



The Leicestershire & Rutland Health and Social Care VCS team

Aims

The Health & Social Care VCS team has been established to ensure that local community and voluntary groups are effective partners in the planning, commissioning and delivery of health and social care services. The team's role is to ensure voluntary organisations have the knowledge and skills to be involved in local planning;

- enable and support voluntary sector representatives to influence and have a 'voice' on planning and policy making groups;
- provide a policy lead for voluntary sector organisation views and enable the local Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to effectively implement initiatives;
- encourage and enable partnership working between the Voluntary and Community Sector and statutory bodies.

Rationale

The Voluntary and Community Sector is a key player in the provision of health & social care services. If the Primary Care Trust and Local Authorities are to meet their targets individually and collectively, the contribution of the voluntary sector must be coordinated and targeted appropriately. The role of the Health & Social Care VCS team is to enable the voluntary and community sector to engage as widely as possible, and at all levels of the health and social care commissioning process in Leicestershire and Rutland.

Partners

The team works closely with a range of partners including the PCTs, Local Authorities, NHS Trusts and other public bodies. Their role is to support and enable the voluntary and community sector to work in partnership with the statutory sector to provide high quality, health & social care services.

The project

The Health & Social Care VCS team comprises centrally based 'specialist' workers and locally based 'generic' workers. The specialist workers focus on specific client group conditions, including mental health, children and young people, older people, palliative care, cancer and long term neurological conditions.



The focus for the generic workers is on working with local voluntary and community groups, drawing on their local expertise and knowledge.

This model of working enables the team to join up local and county planning levels, ensuring a more coordinated approach between local work at a district level, with that at a county and sub-regional level. This two-way communication and consultation enables all voluntary and community groups to have effective and constructive involvement in the development of health and social care services.

Costs and sustainability

The Health & Social Care team receives funding from Leicestershire & Rutland Primary Care Trust and Leicestershire County Council. Currently this is a one-year funding agreement. A review of infrastructure support in Leicestershire, has led to the County Council commissioning a countywide infrastructure organisation. This new organisation will replace the current seven Voluntary Actions (formerly CVSs) in the county.

Key lessons learnt

PCT and Local Authorities are committed to working with the voluntary sector.

Voluntary organisations want to engage with PCTs and Local Authorities but often find this difficult because of issues of capacity. For this reason it is often the 'same faces' that take on this role for the sector.

The VCS team's work has led to an increased recognition of the work of the voluntary and community sector, the knowledge and skills within it, and the sector's knowledge of the local community.

Bringing the sector together in thematic / interest networks has given strength to the voluntary sector 'voice,' and has helped to overcome problems and issues around public service delivery.

The VCS team's work has strengthened partnership working and has helped the voluntary sector to respond to new agendas.

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