

# Norfolk and Waveney VCSE Assembly

## CHAIRS UPDATE OCTOBER 2025

At this month's VCSE Assembly Webinar, I gave a bit of an overview on the changes within the VCSE Assembly, as well as shared key mission statements to be clear on its role and work supporting VCSE organisations across our region. As mentioned, much of my role as Chair is about advocating for the sector, as well as trying to influence a culture shift within our Integrated Care System, highlighting the amazing work and potential within our local VCSE sector, to help provide the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes for our people. As part of this, it's really important that I be transparent about my work, as well as the work of the wider assembly. So you will see updates from myself each month, giving you an insight into what I get up to, as well as potential opportunities for the sector.

For this month, I just wanted to highlight a few key things:

- Helped facilitate Get Norfolk Working Plan event online, which saw over 50 VCSE organisations engage in two sessions over the summer months. This has helped shape the Get Norfolk Working Plan, and there will continue to be engagement on how this will support and impact our sector moving forward.
- I attended the latest West Norfolk Marmot Place Advisory Group - helping to support the priorities and potential workstreams for year 2. I highlighted the need to see tangible results within this work and share this across our system, but also to keep a focus on grassroots, frontline services, and not get lost in high level strategy. I am also pleased that a VCSE representative has been appointed as part of the Marmot Place Steering group and have worked with Rik Martin from Community Action Norfolk to support how we can keep a strong communication and feedback loop with local VCSE organisations in the West, to keep them informed and involved in the ongoing work.
- I had the pleasure of attending the recent NCAN partnership meeting. It was great to see some of the fantastic work and meet colleagues from across the sector.
- As part of my role, I sit on the Quality and Safety Committee within the ICB. My role is there to be a "critical friend" but also to advocate for the role of the VCSE sector in ongoing workstreams and to challenge approaches. This month's meeting has led to conversations regarding the potential for VCSE to help support work regarding community trusts and unallocated visits, potential engagement on work within mental health as how we can support work within Learning Disabilities workstreams. As these conversations progress, I want to make sure that I'm sharing opportunities, so I will make sure to keep sector colleagues updated via newsletters and these updates.
- East Suffolk TB Workshop, hosted by Suffolk Public Health. I was one of two VCSE colleagues in the room and advocated for greater sector involvement, alongside a different approach to the issue. I am awaiting next steps, but hoping that I can help facilitate a VCSE workshop with local organisations to help support this work.
- I am also vice chair of the Living and Working Conditions Group, within the Health Inequalities workstream. The key takeaways from this meeting is the shaping of the groups action, which focuses on the principles, people having a "home, job and friend". The aim is to look at best practices from across the system to think about how we can deliver services within communities to help support people having better homes, better jobs and reducing social isolation and loneliness. I hope that this group will allow me to highlight the work of the VCSE sector, and drive forward a community driven approach across the system to tackle health inequalities alongside system partners.
- Met with Chairs from East of England VCSE Assemblies from across the region, this includes those in Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. We discussed ongoing changes and mergers of VCSE Assemblies within the region and how we can support each other, as well as share best practice within each assembly.

I am hoping that this helps provide a little transparency about my work, and help highlight the role of the VCSE assembly within the system.

As always, I am always happy to speak to colleagues from across our sector, about the VCSE Assembly and its work, please feel free to email me.

Many thanks  
Tim Gardiner  
Chair, VCSE Assembly