD VCSE Full Assembly meetings (monthly).

Overview

The idea is that these meetings are open to all local VCSE leaders who wish to attend. The Assembly aims to act as one of a range of gateways to the VCSE sector, not a Gatekeeper. To date, whilst we have communicated regularly via email to the wider sector with news and opportunities, we have not previously brought everyone together. Therefore, the first Full Assembly Network meetings will be held during September. To avoid duplication in respect of infrastructure charity's work, these meetings will be agenda'd and themed. We will invite strategic leaders, influencers and decision makers from the public, private and voluntary sector to engage with the VCSE to produce services and strengthen our shared strategic aspirations.

Purpose

- ✓ To provide the Executive Group with direction and guidance around the strategic direction for the VCSE Assembly
- ✓ To provide the opportunity for influences, decision makers and other stakeholders to meet and discuss issues directly with CEOs and other stakeholders within Torbay, Plymouth and Devon's VCSE
- ✓ To keep the wider sector updated with Assembly work
- ✓ To share challenges and work together to strengthen the voice of the sector
- ✓ Raise awareness of the VCSE Assembly across and within all stakeholders
- ✓ To ensure that the wider sector are able to input into reporting and monitoring arrangements that are put in place for the Assembly
- ✓ To provide a safe space for CEOs to share concerns and celebrate successes

Chairmanship: will be undertaken by the independent Chair

Frequency of meetings and time commitment: 1.5 hour monthly remote meetings, or more often as needed.

The TPD VCSE Assembly Themed hub meetings.

Context The Assembly secured funding to run a series of three Themed Hub 'pilot' meetings:

- The VCSE Assembly Food Hub
- The VCSE Assembly Health Inequalities Hub
- The VCSE Assembly Mental Health Hub

Each meeting was run differently and with different participants in respond to the need and what was felt to be the most effective service delivery model. Much was learned by these three pilots including how important they were to create different conversations to tackle some very intractable systemic issues.

Purpose of this Meetings:

- ✓ To bring together a range of VCSE organisations and public sector partners to discuss a particular topic or area of interest/concern
- ✓ To provide an opportunity to celebrate successes, bring any concerns to those people and organisations who might be able to influence change..
- ✓ To gather local data and intelligence in relation to the theme being discussed

Membership is developed in accordance with key VCSE stakeholders

Chairmanship: will be undertaken by the most appropriate person recognising these meetings are being led by and for the VCSE

Frequency of meetings and time commitment: as appropriate

Annual Conference

This ill be a networked conference working through any local Local Care Partnership events rather than being positioned as a separate event. The Assembly will have a presence at local events during the autumn and then will consider whether there are any gaps in particular geographical areas that might benefit from an annual Assembly conference.

Appendix 1 VCSE Assembly Structure

