

Norfolk and Waveney **VCSE** Assembly

Dear all,

You may be aware that I was appointed in October 2024 as the new Chair of the VCSE Assembly. The Assembly started back in 2022 to help embed the Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector into Integrated Care System (ICS) structures and has been working with statutory partners to develop an assembly model to help facilitate this and plan for the future.

Alongside my appointment we are 'refreshing' the Assembly based on all the feedback we have received during the recent review period, with new governance structures, support via the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and push to further integrate VCSE representation across the ICS.

As we are approaching a new financial year in April, and coming up to 6 months in post, I wanted to provide an update about the VCSE Assembly and future direction.

I have spent considerable time engaging with stakeholders across the ICS and VCSE sector. I have been to a range of VCSE networks and forums, spoken with VCSE leaders as well as engaging with leaders within local authorities and the ICB. The aim was to build a well-rounded picture of what has been working well and where we could push forward, as well as how we can further integrate the wider VCSE sector into the assembly.

I understand that for many within the VCSE sector, they have been unsure about what the VCSE Assembly is, its aims and how to get involved.

In a nutshell, the VCSE Assembly is a structure to provide a voice and representation with statutory partners within the ICS. It should act as a two-way communication vehicle, providing opportunity to share information from ICS statutory bodies to the wider VCSE sector, and from the VCSE sector, to the ICS. The aim is to build greater understanding across the system, develop a culture of collaboration and further embed the VCSE sector as an important partner in the development and delivery of services within our ICS. This will be done by providing platforms for VCSE representation as well as the opportunity to develop joint working principles and procedures to develop working relationships.

Further information can be found on the website:

<https://improvinglivesnw.org.uk/our-work/working-better-together/the-vcse-assembly-2/>

In January, the first official VCSE Assembly board meeting was held under my chairmanship which included an update from Tracey Bleakley, CEO of the Norfolk and Waveney ICB, as

well as a chance to help formulate some actions and work streams within the assembly moving forward.

Here is a brief overview of some updates:

- New governance structure in place, which is aimed at ICS colleagues, to help request and identify representation, engagement and input from the VCSE sector
- New Terms of Reference to set out the objectives and clear membership of the VCSE Assembly and its board
- Role Profiles to highlight the role and expectations from Assembly Board members
- New reporting structure, each VCSE lead will report on updates from relevant networks and forums, to the Assembly board to highlight relevant themes, concerns risk and opportunities within the sector
- Establish Risk Register and Action Log
- Formally report outcomes and escalate risks and asks to the Patient & Communities Committee, Population Health & Inequalities Board and ICB Board through relevant membership.
- Updated process regarding recruitment for new VCSE Assembly Board members and representatives
- Establishment of new board role, Research and Innovation Lead.
- Updated information on website, highlighting the aims and structure of the VCSE Assembly and how to get involved

Also within this time, VCSE representatives from the Assembly board have been involved in:

- ICB Board
- Health Inequalities Operational Group
- ICB Chairs Forum
- Integrated Care Partnership Committee
- Health and Wellbeing Partnership Development Session
- Electronic Patient Record Pathway session
- Population Health Management data session
- ICB Finance Committee
- West Norfolk and King's Lynn Marmot Place Advisory Group

The above is not an exhaustive list but gives an idea of how we are continuing to strive for the VCSE sector to have representation across the ICS to help influence and shape the health and social care services we offer our communities across Norfolk and Waveney.

In terms of the future;

- All VCSE Assembly Board dates, meeting notes, risk register and action log overviews will be available and published on the VCSE Assembly website
- A mapping exercise will be undertaken to identify gaps within the Assembly board, highlighting key work streams, opportunities for growth and greater representation
- New VCSE Assembly Board member role, Research and Innovation Lead, out for recruitment from Wednesday 19th February (closes 10th March).

- Planning for a public VCSE Assembly “relaunch” event in Summer 2025, to highlight updates within the Assembly, further engagement with the wider VCSE sector and inform future working
- Continued communications to help inform the VCSE sector of the work of the assembly board and to help increase sector wide engagement

The VCSE Assembly will continue to develop over the next 12 months, and will look to continue to build communications, engagement across the sector to make sure that it reflects the voice and needs of VCSE organisations within it.

I would encourage you all to look at the website, engage with the relevant forums and networks, and look out for updates in newsletters and on social media.

I want to highlight the new VCSE Assembly Board role, which is going out for Expressions of Interest from 19th February. Applications close on 10th March at 12pm. This is a great opportunity to help shape the future direction of the VCSE Assembly, as well as support the ICB Research and Innovation team to develop meaningful and innovative work across the system and within our communities. Please share with colleagues within the VCSE sector.

This letter is the start of future engagement and I hope to see the VCSE sector look to engage with the assembly. We have a real opportunity to help shape our ICS and support our communities and need the voice of the VCSE sector to do this.

If you have questions, about the Assembly, the new Research and Innovation Lead role or anything else please get in touch: nwicb.vcseassembly@nhs.net

Best Wishes

Tim Gardiner
Chair VCSE Assembly