

PROJECT SPECIFICATION

Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Coordination Project

1. Project overview

To establish a short-term project team who will recommend a future democratic model of co-ordination to unite and strengthen the VCF sector in Doncaster.

The project team will be made up of 5 talented individuals drawn from a diverse mix of organisations rooted in the borough.

The five organisations will be awarded a grant of £10,000 respectively, in order to dedicate an aligned staff member or volunteer to the project over the course of 7 months. Payment of the grant will be dependent on the satisfactory delivery of the four project outputs:

Output 1	A clear and evidenced recommendation for the future co-ordinating structure
Output 2	An implementation plan
Output 3	An evaluation report
Output 4	A presentation of findings to the wider VCF sector and other key partners

2. Project background

Over the past three months, NHS Doncaster Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) have been working with the local VCF sector to explore how they can better work in partnership to deliver health and social care outcomes.

Doncaster's Place Plan is predicated upon early intervention and prevention and community-led support services. The local sector needs to be at the core of this but has thusfar been detached from strategic decisions and commissioning intentions. There is patchy representation on strategic boards and engagement often defaults to personal relationships, which is not fair, equitable or effective. The main reason for this is that Doncaster's VCF sector lacks co-ordination; at present, there is no central co-ordinating function with which commissioners can engage.

The Innovation Unit, an external service-design and research organisation, were commissioned to undertake research with the VCF sector to understand their views, strengths and challenges.

They produced a report entitled '*Working together to ensure Doncaster and its people thrive: Insights into the experience of the Health and Social Care landscape for VCF sector organisations*'. The main findings of the research (and ongoing dialogue with the sector) were as follows:

- Despite the difficult climate, there is a real desire for genuine co-production and a new kind of partnership working that allows organisations to flourish
- There is a desire to influence decisions about what is commissioned, when and how, underpinned by a belief that the VCF community has huge insight into what is needed, what works and how it should be delivered
- The VCF sector recognises the difficulty of coordinating so many organisations and there are efforts to self-organise. There is a desire in the sector to create new platforms for coordination and engagement but a lack of capacity to achieve this easily
- Austerity and the loss of former infrastructure providers such as Doncaster CVS and Meeting New Horizons has left some VCF organisations feeling vulnerable
- The lack of support and funding available has left some organisations feeling disheartened, unsupported and without a voice
- The VCF are worried about their sustainability and with an increasing focus on finance, losing the core value of what voluntary services deliver

Moving towards the establishment of a democratic co-ordinating structure which will unite the diverse and fragmented VCF sector in Doncaster would help to address these concerns.

Moreover, it would help Doncaster's landscape to align with the national Civil Society Strategy which advocates for collaborative commissioning (where all local players are involved in a consistent and cohesive way) and a stronger role for the VCF sector in strategic agendas.

3. Project Aims

The overall aim of the project is to develop the partnership landscape in Doncaster. Other sectors have alliances, membership organisations and networks which represent their interests and help to develop them collectively – local examples would include the Partners in Learning Teaching Schools

Alliance for education partners; Doncaster Chamber for businesses; Primary Care Doncaster for GP practices and so forth. Currently, there is no democratic, umbrella structure for the VCF sector, although there are a number of issue-specific informal networks and alliances. This project team would be required to design and make a proposal for how an equivalent structure would look for the Doncaster VCF sector and how it would add value to organisations currently operating in isolation.

The strategic outcomes of this eventual structure would be as follows:

- To move towards addressing the 'representation gap' that currently exists within the Team Doncaster Strategic Partnership and to provide a platform for the sector to exert strategic influence
- To better enable commissioning bodies (whether statutory or external) to engage with Doncaster's VCF sector in a more cohesive way (currently piecemeal, reliant on personal relationships, not fair/equitable, tends to be competitive rather than collaborative)
- To provide a VCF perspective on joint commissioning plans, and within the new model, finding a way that helps VCF sector organisations to jointly bid for contracts
- To create a strong and resilient VCF sector – to form a strong peer/sharing network within the sector, but to also act as a united front which has greater leverage than organisations acting alone
- To develop the sector and ensure it has the capacity and capability to take on potentially additional responsibility. Is strong, resilient and sustainable as possible - to provide infrastructure and business development support (recognising that there will need to be universal support, as well as tailored support to different tiers of VCF organisation)
- To add value to what individual organisations/existing groups and alliances within the sector are already doing

There are numerous forms that the co-ordinating structure could take: a co-operative, a locality model, a federation or alliance model. Regardless of the form the structure takes, it needs to encompass the following design principles:

- It needs to be inclusive and open to all – not something which further contributes to the divisions and silos within the sector.

- It needs to learn the lessons from former structures in Doncaster, which have been unsuccessful. It needs to take a new and creative approach, creating something fit for purpose and future-proof.
- The model needs to be sustainable and realistic in terms of scope and resource, i.e. needs to avoid creating dependency on statutory bodies and if it is to sustain itself through income generation, it needs to do this in a way which does not negatively impact on the organisations it supports. Ideally the model should maximise inward investment into the sector.
- The structure needs to be flexible and agile to adapt and change with the needs of the sector.

4. Project Outputs

The table below shows the **minimum outputs** that need to be achieved by this project during the period of **1st January 2019-1st August 2019**. Payments will be dependent on these outputs being delivered to a satisfactory quality.

Outputs	Requirements	Expected delivery date
1. A clear and evidenced recommendation for the future co-ordinating structure	This must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A clear purpose and vision for the structure - What benefits the structure will bring to small, medium and large VCF organisations - Clear parameters of what the structure will and won't do - How the structure will be governed and held accountable - How the structure will co-ordinate its membership - How the structure will communicate and engage with Team Doncaster partners - How the structure will align with other structures which form part of the VCF landscape such as Expect Youth and Social Isolation Alliance 	1 st August 2019 (progress updates to be provided to Steering Group on monthly basis)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How the structure will be funded and sustained - How the structure will bring together disparate VCF networks and forums that exist - Learning from previous structures and best practice from other areas - Clear evidence of consultation and sign-up from wider sector - Options considered and justification of why the recommended model is fit for purpose 	
2. An implementation plan for the future structure	This will be a proposal for how the structure would be implemented – may be a democratic election process to the structure, or equivalent	1 st August 2019 (progress updates to be provided to Steering Group on monthly basis)
3. An evaluation/learning report	This would detail the findings of the team and what they have learned from the process	1 st August 2019
4. Presentation to key stakeholders	This will need to be inclusive and engaging to demonstrate the progress made and to build enthusiasm for implementation	1 st August 2019 (Steering Group to be invited)

5. Project Team

Individuals who wish to take part in the project will need the support of their aligned organisation. The Expression of Interest form must be collectively done and submitted. A conversation must take place between the individual and their organisation to ensure that the demands of the project are fully understood and that the appropriate permissions have been granted.

Collectively, the team needs to contain the following skills:

- **Clear understanding of the scale of the challenge** and the commitment the project requires
- **Strategic, ‘big picture’ mindset** – project will benefit sector as whole, rather than individual organisations
- **Effective communication and teamwork skills** – to build relationships, communicate vision and secure buy-in
- **Proactivity** – ambitious amount of work to achieve in short timeframe

- **Project management** – to reach milestones and complete substantial pieces of work within limit time frame
- **Creativity** – to think of innovative ways to bring people together and learn lessons from former structures (CVS, Meeting New Horizons, voluntary sector consortiums)
- **Resilience** – to deal with potential criticism and resolve conflict
- **Level of trust and credibility** within the VCF sector – to prevent personal agendas taking precedence over what is best for the overall sector

The team, in their way of working, should aim to build capacity in the VCF sector and draw upon skills/resources which already exist within the sector (i.e. using community venues, community services).

6. Project support

To ensure that the project achieves its desired outputs, team members will receive ongoing support.

Once individuals have been selected to be part of the team, some facilitated team-building sessions will be provided, to help the group form as a team.

A Project Steering Group will be established, which will include a senior-level 'project sponsor', key officers from across the Council and CCG and representatives from the VCF sector.

The group will be expected to provide a progress update to this group on a monthly basis. Not only will this ensure the project team are accountable to the stakeholders they are delivering the research for, it will also provide a source of support, ideas and guidance. It will also act as a mechanism to troubleshoot bureaucracy and collectively problem-solve.

Room space and other in-kind support will be provided on the team's specific request.

6. Selection process

To be considered, organisations and the individual must jointly complete the Expression of Interest form. If the form is incomplete, the bid will be disqualified.

Doncaster Council and Doncaster NHS Clinical Commissioning Group have a responsibility to ensure that any public funding it provides is used for its

approved purposes and that, when an organisation receives funding, it is used appropriately. In the completion and submission of the Expression of Interest, you are confirming that you can demonstrate the following when asked to do so:

- Your organisation is well governed;
- Your organisation has a clear management structure in place;
- Your organisation has up to-date key policy documents as required in place;
- Your organisation is managed effectively;
- Your organisation is financially viable;
- Your organisation is committed to equality in provision and (where appropriate) employment practices;
- Your organisation has relevant valid insurances in place.

The bids will then be evaluated by an independent panel (Innovation Unit) according to the following criteria which correlates to the questions on Expression of Interest form.

For clarity, the maximum available amount of marks your application can be scored by the Decision Making panel is 8. To be successful with your application and be considered for a funding award you will need to score 7 marks and above.

Question 1: Evidence of organisation's commitment to the project and supporting individual

Score	Criteria – Minimum score 2
0	No evidence that the organisation understands the rationale of the project, nor any willingness to support the named individual
1	Some indication that the organisation understands the rationale of the project and is willing to offer some support to the named individual
2	Clear evidence that the organisation understands the rationale of the project and is willing to offer meaningful, ongoing support to the named individual

Question 2: Motivations, skills and qualities of named individual

Score	Criteria – Minimum score 2
0	Named individual does not possess motivations, skills and qualities which align with the framework for the desired project team.
1	Some indication that the named individual possesses motivations, skills and qualities which align with the framework for the desired project team.
2	Clear evidence that the named individual's motivations, skills and qualities align strongly with the framework for the desired project team.

Question 3: Creativity and appropriateness of proposed approach to the challenge

Score	Criteria – Minimum score 2
0	No evidence that the approach is creative or appropriate to deliver the desired outputs.
1	Some indication that the approach is creative and appropriate to deliver the desired outputs.
2	Clear evidence that the approach is creative and appropriate to deliver the desired outputs.

Question 4: Partnership working and engagement with wider VCF sector

Score	Criteria – Minimum score 2
0	No evidence of partnership working or engagement with wider VCF sector.
1	Some indication of partnership working and engagement with wider VCF sector.
2	Clear evidence of planned partnership working and engagement with wider VCF.

Categories	Weightings
Question 1: Evidence of organisation's commitment to the project and supporting individual	20
Question 2: Motivations, skills and qualities of nominated individual	40
Question 3: Creativity and appropriateness of proposed approach to the challenge	20
Question 4: Partnership working and engagement with wider VCF sector	20

Using these weightings and the score granted, a weighted score for each question will be calculated as shown below:

	Question Number	1
	Weight	20
Company A	Enter score here	2
	Weighted score	40

Finally, all the weighted scores will be added together to provide an overall total score. The five organisations who submit the highest scoring bids will be offered a place on the project.

Organisations who have not been successful but would still like to support the project will be invited to be part of the Project Steering Group.

Payment Schedule

Payments will be made directly into the organisation's bank account through BACS (Bankers Automatic Clearing System).

Payments will be made in the following tranches.

Amount	Payment date
Tranche 1: (upfront)	
Tranche 2:	
Tranche 3:	
Tranche 4:	

The project team will be expected to meet with the Project Steering Group on a monthly basis to update on the following:

- Progress / activity in the current month
- Planned activity for the next month
- Good news stories / events
- Detail of any outputs / deliverables achieved
- Concerns, issues and risks

If outputs are not delivered to a satisfactory quality and commitments cannot be met, the Council and CCG reserve the right to withhold the grant payment.