



IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLBEING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN SALFORD

Assessing the strengths of
the VCSE Sector in Salford -
2023



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Salford CVS was commissioned to carry out this research by Salford City Council as part of their Joint Strategic Strengths and Needs Assessments. The purpose of the research was to capture the strengths that the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector bring to improving the health and wellbeing of children, young people and families within the city of Salford.

Salford CVS would like to express our utmost gratitude to the voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations who participated in the research and our public sector colleagues Dr Muna Abdul Aziz (Director of Public Health) and Gordon Adams (Strategic Intelligence Manager) who contributed to the completion of this research project. Without their time, insight and expertise this report would not have been possible.

The research lead would also like to thank the wider staff team within Salford CVS for their support in developing the survey and interview questions; and for their efforts to ensure a wide range of involvement from VCSE organisations from across the city. Their support greatly enhanced the strength of the findings contained within.

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FOREWORD – ALISON PAGE

During the year 2016/2017 Salford CVS undertook a comprehensive piece of work, commissioned by NHS Salford CCG and Salford City Council, to research and evidence the work of c.50 VCSE groups and organisations working with children and young people in Salford.

The subsequent report aimed to give a comprehensive view of the learning from research undertaken by Salford CVS between April 2016 and March 2017. In addition, The Centre for Local and Economic Strategies (CLES) undertook an independent value-for-money assessment (see link overleaf).

This research project was supported by Vocal Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) (a forum for voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations, facilitated by Salford CVS).

The research reported on provision for children and young people from a sample of 42 VCSE organisations, including the impact and added value of their support for children and young people.

Particular focus was given to three main areas of work:

- Emotional health and wellbeing
- Children and young people with disabilities
- Speech, language and communication needs

This evidenced-based research demonstrated the significant, strengths-based contribution of the VCSE sector to children, young people and families in Salford.



You can read more about this work below:

[VCSE Research and Development Project](#)
[0-25 VCSE Transformation Report](#)
[CLES 0-25 Value for Money Assessment](#)

A lot has happened since 2017 – including a pandemic followed by a cost of living crisis, all in the context of longer-term disinvestment into the VCSE sector.

So, with the refresh of the Salford Joint Strategic Needs Assessment due in early 2023, and the welcome addition of a strengths-based approach from the Director of Public Health (a new person since 2017), in late 2022 we agreed to undertake a modest refresh of our 2017 research, to see what had changed for our VCSE CYPF sector in Salford during those six turbulent years.

Salford CVS has been working to make a difference in Salford since 1919. We are proud of all that the VCSE sector in Salford accomplishes, usually on a shoestring and at short notice, so were happy to be asked to undertake this piece of work.

Thanks go to Dr Muna Abdel Aziz for commissioning this work; to my colleague Michelle Warburton for leading this work; and to Sam Bate-Francis for undertaking this research.

I hope you find it an illuminating read!

Alison Page
Chief Executive
Salford CVS





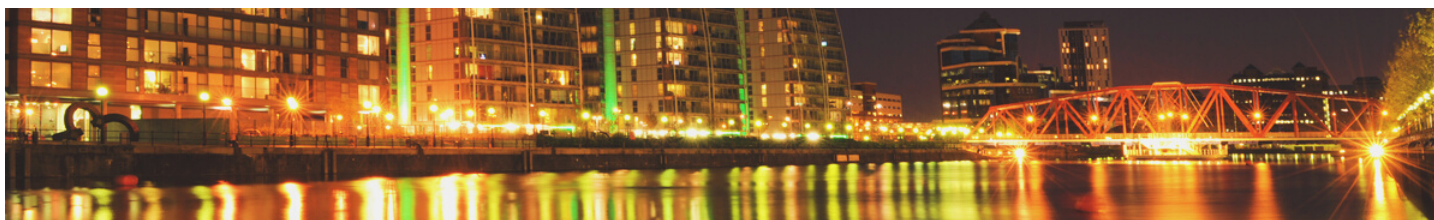
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1. INTRODUCTION

In October 2022 Salford City Council commissioned Salford CVS to undertake a research project into the strengths of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in the city of Salford. This was as part of the refresh of the council's wider Joint Strategic Strengths and Needs Assessment (JSSNA).

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as 'a matter of complete mental, physical and social wellbeing, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (World Health Organization, 2021). It is through this holistic lens that the concepts of health and wellbeing are analysed in this report.

With over 250,000 residents, Salford's population is growing at a rate faster than any other locality in the North West of England. Partnered with shifts in the city's demographics (age and ethnicity), Salford is becoming increasingly diverse as more and newer communities choose to settle in the city.

Alongside this growth, however, we have witnessed the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, as well as the recent and ongoing cost of living crisis. This has placed achieving positive health and wellbeing outcomes for some of the city's children, young people and families under greater strain. The purpose of this report is to analyse the role played by the VCSE sector in supporting positive health and wellbeing outcomes for children, young people and families in Salford within the context of these changes.

Salford City Council clearly prioritises improving outcomes for residents. According to 2021 census data:

- **45.1%** of people living in the city described their health as 'very good', an increase from 41.7% in 2011 (Office for National Statistics, 2021).
- This was accompanied by a decrease in the percentage of residents describing their health as both 'bad' (**7.0% to 5.7%**) and 'very bad' (**2.1% to 1.7%**) over the same time period.

- At the same time, the city's demographic shifts have altered the age structure of the local population; the median age in the city has fallen slightly over the same period, while the number of people aged between 25-34 years rose by **33.4%**, with the number of residents aged over 85 years old falling by **3.1%**.

Salford City Council's JSSNA programme seeks to examine an array of factors that affect the health and wellbeing of local residents. The inclusion of 'Strengths' in the model of assessment aims to deepen stakeholders' knowledge of assets already present within the city. It shows the types of benefits they bring to communities, families and individuals within Salford. This report aims to focus on the role of the VCSE organisations working primarily with children, young people and families (CYPF) in contributing to strengths-based interventions leading to improved outcomes. CYPF refers to young people aged 0-25 years old, families, parents and carers.

In carrying out this project, Salford CVS has acquired primary data from 58 VCSE groups operating within the city. We used surveys, semi-structured interviews and focus groups to acquire a strong body of both quantitative and qualitative data. Salford CVS has also drawn upon the extensive body of secondary data regarding Salford and its demographic composition made available as a result of the publication of the most recent census findings (acquired in 2021 for publication in 2022).

1.1 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Made up of approximately 1,665 groups and organisations (Salford CVS, 2022), Salford's VCSE sector is a vibrant, healthy ecosystem of voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises. Each organisation offers a unique package of support for the local community. As the city-wide infrastructure organisation for the VCSE sector, Salford CVS is uniquely placed to be able to engage with and survey the impact these organisations have on the health and wellbeing of residents in the area. Salford CVS has drawn upon its extensive connections within the sector in order to ensure that a broad range of voices and interests are represented in this report.

In line with the *Salford Locality Plan 2020-25*, this report will focus predominately on the strengths and assets in place throughout the VCSE sector rather than needs and limitations.

In addition to this, the significant effort undertaken to interact with 58 VCSE organisations is itself demonstrative of commitments made in the Local Authority's plan to ensure that local communities will:

- Be engaged in designing and delivering the services that affect their lives
- Play their part in looking after the local area and developing strength and connectivity (Salford City Council, 2020)

Similarly, Salford CVS's unique position within the sector enhances the effect to which both this report, and the wider JSSNA, support NHS England's principles for VCSE engagement. Salford CVS has relationships with c. 1,000 members and knowledge of the sector and local area it has accrued through over a century of place-based working. This means that the report's findings will help Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership and Salford City Council to meet their commitments as laid out by NHS England's People and Communities Taskforce: (NHS England, 2018)

- Challenging inequalities
- Demonstrating impact and building an evidence base
- Adopting co-production
- Transparency
- Being a critical friend
- Working towards the same goal

The findings of this report will go some distance towards ensuring these principles are adhered to in the future.



2. RESEARCH AIMS, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Research Aims

The aim of this research was to map the strengths and assets of the VCSE sector in Salford regarding its capacity to promote and provide good health and wellbeing for local communities through the provision of services and support for children, young people and families.

Scope

The project aimed to engage a sample of 50 VCSE organisations supporting children and young people, including those which are not commissioned by Salford's public sector. The nature of the activity we have identified includes:

- Community groups working with children and young people in community settings e.g. youth work, play provision
- Voluntary organisations providing targeted programmes of work/support for young people
- Social enterprises providing innovative programmes for young people
- African, Asian, Middle Eastern, Eastern European, Hong Kong and Refugee organisations working with the diverse communities of Salford
- The community work of faith groups where this involves support for children or young people
- VCSE organisations engaging with young people and families with protected characteristics e.g. LGBTQ+ and Disability

Methodology

The deliverables outlined in the research brief were as follows:

- Data from a minimum of 50 groups working with children, young people and families (0-25)
- Quantitative data captured via closed-question survey
- Qualitative data captured via semi-structured interviews
- Two focus groups populated by members of VCSE organisations working primarily with CYPF and communities of identity
- Case studies on five organisations, analysing impact on beneficiaries

Survey

The quantitative aspect of the survey permitted Salford CVS to acquire a breadth of up-to-date information on the operational situations of VCSE organisations working with CYPF. The questions allowed for the extraction of data on a number of crucial themes. Prompts included:

- Organisation yearly turnover
- Salford neighbourhood(s) in which the organisation operates
- Types of services offered by the organisation
- Extent of organisations' reliance on volunteers
- Organisations' involvement with residents from communities of identity



Interview

From a qualitative perspective, the lion's share of the information was acquired through semi-structured interviews conducted with representatives from organisations working or volunteering with CYPF. In many cases, particularly when engaging with smaller organisations, representatives were often at the head of the operational structure (Chief Executives or Chairs of Committees/Boards). In the cases in which larger organisations were interviewed, representatives were often middle-management. For the most part, the pool of interviewees was sourced from contact details held by Salford CVS and the promotion of the survey through our communication channels. Some participants elected to take part in the interview without completing the survey. Interview questions ranged across seven key themes:

- About your organisation: general overview of the group, its fundamental operational details and mission
- Physical assets and neighbourhood: the organisation's access to and relationship with the sites, buildings and neighbourhoods it operates from or within
- People: staff, volunteers and the strengths they offer
- Services: what the organisation does, what makes it good at doing it, how it benefits the community
- Interconnectivity: the extent of an organisation's relationships with other VCSE groups, businesses, statutory institutions and educational centres
- Equality, diversity and inclusion: what an organisation offers for Salford residents from communities of identity, its strengths in engagement

The length of interviews ranged in duration, with some concluding in 25 minutes and others lasting over an hour and a half. The duration of the interview was usually determined by the extent of the preparedness of the interviewee. All interviewees were provided with the same contextual introduction and afforded anonymity in the findings, as laid out in the project data privacy notice published on the Salford CVS website.

Focus Group

Twelve VCSE organisations were contacted to take part in a focus group centred around work conducted with children, young people and families. This focused on the sector's strengths in supporting health and wellbeing outcomes for Salford residents. Five organisations agreed to participate in the focus group. Participants discussed the unique strengths of not only their organisations but also the beneficiaries from the local community who interact with their services.

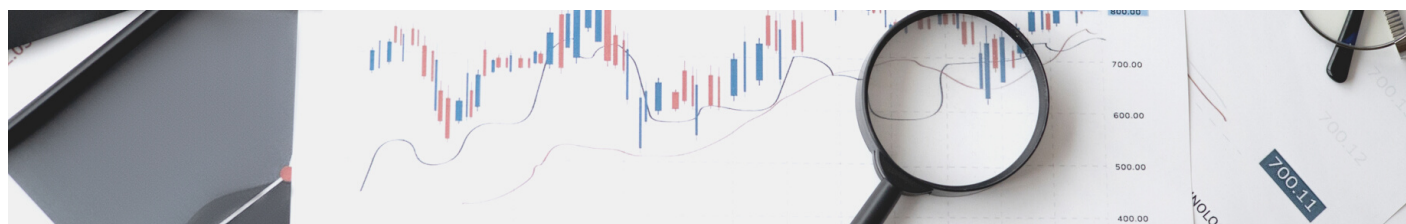


Case Studies

Six organisations were selected for deeper examination based on the creativity of the services on offer and their work across Salford's neighbourhoods. Although it was not possible to acquire enough data in the interview phase to conduct a case study on a group based in each of the eight Salford City Council neighbourhoods, steps were taken to ensure that the groups identified for presentation worked with local residents across these eight footprints.

The case studies included in this report analyse groups who have delivered services with particularly noteworthy health and wellbeing outcomes for their beneficiaries. Much of the data conveyed within each was acquired through face-to-face interviews.





3. FINDINGS FROM THE RESEARCH

This section of the report details the findings made through the combination of the qualitative and quantitative methods previously detailed. It also draws on the focus group conducted on the topic of 'children, young people and families' and the abundance of secondary data relating to the topic conducted by key stakeholders in the local area over the course of the last several years. For the purpose of clarity, this section has been divided into the following key themes:

- Place
- Money and finances
- Services
- People
- Interconnectivity
- Equality, diversity and inclusion

These themes reflect how the questions were categorised in the semi-structured interview phase of the research. They were selected in order to ensure full coverage of the information acquired from the interviews, while also providing the interviewee with a logical structure upon which they could form their answers and follow thoughts to their conclusion in a coherent manner.

Over the course of the project, Salford CVS engaged with 58 organisations working primarily with CYPF (which according to the 2021 *Realist Evaluation of the State of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector in Salford*, represents 18% of the VCSE sector) (Salford CVS, 2021). The project involved interaction with VCSE organisations from each of the eight Salford Council-defined neighbourhoods.

3.1 PLACE

As part of the quantitative survey, participant organisations were prompted with the question: 'Does your organisation have access to a designated physical space from which it is able to deliver its services?' Examples of such locations were provided in the form of:

- Offices
- Community venues
- Recreational spaces

A number of other locations including churches and faith centres, community hubs and schools were also highlighted.

Participant responses to the survey prompt indicated that 80% of VCSE organisations do have access to physical spaces for the purpose of service delivery, with 20% responding that they do not. For many organisations, particularly those delivering services explicitly related to 'health', access to a fixed location was an essential aspect of their offer and one of the key selling points in ensuring the continued attendance of users.

The Salford Church of the Nazarene in Broughton, for example, plays host to a number of groups who have utilised the space collaboratively in order to accommodate a wide variety of beneficiaries. A faith group based in the church offers an extensive package of services, centred on befriending and mentoring.

'We look to reach people who are on the margins of communities; whether that be due to economic circumstances, race or ethnicity. People who may be otherwise sidelined by society.'



In addition to study groups focusing on religious texts, pop-up cafes and support for young people with sensory needs, the organisation based in the church hosts an external craft group, run by another organisation based in the Emmanuel Centre.

'The person who runs our craft group, she's just amazing'

The craft club operated by the guest organisation provides the opportunity for people to access the wider offer run by the faith group at the Nazarene.

In addition, it provides a source of engagement for members of the group at the Emmanuel Centre. As a nursery, they have developed an extensive network of support around their hub for infants, parents and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Additional sessions at the Naz allow them to share expertise, advice and referrals



This capacity for connectivity is one of the VCSE sector's foremost assets. The participant in question demonstrated how children, young people and families in Salford are able to benefit from a collaborative approach to the utilisation of community assets across organisations. Whilst collaboration between sectors is a central pillar of the Salford VCSE Strategy, the ability of VCSE organisations to work together in order to maximise their strengths and extend the number of beneficiaries they are able to support is similarly important. In sharing locations, VCSE organisations such as those discussed above are not only able to extend the coverage of their own support offerings, but they are also better placed to exchange information, expertise and experiences – augmenting the effectiveness of their own interactions with the children, families and young people they engage with on a day-to-day basis.

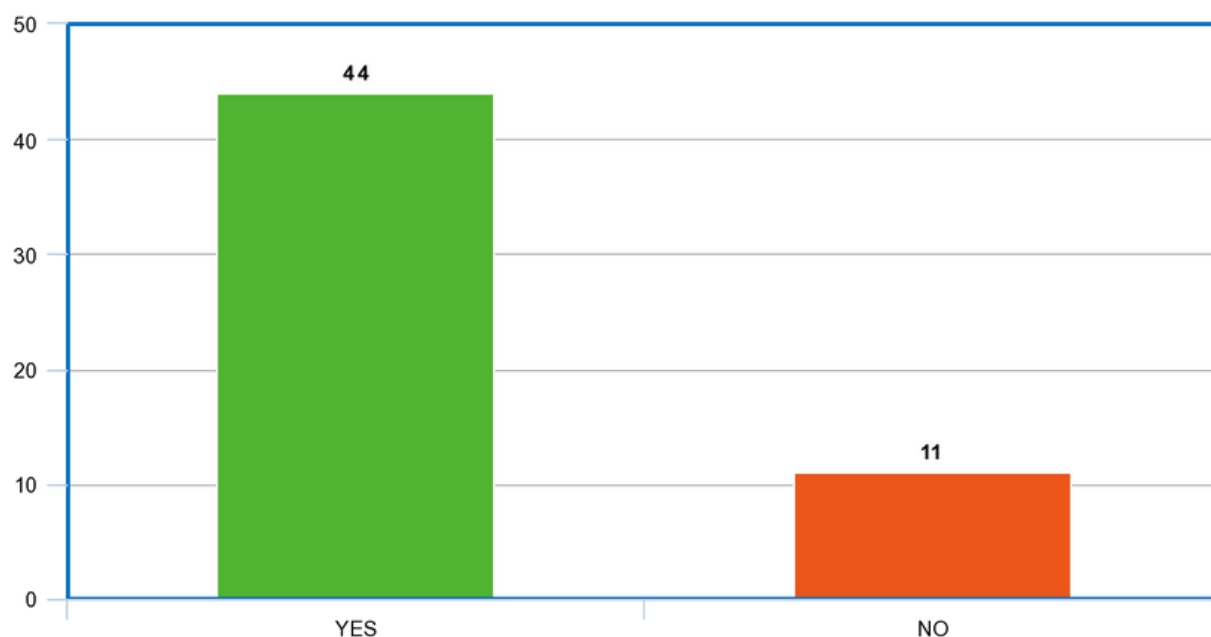


Figure 1: Graph depicting organisations' access to physical space from which it delivers services

When analysing the impact of a positive approach to collaboration on the cross-sectoral level, one is able to observe the strengths of the process in Council-owned spaces such as the Cleavley Athletics Track and associated Community Garden. These spaces operate as hubs from which multiple organisations are able to operate and interact. There is a blending of services in an outdoor environment from which initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of local people can be strengthened through cooperation.

One organisation operating out of the community garden offers a variety of gardening sessions, including horticultural activities for young people from marginalised communities or with SEND. The interviewee representing the organisation said:

'It helps the young people develop a sense of ownership of the project, being part of developing a community asset. We've seen unemployed people get back into work through participating with our organisation, they learn new skills and become empowered.'

Another organisation operating out of the athletics track attached to the garden specialises in providing a space for physical activity for disabled people across the country. A representative from the Salford branch said:

'From the track, we're able to offer sessions for people with both learning and physical disabilities. Access to the wider facilities means we are also able to provide tea, coffee, refreshments – a place to socialise as well as stay active.'

As part of the *Salford VCSE Strategy*, stakeholders in the sector are committed to the inclusion of micro and small-sized organisations in 'dialogue, co-design and co-production with local people.' (Salford CVS, 2018). By utilising spaces owned by Salford City Council, the organisations in question are able to work together to build a package of support that encourages joint participation in both sets of activities. As a result, those organisations operating from the spaces have taken it upon themselves to cooperate in offering extensions to their existing packages by facilitating access to one another. This is an example of the type of dialogue and co-design involving smaller organisations, facilitated by access to publically-owned spaces, pursued in the VCSE strategy. The consequence is a more holistic package of support on offer to the beneficiary.

Participants frequently promoted the impact of the long-term ability of an organisation to remain in place at one location as a significant asset. Due to the nature of the financial landscape at local, regional and national levels, the ability to remain at a single site for an extended period is often dependent on the concessions of the landowner; in the form of favourable rental rates, long-term leases, or both. One organisation, based in Eccles, secured a long-term lease with Salford City Council in 2015. According to the group's representative, this is an essential aspect of their organisational mission:

'Although we have to maintain the building and pay rent, being here means we're able to survive. Crucially, it allows us to be present in the community.'

This sense of ‘presence’ – the ability to be ‘in’ the community an organisation seeks to represent – emerged as a key theme over the course of the project. For people who can't travel easily or have financial limitations, and for families faced with childcare commitments, particularly around babies and infants, geographically-accessible community spaces are essential.

Neighbourhoods

Each of the eight Salford (council) neighbourhoods hosted a VCSE organisation that participated in both the survey and the interview stages of the research. Those neighbourhoods were:

- Cadishead, Irlam and Peel Green
- Eccles, Barton and Winton
- Boothstown, Ellenbrook, Worsley and Westwood Park
- Little Hulton and Walkden
- Claremont, Weaste and Seedley
- Quays, Ordsall, Pendleton and Charlestown
- East Salford
- Swinton and Pendlebury

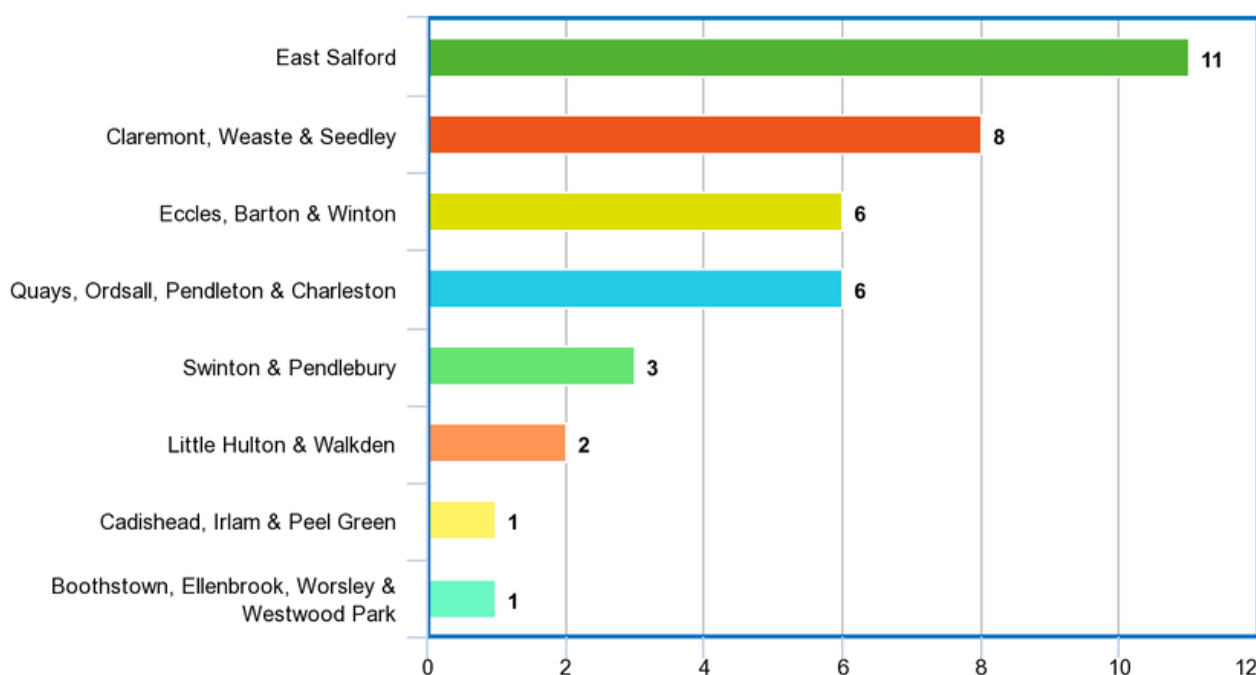


Figure 2: Graph depicting the number of Salford neighbourhoods in which participant groups are based

According to the 2019 *Salford City Council Indices of Deprivation Intelligence Brief*, there are nine Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within Salford that are categorised as being within the top 1% most deprived in England. Approximately 76,400 Salford residents live in areas of Salford categorised as 'highly deprived', accounting for 30.4% of the total population, while a further 10,500 people reside in areas of extreme deprivation (Salford City Council, 2020). The most deprived LSOAs were clustered in areas within the Quays, Ordsall, Pendleton and Charlestown, Eccles, Barton and Winton, Little Hulton and Walkden and East Salford neighbourhoods, with a particularly dense concentration around the areas of Pendleton, Langworthy and Little Hulton.

In spite of these facts, there is significant evidence of positive strides made on health deprivation and access for disabled people in the city contained within the findings of the 2021 census. Salford improved to the 12th most deprived local area in key health indicators such as:

- Comparative illness and disability
- Mood and anxiety disorders
- Acute morbidity
- Years of potential life lost

The impact of the VCSE sector in contributing to these positive changes is evidenced in the significant presence of VCSE groups and organisations in geographical areas of high or extreme deprivation.

East Salford in particular, with its centres of high 'deprivation' around the Broughton area, featured the most participants of any single neighbourhood, while both Claremont, Weaste and Seedley, as well as Quays, Ordsall, Pendleton and Charlestown, similarly hosting high deprivation LSOAs, accounted for over a quarter of participating groups (25.4%). Interestingly, all of these locations are within close-to-immediate geographical proximity of VCSE groups and organisations based at fixed, multi-purpose locations with long-standing reputations in the local community.



The Humphrey Booth Centre in Lower Broughton, for example, acts as the base for a local VCSE organisation that provides a number of services aimed at poverty reduction and life improvement for people in East Salford. Part of this package includes an impressive offer tailored to support young people. This organisation was established in 1999 and takes great pride in its role as a community anchor operating in some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the city. Since 2011 it has been based on the left bank of the River Irwell at the Humphrey Booth Centre, Heath Avenue. The organisation has cultivated strong connections with the local community through its long-term residency in the area, as well as its board appointment policy in which eight seats are reserved for local residents at any given time.

'Broughton is a massively deprived area. Since we started our role has developed; we've picked up more and more issues as they've presented themselves.'

The organisation's youth work focuses on developing employability skills, particularly through hosting CV and job application workshops and skills and training sessions, as well as providing access to work experience placements and job vacancies.



'Our youth involvement work is a key aspect of what we do. Not only does providing young people with the skills they need to get a job help towards making them feel better about themselves as people, it also supports our wider strategy of building networks within communities through placements.'

The organisation also works with younger people to help tackle the issue of unemployment and the prevalence of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) within one of Salford's most economically challenged areas. The work of this organisation contributes to the alleviation of situational factors that negatively impact health and wellbeing, such as financial deprivation, social isolation, low self-esteem and lack of confidence - all of which impede the route to improved wellbeing.

The organisation has a commitment to working from and within the local community it seeks to support and build tangible connections through the involvement of residents in the governance of the organisation. This is evidence of the strength of the sector in working towards the provision of good health and wellbeing.

It is also worth referring to the impact made in the VCSE sector by those organisations working in Salford that do not operate in a traditional, 'place-based' manner. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, many organisations began shifting to working models based on working from home or hybrid attendance. Staff (and volunteers) split hours between fixed premises (e.g. an office) and a location of their choosing. In addition to enabling organisations to make savings on overheads including rent, utility fees and other costs associated with the maintenance of a large commercial property, some organisations reported the benefits of flexibility that came with the freedom to carry out work away from a designated office.

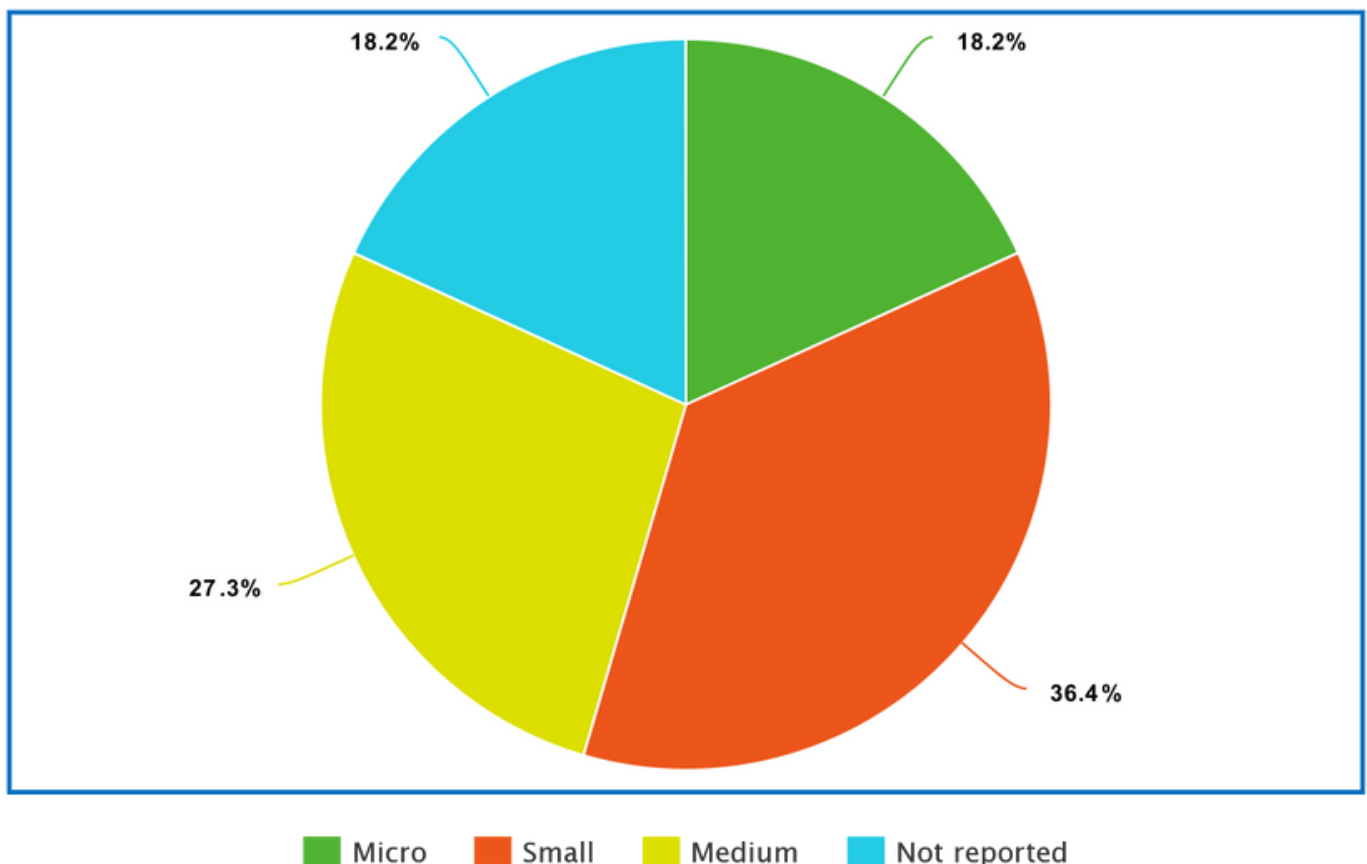


Figure 3: Chart depicting size of organisations that reported no access to physical space from which they deliver services

Of the 11 participant organisations who responded 'No' to the survey prompt 'Does your organisation have access to a designated physical space from which it is able to deliver its services (i.e. offices, community rooms, recreational venues),' four are categorised as 'small', three as 'medium' and two as 'micro' according to *A Realist Evaluation of State of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector 2021* classification (Salford CVS, 2021).

In the case of the micro-organisations, both were established within the last five years and are still in their developmental stage. In the case of the small-to-medium-sized organisations, those who participated in the interview reported different reasons for their decisions not to operate from a designated space:

'Most of the services we deliver take place outside, in some cases, we visit schools and places of worship. We look to utilise youth services, schools and pupil referral units. We have even delivered services from car parks. It's about going where the people are.'

Although savings on rent and building costs undoubtedly alleviate some of the financial burden on smaller organisations, the costs associated with setting up and securing a functioning remote working network are considerable. The flexibility practised by some organisations in relation to where and how they deliver their work can also be regarded as a strength, permitting greater flexibility by facilitating the delivery of services and support at the point where they are most needed and most accessible.

The place-based approach is a crucial aspect of the strategy to tackle health inequality in Salford. It emphasises the importance of addressing the wider determinants of health when working towards the improvement of health outcomes. These determinants include the environment a resident is born into, where they go to learn and work, and the conditions in which they live. The presence of VCSE organisations within Salford supporting children, young people and families is an integral aspect of the place-based approach, bringing additional much-needed support to residents.



3.2 MONEY & FINANCE

According to research conducted as part of the 2021 *A Realist Evaluation of State of the Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise Sector* report, there are 1,666 VCSE organisations operating in the city. Amongst these organisations, 1,143 are designated as 'micro-organisations' (reporting a turnover of less than £10,000 per annum). 298 organisations are designated 'small' (less than £100,000), 174 as 'medium' (less than £1mn) and 51 as 'large' (over £1mn but less than £10mn) (Salford CVS, 2021).

According to the dataset collected as part of this research, 4.5% of these organisations can be classified as 'micro' according to their reported turnover, 34.1% as 'small', 43.2% as 'medium' and 15.9% as 'large.' One organisation reported a turnover in excess of £100mn – defined in the Almanac as 'super-major'. Eleven organisations opted to return no information regarding the size of their turnover.

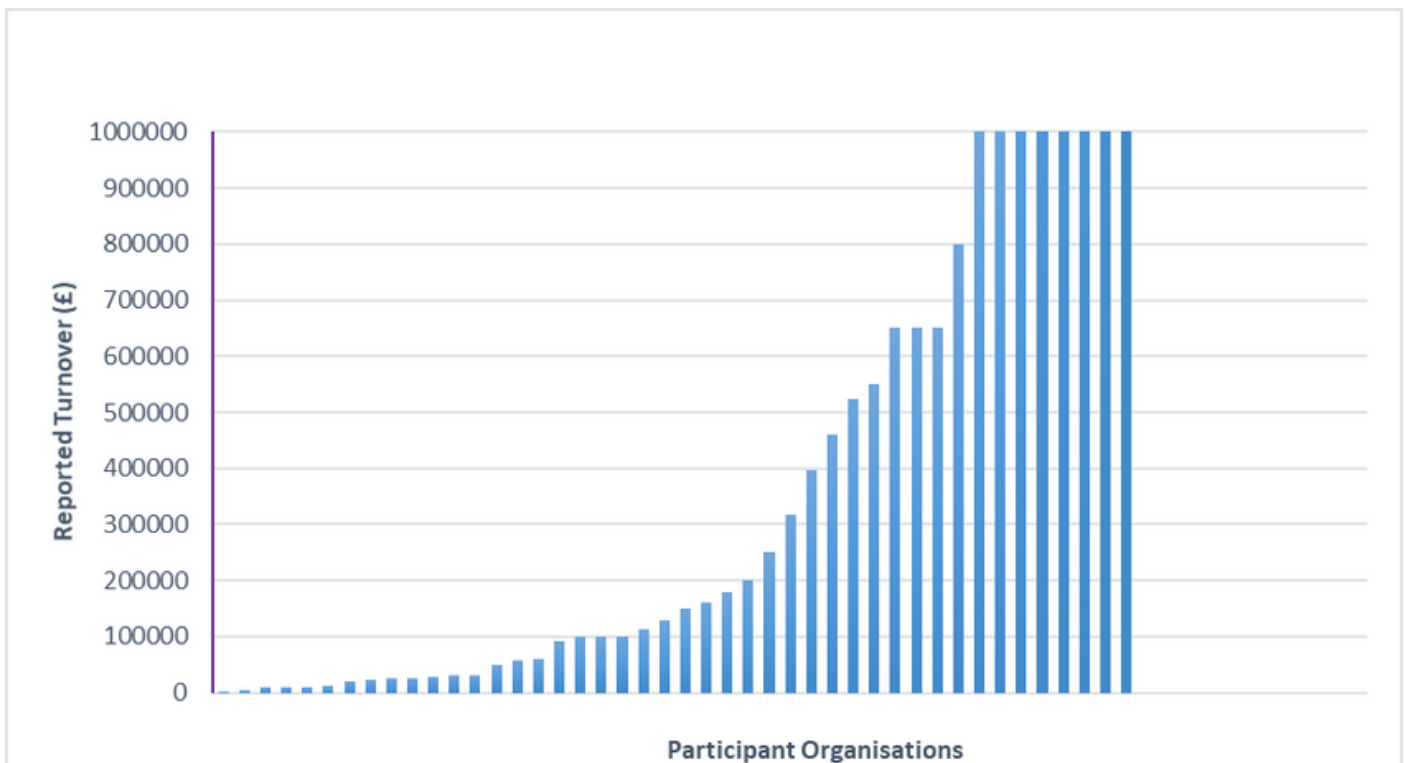


Figure 4: Graph depicting size of participant organisations

3.3 WHAT THE SECTOR DOES

Based on Salford CVS's intimate knowledge of the sector, there is already a detailed understanding of the full breadth of services offered by the organisations that make up the city's vibrant VCSE sector. A *Realist Evaluation of the state of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector 2021* (Salford CVS, 2021) found that much of the work conducted within the sector could be broken down into three primary categories (percentage figures account for the total number of organisations who reported one of these three categories as a 'main area of work' in closed-questionnaire surveys)

- Community development (40%)
- Wellbeing, health and social care (30.2%)
- Sports, arts & recreation (25.5%)
- Other (4.3%)

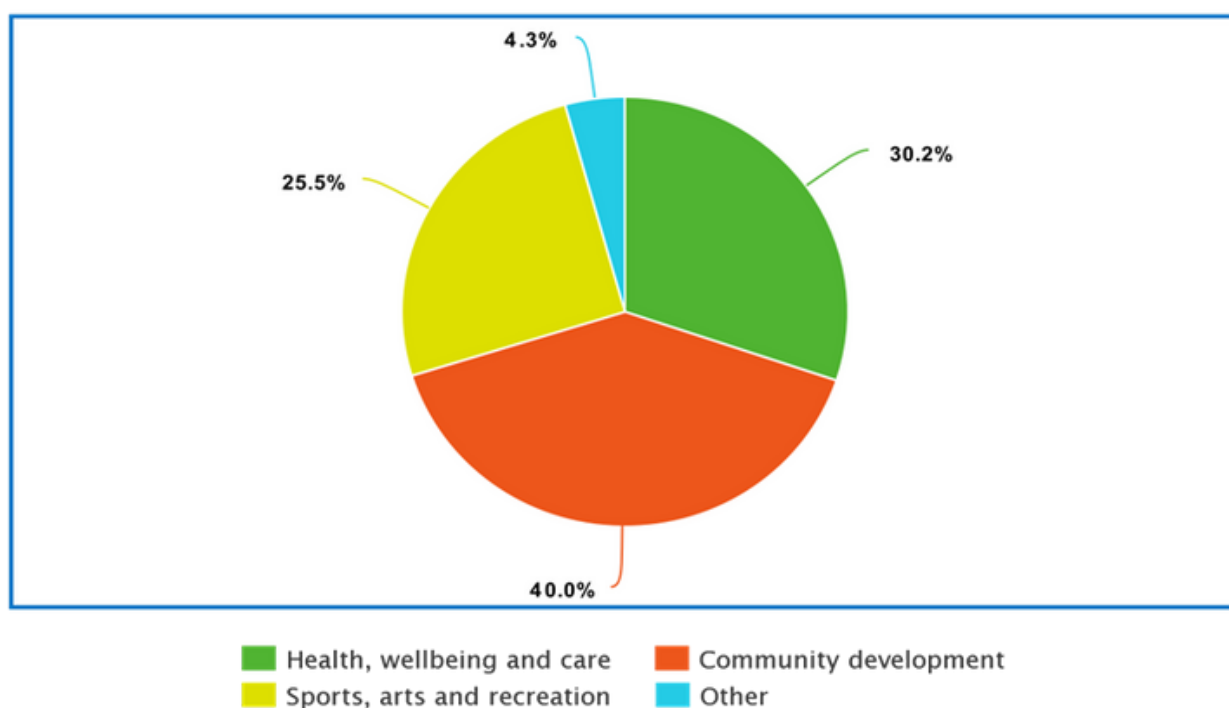


Figure 5: Graph depicting types of services offered by participant organisations

Within this breakdown, it was found that the three predominant types of support offered centre on education and employment (33 organisations) advice, information and skills provision (31 organisations) and mental health services (28 organisations).

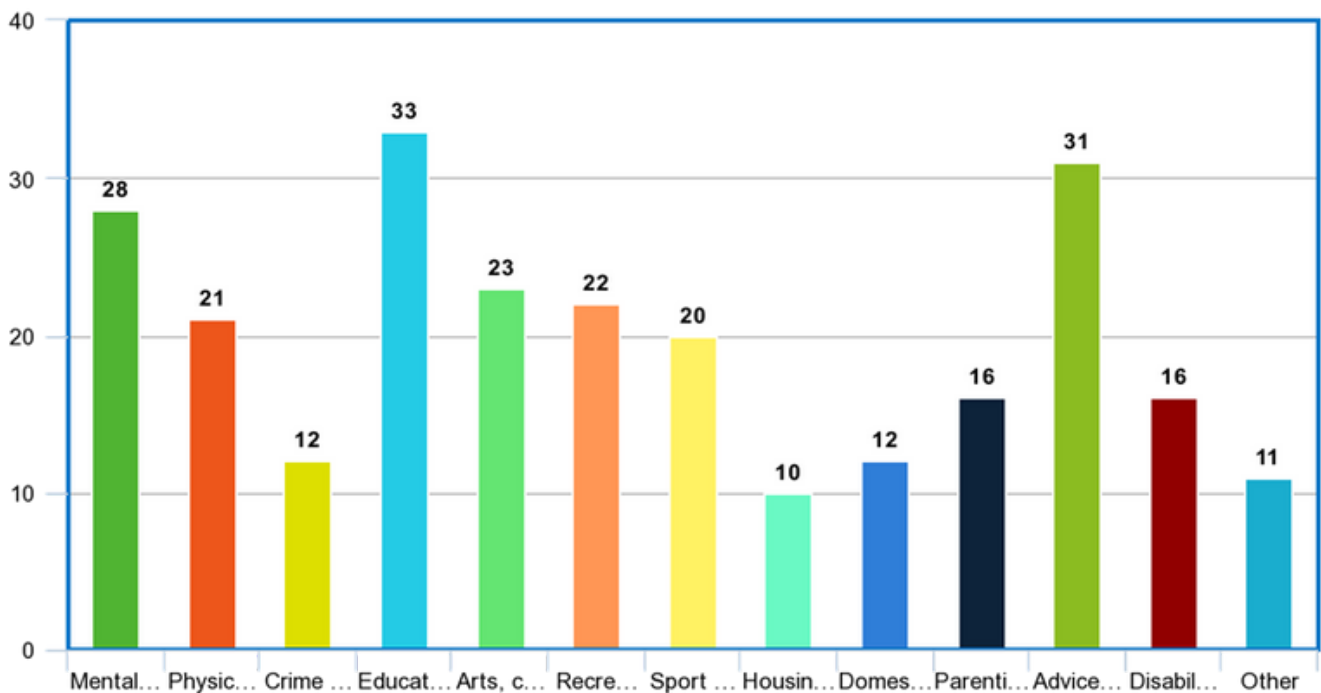


Figure 6: Graph depicting the number of activities offered by participant organisations

For the purpose of analysis, physical and mental health were listed as distinct categories. Each category is considered a contributing factor towards the provision of good health and positive wellbeing due to the holistic definition of the term and the social benefits they impart.

The breadth of support offered by Salford's VCSE sector must be regarded as an asset in and of itself. The holistic offer means children, young people and families have a variety of avenues that they are able to follow. This can be of their own accord or through the process of informal referral, or through more established, VCSE-led initiatives such as the Wellbeing Matters social prescribing approach.



Asset-Based Community Development

Social prescribing approaches remain an important aspect of the effort to democratise healthcare. There are other methods though in which the VCSE sector in Salford can play a role that place greater emphasis on the collective community in achieving these goals.

One such model is Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). In the words of social theorist Cormac Russell. This approach to healthcare involves mobilising people in their local communities to take responsibility for one another and their resources (Russell, 2020).

The VCSE sector has an important role to play in supporting this approach. Through the ownership and leverage of community assets - whether they be mental health one-to-one sessions, local venues, or access to artistic spaces – VCSE organisations operate inside a ‘mutual space’, wherein local residents take responsibility for one another’s health and wellbeing needs on an interdependent level. This contrasts with the relationship fostered by an individual approach to healthcare, in which those in need are placed in a position of dependence to medical institutions. The ABCD approach seeks to tackle the determinant factors of health by revitalising the collective environments in which residents live and fostering a sense of social cohesion that supports good wellbeing at the individual level (Russell, 2022).



One of the key strengths of Salford’s VCSE sector in fulfilling this role is its capacity for the projection of local voices into the decision-making process at the statutory level. This objective is defined in the *Salford VCSE Strategy* as ‘enabling the VCSE to provide the lived-experiences of people into public sector decision making’ (Salford CVS, 2018). Through greater public involvement in the process of addressing health and wellbeing needs, it is hoped that stakeholders in other sectors will benefit from a more diverse, inclusive and democratic approach to decision-making, which will in turn better tackle the wider determinants of health and wellbeing.

One participant organisation conducting work with young people in order to make early interventions to prevent anti-social behaviour offer unique, 'on-the-ground' support, with an emphasis on locating the offer in the places young people occupy.

'We conduct most of our work on the streets, usually from our 'street vans' which can hold between 10-15 people.'

Operating a consistent presence on the streets and in local communities affected by anti-social behaviour facilitates the development of relationships between staff and the young people they are attempting to connect with. It is through the demonstration of consistency that trust is developed. The organisation's dedication – personified by its recognisable 'street van' is an asset to both residents and beneficiaries. Once trust has been established through commitment, a wider suite of services can be offered to the young person.

'We deliver workshops relating to a variety of topics including mental health, abuse, addiction and sexual health. We ask young people what life is like in their communities, and with that knowledge we offer a range of schemes; including multisport engagement, CV writing support and music and art projects.'

The organisation demonstrates a near-textbook example of how to implement community development services with young people in need for the benefit of the local community. By first identifying the key issues negatively impacting health and wellbeing outcomes, the group is able to understand the determinant factors contributing to the prevalence of anti-social behaviour in the locality. With this understood, the impetus is placed on young people to identify the issues themselves and contribute to the solutions they feel they would benefit from the most.



The service relies on collaboration between people within the community and the VCSE sector – who provide the intelligence and topography of the circumstances - and statutory organisations. This includes Greater Manchester Police (GMP) and the NHS, who facilitate the offer; the standard model of the ‘place-based’ approach to improving health outcomes for local residents. Supported by collaboration, practical means for rectifying the determinant factors of anti-social behaviour can be implemented (physical activity sessions, employability and skills building, etc.).

NEET Reduction Strategy

In regard to community development services, Salford VCSE organisations act as a lynchpin in connecting the city’s residents with the statutory body. In this sense, they are an essential asset in the implementation of Local Authority’s place-based strategies for community development. They are also key projectors of the voice of local residents in the direction of the statutory sector. They facilitate the collaboration necessary for identifying issues surrounding health and wellbeing in the local area and devising strategies to improve outcomes relating to them.

One such area in which the VCSE sector has performed this role is the *NEET Reduction Strategy*. The negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted young people in Salford extensively. As of December 2021, 1,695 residents between the ages of 18-24 claimed unemployment benefits. Salford also retains one of the highest proportions of young people aged 16-17 not in education, employment or training (NEET) in England and the highest in Greater Manchester (Salford City Council, 2021). Initiatives including the Salford Employment and Skills Strategy and the supporting *NEET Reduction Strategy* represent an attempt to create a framework within which to tackle these issues.

The VCSE sector has a role to play in facilitating these strategies, particularly in regard to supporting the process of transition for young people; whether that be from 11-16 education to post-16 learning, or from there to further education, employment or training.

One of the other fundamental planks of community development work in supporting this agenda is the provision of educational services, particularly for those otherwise excluded from mainstream schooling. By supporting the effort to prevent young people from falling into patterns of long-term or 'chronic' unemployment, VCSE organisations providing educational services seek to avert risks associated with embedded cultures of economic stress, with its knock-on effects on mental and physical health within families and communities.

12.9% of the organisations that opted to provide relevant information as to the types of services they provided reported conducting work around education and employment.

One VCSE organisation explained the nature of their services detailing how they provide alternative education for those otherwise excluded from mainstream schools from their base in Eccles:

'We focus on young people with learning needs, behavioural needs or problems in the family background for whom mainstream school just doesn't work.'

The organisation worked to provide meals for over 750 families with their 'breakfast in the park' scheme. Ensuring young people are fed and begin each day with a full belly is the fundamental platform upon which the rest of the education service rests. Tackling issues around poverty and its impact on poor physical wellbeing removes the barriers faced by marginalised young people from achieving educational attainment. They are then in a position to pursue good employment at the end of their school careers.

'Kids arrive in the morning, they get breakfast, and then they're ready to learn. You can't teach a hungry kid, right?'

The agility and specialisation VCSE organisations are able to offer makes them ideally placed to be able to react to the needs of children and young people; and contribute to improved education and learning. It is crucial to offer young people a place to develop key skills required for the pursuit of either further education, training or employment.

The flexibility and capacity to provide services that are responsive to individual needs remain essential in the process of narrowing attainment inequalities. VCSE groups working in education and skills provision enable this process by acting as a safety net. In this case, for those young people excluded from mainstream education in order to prevent them from falling into the rising number of NEETs within Salford. By leveraging their reputations and knowledge within the local community, VCSE organisations are able to offer young people at risk of falling into NEET status an observable route into employment.

While collaboration with the statutory sector and mainstream educational providers like schools and colleges remains important, VCSE organisations are able to benefit from their alternative statuses. It permits a greater degree of flexibility with regard to the methods of development and possible outcomes they are able to offer young people.

Health

The strengths of the VCSE Sector within the context of health lie in its role within the cycle of care. Whilst qualified professionals carry out the direct provision of actual medical treatment, VCSE groups act as nodes preceding or succeeding the medical procedure itself. They work to identify issues, make referrals and provide aftercare for local residents, particularly those living with the realities of health inequalities in lower-income neighbourhoods.

One participant organisation demonstrated the extent to which this ambient care – working around the medical professionals – was integral to consolidating the health outcomes of young people.

The organisation in question offered a service centred on delivering music therapy to young people with complex health needs. A crucial aspect of their work was not only the healthcare experience the staff brought from previous careers in the medical profession, but also the access they are granted to hospitals, universities and community spaces, as well as the close relationships they have cultivated with the staff who work there.

'We work quite closely with the staff already in the building, we couldn't really do the work we do without that partnership. We bring music and they deliver the healthcare expertise, it's really crucial to secure their knowledge and fun to work in consultation.'

The participant went on to describe the aggregate effects their musical offer has on the wellbeing of not only the beneficiaries with complex health needs but also the staff who work with them on a full-time basis.

'Our main focus is of course working with the children, but from working with the staff we realised that we were having a ripple effect. Nurses told us that the music helped them de-stress in a highly pressurised environment – we have tried to build that kind of approach into the rest of our philosophy.'

Given the budgetary and capacity strains endemic throughout the NHS, the presence of VCSE organisations in the 'gaps' between diagnosis, care and discharge is one of Salford's foremost strengths. VCSE solutions allow for a deepening and extension of individualised, high-quality care. This is necessary to ensure that health and wellbeing needs are not only addressed in the immediate term, but maintained in the long-term. Indeed, 19% of all participants in the semi-structured interview phase of the research suggested that a key strength of their work was the alleviatory effect it had on NHS capacity.

Similar trends were reported amongst groups specialising in work around mental health care. An organisation that specialised in providing psycho-social support for young people aged 11-25 reported how their holistic approach to mental healthcare helped mitigate the impact of psychological distress amongst their user base:

'The organisation is built around a model of youth workers, social workers and counselling therapists – the idea is that all of these modalities work in a holistic way to support the young person with any kind of stress they are presented with.'



Not only does the organisation have the expertise required to engage with young people in need of the highest standard of care, but the holistic approach also means that beneficiaries are supported through every stage of the process; from the moment they present, through the caring process and into the recovery stage.

In addition to the depth of care provided the organisation is designed to ensure that the young people who interact with them are made to feel valued. The individualised, holistic approach to care is partnered with a longer-term project that centres the voices of young people inside the organisation. They trust them with the capacity to contribute to the strategic direction. They work in partnership with young people to design services for those who may require support in the future.

'We look to help young people where they are; we go into schools, into the community. If they'd like to see a social worker or a youth worker, we'll visit them at their youth project or in their community. We've used local hubs, GPs. We see them where they want to be seen.'

The needs of the user are considered beyond those merely prevalent in the clinical sense.

'When we're there we can hold our one-to-one counselling sessions as well as a host of other things. We recognise the importance of art and creativity in working to support young people's mental health and wellbeing, so we have a gallery to show off their artwork. Another big part of our work is social action; ensuring you people have their voices heard at panels and conferences and such. Our youth practitioner programme provides young people with the skills they need to work within the mental health industry.'

They are able to offer a blend of traditional therapeutic care and holistic, tailored services. This provides the young person with a platform of support that will help them develop the skills conducive to achieving a state of positive wellbeing in the future. This is achieved through the establishment of social bonds, the development of skills for potential employment and the renewal of self-esteem through community engagement.

The capacity for innovation inherent within the VCSE sector, in this case, driven by the young people who simultaneously benefit from the service themselves, allows them to penetrate the issues that act as the determinants for long-term negative wellbeing impacts. The flexibility and speed with which the VCSE organisation can react, as well as the invaluable, real-time intelligence they are able to acquire through the human resources of the young people they interact with, make those VCSE organisations working around mental health an invaluable asset to Salford.

The organisation in question demonstrates the added impact the VCSE sector can deliver to mental health and wellbeing provision in Salford. Through collaboration with schools, statutory organisations and other VCSE organisations, the participant showed how the sector is able to work towards breaking down the barriers to access for young people in order to tackle inequalities around health.

Sports, arts, recreation

VCSE organisations are particularly well-suited to supporting positive health and wellbeing outcomes through recreation. They are able to operate as hubs through which children and young people are able to connect, socialise, de-stress, learn and remain physically active.

Although safeguarding and the protection of young people remain the utmost priority in any situation, sports and art groups and organisations are not limited by the intensive expertise demanded of those delivering work around healthcare; meaning the pool of eligible volunteers to deliver the offer is wider.

At the same time, the recreational element of the work means that young people from across the spectrum of wellbeing naturally gravitate towards the types of activities on offer. This means that VCSE groups and organisations delivering them are well-placed to operate as community assets. They support young people to engage socially and offer a space for families to build interdependent relationships with other residents.



One participant organisation focused on providing young people in Salford with an accessible, barrier-free football club took part in the interview phase of the research project. They spoke about the importance of not only offering young people a space to play, wherein they would remain active and stay healthy, but also a place to come to escape some of the ambient determinant factors that impact neighbourhoods and contribute to negative wellbeing outcomes, particularly in the realm of long-term mental health.

'The main thing we do are our football sessions, but around that, we also look to deliver wellbeing and education services. The development of the young people who join the club is more important than the football.'

The removal of artificial barriers to entry not only provides the users with the opportunity to take up a hobby with positive impacts on their physical health, but also to tackle social isolation and expose them to an ambient culture of wellbeing, powered by a non-discriminatory, caring and developmentally-focused approach. The football aspect of the service acts as a lynchpin and a recreational relief around which the rest of the service can be delivered.

As observed in previous cases, VCSE organisations such as this are able to benefit from the non-compulsory, out-of-school atmosphere the club generates.



Another participant organisation offered their insights on the impact of the arts and the VCSE sector's capacity to deliver them in order to achieve a positive impact in Salford. The group's primary objective was to overcome inequalities and to increase opportunities for disadvantaged people using theatre.

'Our interactive theatre tours are set up to focus on issues around public health. They are developed by people with lived experience of the issues at hand and delivered largely in an educational setting.'

The group's tours help provide a platform for young people to gain experience at the theatre. They also provide an interactive, non-traditional space in which to engage with crucial issues around public health and wellbeing. They equip them with the knowledge required to make a difference in their own lives and in the communities of which they are a part.

All of our work is based around trauma-informed or restorative approaches, non-violent communication and anti-racism.

The organisation is able to act as an asset to the local community by developing strategies for the management of what is described in the interview as 'extremely complex' issues – around mental health or consent, for example – to young people. They do this in a manner that is beneficial not only for the user of the service but the community as a whole.

This wrap-around approach to the VCSE sector's offer positions local VCSE organisations at the heart of the communities in which they operate. It also facilitates greater interaction between VCSE organisations, allowing them to consolidate and project their strengths across a wider range – socially and geographically – and operate as assets for the benefit of the local community.

As linking bodies between the VCSE sector and statutory, VCSE organisations are able to open doors to new opportunities, particularly within the realm of skills and personal development, to young people from communities with a historic record of under-exposure and exclusion.



One participant organisation, for example, is a restorative justice organisation with links to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Youth Justice Service (YJS), and prisons across the country. They seek to empower both the victims and perpetrators of crime in Salford to work cooperatively towards repairing the damage caused by trauma and tackling crime in the local area. The organisation uses its excellent connections with the statutory sector to connect with young offenders and place them with other local VCSE organisations.

Volunteers

According to the most recent figures, there are 61,828 volunteers contributing 210,299 hours per week. Based on a 'real' living wage rate at the time of £9.50 per hour, this translates to £104m per annum in added economic and social value contributed to the Salford economy (Salford CVS, 2021). Volunteering is a foundational asset within the VCSE Sector as Salford's sole accredited Volunteer Centre. Salford CVS acts as a unique conduit through which much of the city's volunteering activity, whether that be from the perspective of the recruiter or the participant, takes place.

Commitments made by local organisations such as the Salford Social Value Alliance (SVA), further empower VCSE organisations by formalising businesses' obligations to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) through the provision of Employee Supported Volunteer (ESV) schemes. Not only does this allow Salford to maintain its already impressive volunteering capacity, continuing to add value to the local area, but it also allows VCSE organisations to maximise their social return on investment from funders and commissioners.

The importance of volunteers to the Salford VCSE sector cannot be understated. According to the 2021 *A Realist Evaluation of State of the Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise Sector* report, over 71% of the city's volunteers engage with organisations without any paid staff (Salford CVS, 2021). The expertise and dedication they bring allow for the provision of good health and wellbeing through the dissemination of care and knowledge. In many cases, volunteering acts as means for social interaction, physical exertion and community integration that similarly benefits the wellbeing of the volunteer as it does the service user.



Volunteers operate as the foundation upon which the sector's ability to deliver outcomes for the improvement of health and wellbeing is grounded. Volunteers deliver both additional capacity and a depth and breadth of expertise. This augments the strengths exhibited by the combination of a VCSE organisation's paid staff, operational structure and package of services. The single most frequently recurring answer given to any question present within the semi-structured interview question was:

'Without the volunteers, we wouldn't be able to do what we do.'

33 of the 51 participant VCSE groups and organisations opting to provide relevant data reported higher numbers of volunteers participating than paid members of staff. Organisations working with children, young people and families have significantly heightened obligations to ensure best practice is observed in regard to recruitment, with legality and adequate safeguarding processes assuming utmost priority throughout the volunteer's tenure. One VCSE organisation conducting work around child sexual exploitation expressed the challenges they faced around ensuring a consistent flow of volunteers through the organisation's various projects in light of the extremely sensitive nature of the issues at hand.

'In recent years we've found ourselves needing more and more volunteers, but it's hard to get around the issues that present when dealing with child sexual exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour. In getting volunteers to a stage where we feel they are able to carry out the work – because it's such a technical role – we like them to have progressed through the service. Although we have a view that there must be a year between them progressing as a user and starting as a volunteer.'

Anchor organisations within Salford's VCSE sector play a crucial role in facilitating the level of technical expertise required to generate a meaningful impact on the health and wellbeing of young people in the local area. Salford CVS offers a diverse package for the facilitation of volunteering and supporting safeguarding measures.



Organisations and potential volunteers are provided with a platform through which they can connect with one another through the CVS-managed Volunteering Portal for Salford.

'When looking to recruit for our Family Hubs work, we go through Salford CVS. They provide the forms and checks we need to meet safeguarding requirements.'

In addition to this, Salford CVS also operates as a registered Umbrella Body for the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), conducting 1,401 DBS checks between April 1st 2022 and March 31st 2023.

For some groups, the impact volunteers have on alleviating capacity constraints is the most important strength they deliver. In these cases, volunteers often performed highly practical roles, such as assisting with the set-up of events, working in food-handling roles and providing communications support through the management of social media channels. In a number of instances, participants in the interview phase of the research emphasised how volunteer support in these roles allowed paid members of staff to focus on aspects of the operation that were essential for ensuring continued growth; namely bid writing for funding applications, adequate safeguarding provisions and strategic development around the expansion of services already in place and the implementation of new ideas.

'We've started to work with volunteers in the last 12 months – we currently work with two. They help with the promotion of our organisation's social media presence; getting messages out, increasing our reach and awareness, etcetera. Their efforts are important to us as without them our staff sometimes struggle, especially when they are focused on delivery or fundraising, for example. Without the volunteers, we just would not have been able to achieve the progress we have.'

The impact of volunteers as a catalyst for innovation and growth within the VCSE sector, either directly or indirectly, is one of the most important strengths in Salford's arsenal with regards to improving health and wellbeing for children and young people. The flexibility offered by smaller VCSE organisations places in the sector in a unique position.

They are able to trial novel approaches to implementation and delivery unavailable to larger institutionalised bodies bound by the limitations of contracts and funding agreements.



One interviewee explained the impact volunteers have had on their organisation's ability to deliver educational development services in a manner that best reflects their ethos and practical means for delivering positive outcomes.

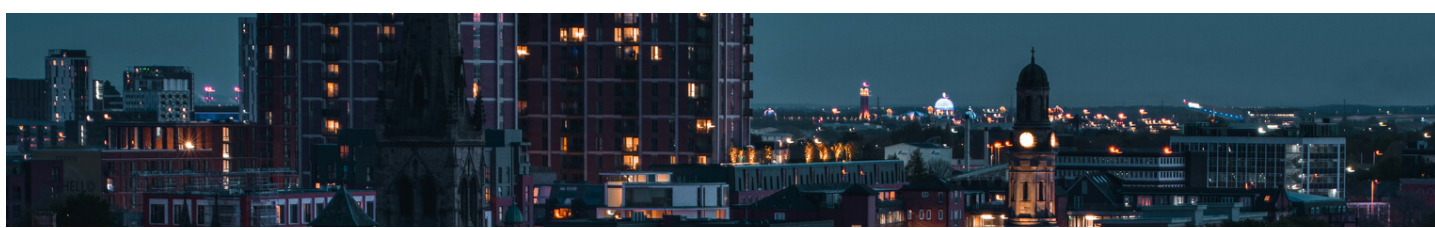
'The more volunteers we have the better able we are to grow as an organisation. Many volunteers came through the group themselves, when they get older, they want to give back and appreciate the impact you can have in working with small groups of young people to deliver skills and services in a better way.'

An important role played by many volunteers, and one that is unique to the VCSE sector, is their capacity to support local authority objectives delivered through their organisations.

'We try to recruit volunteers with a lived-experience of the types of services we deliver so that they can really relate to the issues at hand. They're there to bring 'additionally' - additional experience and additional capacity - to help us fulfil contracts that can be quite challenging in regards to complexity and numbers.'

Flexible bodies of volunteers contributing small numbers of hours towards helping to improve a VCSE organisation's operational capacity act as 'projectors'; supporting them to reach deeper into communities by offering a diverse range of skills and experiences. A group can rely on them in the process of development, service innovation and quality of care in order to better project the strengths they bring in developing health and wellbeing services for Salford residents.

Over the course of the research, two distinct types of volunteers emerged; those participating on the delivery side, and those participating in governance. The former generally refers to volunteers who serve to increase the capacity of the organisation enabling them to deliver more services or activities. In many cases, they are volunteering to improve their own mental and physical wellbeing and maintain social connections.



The latter group is often recruited with the objective of securing expertise in a specific area in order to ensure a group is governed effectively. In organisations that work primarily with children, young people and families, this model serves as an effective means of safeguarding the participation of children and young people in the development of the group. It also brings the invaluable lived-experience with technical expertise. Interviewees from one organisation focused on providing a space for young people to learn and grow through arts, skills training and wellbeing provision describing themselves as 'fully volunteer-run emphasised how the model works to benefit young people.

'We like to say that our group is led by older people and run by young people. Young people feed into everything we do, some even sit on the board of trustees. We like to utilise their capabilities and adapt to the feedback they present us with. From there, we can help them to implement their ideas.'

The role of more experienced volunteers employed in administrative capacities, such as trustees, is similarly significant. This in turn facilitates their development through the acquisition of transferable skills, in the case of the sample group cited above, project management, but also IT, social media and communications and graphic design. This better equips young people for the workplace by providing them with the social tools to engage with and give back to the local communities of which they are residents, in turn benefitting the wider Salford community.



'Our trustees are volunteers who offer their input and provide supervision of our services. They enable us to provide the capacity to be there for parents and young carers of children with SEND. They help the children to feel valued by ensuring we have the capacity to provide them with the attention they need.'

Recruiting volunteers for the purpose of providing expertise in a specific field was cited as an arduous task by interviewees from some organisations. In these instances, cooperative relationships with specialist volunteering service providers or institutions with access to qualified candidates were brought up as vital assets with regards to the facilitation of volunteers. The participant from an organisation that offered a suite of services for young carers, including bereavement support for which qualified counsellors were required, spoke about the impact their relationship with the local university provided.

'Our volunteer counsellors arrive to us on placement. They need to conduct a set number of hours of practical therapy before they can qualify, so they provide those therapy and counselling services to our users.'

The expertise present within Salford's volunteers is an asset vital to not only the VCSE sector, but the city as a whole. The dedication demonstrated by volunteers allows VCSE organisations to deliver a host of high-quality services, particularly relating to those working around the provision of mental health support. Given the long-standing issues present within the statutory sector's ability to meet the demands of its mental health services and the economic realities of private care, the VCSE sector's impact in this role this cannot be understated.

A representative from an organisation whose work centred on supporting community initiatives around local economic innovation in Charlestown and Lower Kersal described how volunteering, carried out in this instance by the beneficiaries of the service, affected change in the local area by generating improved health and wellbeing outcomes throughout the community.

The innovation process we seek to implement with local residents is focused around creating solutions to local issues with local people. The process helps participants to improve their own health and wellbeing by building connections to tackle the determinants of health. From there, we hope to see knock-on effects throughout the local community and in the wider system at large.



In this instance, the specific skills targeted for development focused on project management and innovation – not only highly sought by potential employers, but also often only considered attainable within the context of time and resource-extensive further education courses. The impact of an organisation and a service such as this in the local community must be measured as an asset. This is not only in regards to the outcome of the work carried out, but also in the knock-on effects and the proliferation of skills free of charge to members of the local community.

The Impact of Volunteering on Volunteer Health and Wellbeing

In much the same way as those people who make up the VCSE sector constitute an asset to local residents in Salford, the act of volunteering and participation within VCSE groups has been shown to improve wellbeing outcomes for those who take part themselves. Volunteer Scotland state that volunteering helps to improve individual ‘social connectedness’, which in turn contributes to better mental health through the reduction of social isolation and loneliness (Linning and Jackson, 2018) As part of the semi-structured interview phase of the research, interviewees were prompted with the question ‘what health and wellbeing benefits do volunteers gain through volunteering with your organisation?’ Participants reported three primary benefits:

- Having a positive impact in the local community
- Reducing social isolation
- Training and skills development

According to the NHS’s ‘Five Ways to Wellbeing’ (National Health Service, 2022), ‘giving’ is cited as a means of achieving a positive state of mental wellbeing. Participants throughout the interview phase regularly raised the observable impact volunteering had on those who engaged within their organisations.

'You can see a real sense of value develop amongst our volunteers. It really helps them to realise their potential.'



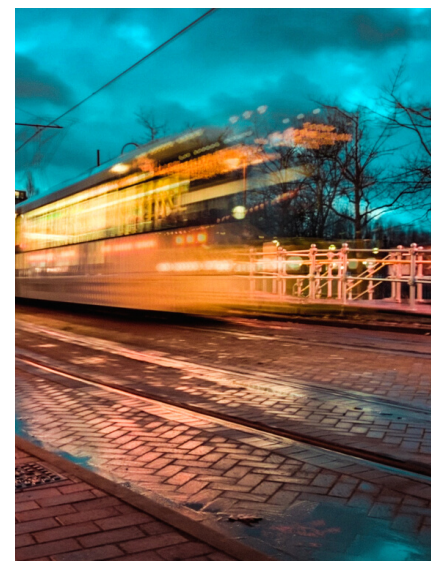
A frequently raised point regarding the volunteering experience when supporting young people was the impact volunteering could have on a young person through the transitional phases of adolescence. It has observable positive outcomes that are measured through life achievements such as academic attainment, securing employment and the improvement of physical or mental health. In organisations where young people made up the bulk of the volunteering force, creating a space in which this potential could be realised through volunteering was referenced as a rewarding process for everyone involved.

'Obviously seeing the personal outcomes around improvement, self-confidence, self-esteem are great, as well as those specific goals around things like improving public speaking... But the thing I love the most is when a young person feels like they have really achieved something that they thought was quite challenging or difficult, because that helps them to go on to do whatever it is they want to do after that.'

'Connecting with other people' is recognised by the NHS as the first step towards mental wellbeing (National Health Service, 2022). Through the cultivation of positive relationships between both volunteers and beneficiaries, Salford VCSE organisations provide a platform for people struggling with issues around social isolation to connect with wider networks and renew social bonds through the medium of a shared interest in service of the community through volunteering opportunities.

'We have had previous experiences of volunteers suggesting that participation with our group saved their life through tackling social isolation, allowing them to feel valued and improving their mental health.'

In offering services for young people, some VCSE organisations provide a unique opportunity for the strengthening of inter-generational bonds. A representative from one group who recruited older volunteers to provide transport services for young people, and their families discussed the holistic impact breaking down age barriers had on the wellbeing of both beneficiaries and volunteers.



'Many of our volunteers are retirees, we feel we are supporting that community by helping people to stay busy and be active. All of our volunteers have enhanced DBS checks and receive regular safeguarding training. This helps strengthen the relationship they develop with families. We try to ensure they work with the same families consistently, in this way we find the bond is strengthened.'

In addition to providing a means for the improvement of the mental health of the volunteers who take part through the reduction of social isolation, volunteering helps to foster inter-generational bonds that have historically been difficult to cultivate.

With regards to employment and skills opportunities, Salford's healthy VCSE provision of education and employability services for young people provides an excellent framework from which potential employers can offer opportunities to local people working towards the attainment of vocational qualifications. A participant from an organisation that works to place young people into volunteering roles as part of the restorative process discussed how the placement process works to set the beneficiary of the service up for the pursuit of employment at the end of the justice cycle.

'A lot of the time – in the reparation and mentoring world – we often get young people who tell us that they're bored and that they've got nothing to do, or that they don't want to get into anything and that they have no friends. A lot of those issues can be solved by us supporting them to access different placements in the community.'

We had one young person working at a community kitchen; when he came to us he had no aspirations or any real idea of what he wanted to do with his life. After his placement there, he developed loads of skills and absolutely loved the experience – now he's volunteering there full time.'



Throughout the interviews, a similar trend presented itself with regards to the perceived impact on volunteers' health and wellbeing through the training and subsequent development of skills acquired through their participation. The NHS lists 'learning new skills' as one of its five steps to mental wellbeing, citing the favourable effects the process has on self-esteem, as well as the inculcation of strength of purpose and the route it offers in connecting with others.

Employees

Organisations participating in the survey reported a combined workforce of 1,234 people. As part of the semi-structured interview phase, participants were prompted with the question: 'Do you recruit staff predominately from the local area?' 72% of all participants reported a recruitment strategy focused on hiring from Salford and Greater Manchester.

This emphasis on progression from volunteering into employment, through the young person service user's skills development pathway, is a theme that emerged consistently throughout the interview stage.

'We try to recruit locally wherever we can. Our ideal model involves former service users progressing on to become volunteers at the organisation – helping to facilitate sessions and supporting on the operational side – before returning with the skills they have developed as sessional staff.'

Another participant:

'We always try to employ people from the local area; one of the key factors in our recruitment strategy is that we will seek to provide opportunities for those who are excluded to find a role with us; young people often step into a volunteering role with us that can go lead to securing a paid position.'



Interconnectivity between VCSE organisations and learning institutions provides the former with the access they need to identify the young people who would benefit the most from defined routes into employment. It also gave those young people the opportunity to acquire skills in the sector that will support further career development.

'80% of our workforce is GM-based. We're also working on a scheme with the University of Salford to create a soft pipeline of young people coming to do placements with us. We have some really good cases in the foundation of people who have started with us as a client, then a volunteer, before going on the full journey of becoming a paid member of staff. There are lots of strengths around having local people in the workforce.'

Some VCSE organisations partake in complex work with young people that may entail a degree of risk. For one such organisation, the necessity of employing highly-skilled staff takes precedence over any other consideration.

'We look to cast our net as far as it can be stretched. Due to the challenges staff might face on the job, we have to make decisions based foremost on skills and experience.'

The strength of the VCSE sector with regards to employment lies in its holistic role as a hub for skills, growth and jobs.



3.5 INTERCONNECTIVITY

One of the principal themes that emerged over the course of the research project is the significance of interconnectivity: the relationships between VCSE organisations, the impact of their partnerships with other sectors and the extent to which collaboration defines health and wellbeing outcomes in Salford.

As part of the quantitative phase of the data collection process, survey participants were prompted with the question: *'How often does your organisation interact with other VCSE organisations in the delivery of its services?'* The data returned provides evidence of the extent to which Salford's VCSE organisations rely on one another with regards to delivery.

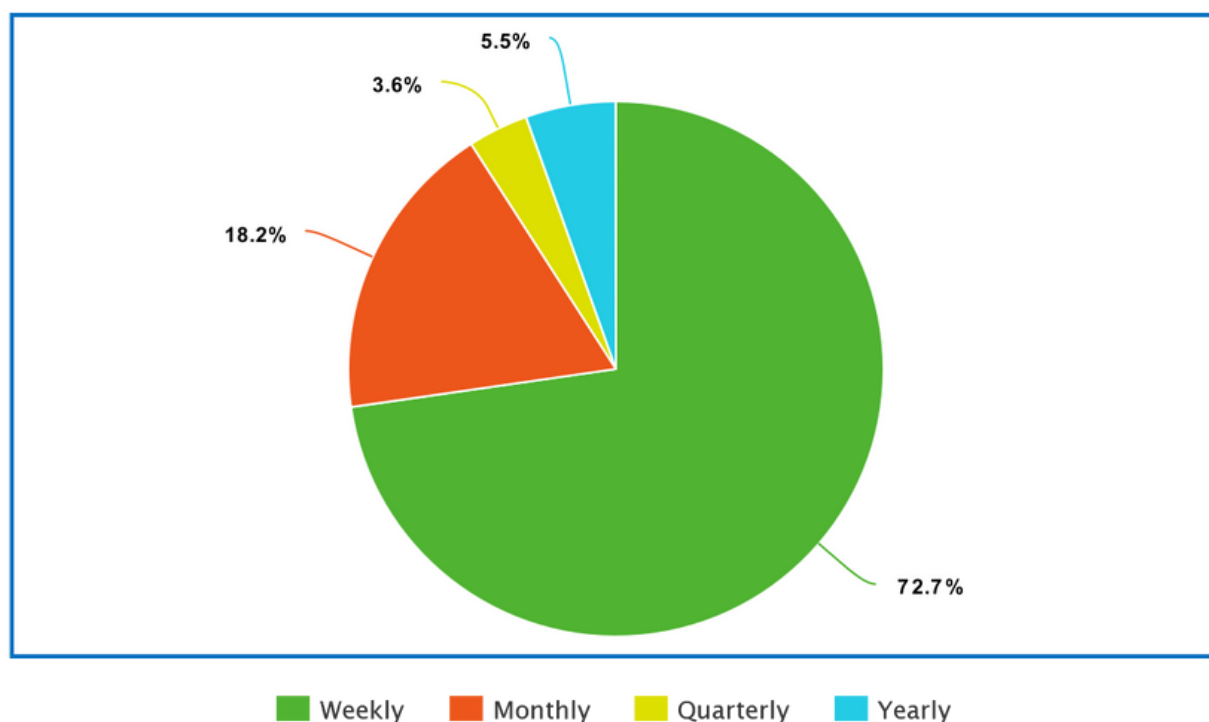


Figure 7: Chart depicting extent of interactions between participant organisations

Given the financial landscape of the sector, and the challenges proposed by ongoing macro-economic realities, the level of collaboration exhibited by organisations reflects an increasing reliance upon cooperation as a means of supporting communities.

72.1% of participant VSCE organisations reported weekly interaction with others in the sector. In regards to health and wellbeing, three primary sub-themes emerged throughout the interview phase in regards to how this interconnectivity manifested in practice.

- Capacity to provide holistic care
- Establishment of referral networks
- Sharing of physical assets and resources: i.e. community venues

Many participants detailed how their organisations rely upon cooperative networks to acquire knowledge of the types of other services that may benefit the people they are supporting.

A participant in the interview phase of the project from a nationally recognised VCSE organisation offered their insights as to how these networks of intelligence are brought to bear in tackling health and wellbeing issues in Salford.

'Since the pandemic, and even preceding it, we've had a crisis in mental health amongst young people, so the level of expertise the organisation has been able to bring around high-level counselling and therapeutic support... these are all things that have massively improved their overall health and wellbeing.'

In adopting a collaborative approach, the VCSE organisation was able to draw upon the technical expertise of local partners in the VCSE sector in order to deliver first-rate mental health support for young people in Salford. These young people were contending with intensely complex traumatic needs relating to domestic abuse and family dysfunctionality. The organisation's emphasis on ensuring these services remain accessible to young people from Salford's 'most deprived' neighbourhoods demonstrates the impact such a service has on local communities.

The second theme that emerged over the course of the interview phase was the significance of referral networks in providing individual VCSE organisations with the scope to augment their own strengths with a broader, more holistic and longer-serving approach to health and wellbeing. Within the context of work with young people in Salford, participants reported two primary categories of referral:

- Further care
- Employment and skills-based opportunities

For those VCSE organisations working to improve health and wellbeing, the capacity to signpost to other services prevents potential beneficiaries from 'falling through the cracks'.



A participant from a VCSE organisation seeking to support young families with the provision of resources for newborn children discussed their links with other VCSE organisations in Salford.

'We work with all sorts of people: foodbanks, domestic violence charities, community anchors. There's a process through which we refer our users to them when we need to, but they also refer people to us, so it's a two-way thing. We have services that feed into one another because we do a lot of the same stuff.'

Collaboration through referral networks supports Salford residents by extending the safety net offered by VCSE organisations in the city and the ease of access qualified referral provides.

Through interconnectivity and the establishment of long-standing, mutually beneficial relationships within the sector, Salford VCSE organisations are able to support children and young people in a holistic manner. They touch upon the multifaceted and complex nature of the issues that negatively affect health and wellbeing outcomes.

Through Local Authority level strategies such as the Locality Plan and city-wide partnership initiatives like the Social Value Alliance, there has been an ongoing mission to enhance the levels of cooperation between Salford's statutory bodies, VCSE groups/organisations and the private sector.



As part of this quantitative survey, participants were prompted with the question: 'Does your organisation have relationships with private sector organisations in the local area?'

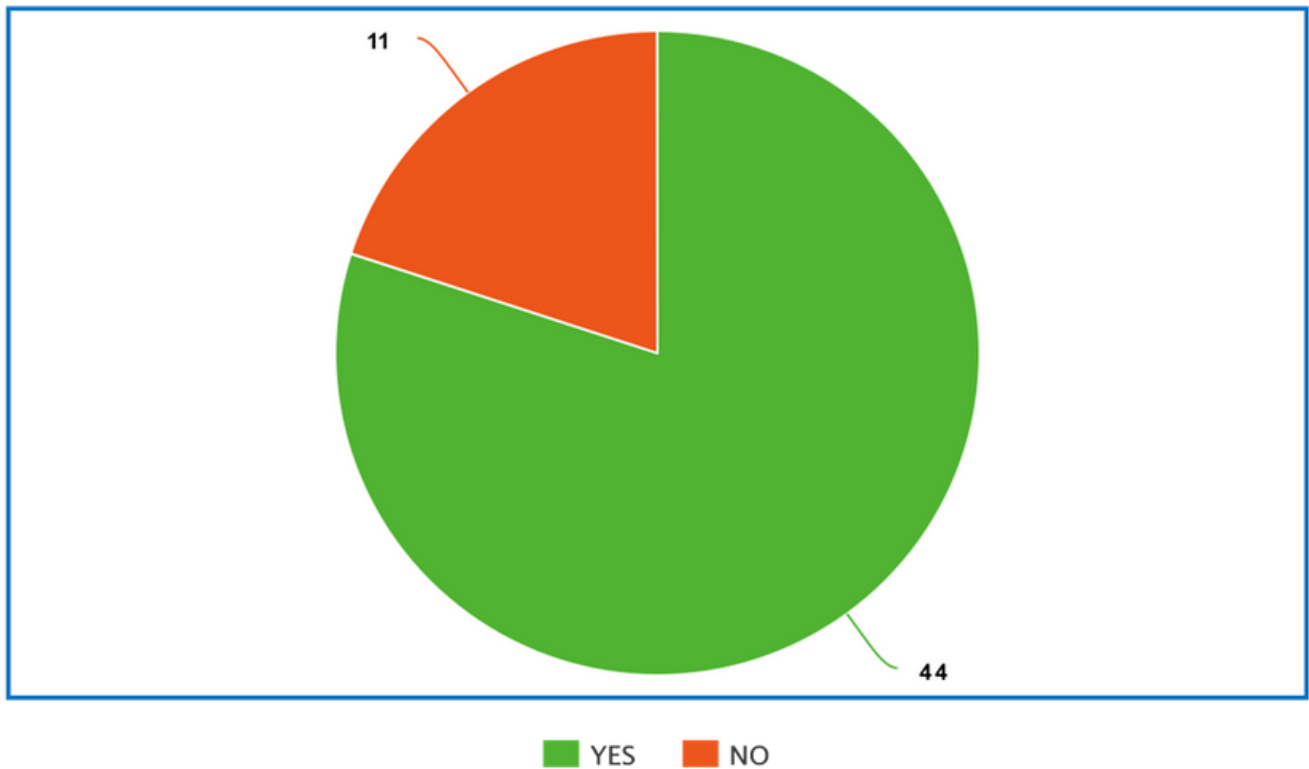


Figure 8: Chart depicting extent of interaction between participant organisations and the private sector

Of the 55 organisations that opted to submit relevant information, 80% reported positive relationships with local private-sector organisations.

During interviews, participants were presented with the opportunity to expand on the information provided in the survey with the prompt: 'Does your organisation maintain cooperative relationships with organisations in the private sector?' Interviewers clarified the parameters of the question by emphasising the significance of the 'cooperative' aspect of the relationship.

Participants were instructed to focus on interactions with businesses that could be described as 'mutually beneficial'; not simply transactional in the sense of the exchanging of money for goods. Indeed, relevant examples provided included a supermarket's provision of unsold food products to a local foodbank free of charge.

Although participants reported a broad array of ways in which these relationships manifested on the practical level, no single organisation went as far as to suggest that they were reliant on connections with the private sector for delivery. Instead, organisations taking part told the story of a blend of interactions that ranged from pro bono project management and consultancy work, to CSR volunteering opportunities and one-off donations.

A participant from a VCSE organisation that took part in the interview phase of the research talked about a project in which they had partnered with an independent creative studio to design green spaces for families from the Afghan refugee community at Wardley Hall in Worsley.

'We worked with a group of creatives to help set up the space. They ran workshops and consultation days with refugees to figure out exactly what they wanted from the location.'



The VCSE organisation leaned on the studio's capacity for delivery in order to bring their vision into reality, while integrating the voices of the families they sought to represent in the developmental process by utilising the consultation and design expertise of their partners.

It is important for the city's VCSE groups and organisations to remain crucial yet distinct from the statutory bodies and private sector organisations they work in partnership with. Cooperation between the VCSE and private sectors in Salford undoubtedly contributes to good health and positive wellbeing in the local area.

Not only are VCSE groups/organisations able to draw from the significant expertise with regards to delivery and execution inherent within the business community, but the organisations themselves also offer an opportunity for the local workforce to give back through volunteering. In both cases, the expansion of capacity for VCSE organisations helps to create a network in which both the determinants and outcomes of wellbeing can be impacted in a positive manner.

3.6 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Residing at the core of every initiative, strategy and ambition launched inside Salford is the mission to reduce inequalities. Salford is a vibrant, diverse city powered by demographic growth.

Since 2011, Salford has seen the second-largest increase in the percentage of residents who did not identify with any United Kingdom nationality (8.5% in 2011, 12.9% in 2021). Contained within this rise is a multitude of cultural and ethnic groups, the largest proportion of which identify as 'Black' (6.1%). Those identifying as 'Asian' make up 5.5% of the local population, while people identifying as 'mixed' make up 3.1%. Within Salford there are also thriving centres of Jewish, Polish, Eastern European and East African culture – representatives from which contributed significantly to this report through their invaluable contributions to the VCSE sector in both individual and collective capacities. Moreover, Salford's VCSE sector boasts a significant number of organisations working specifically with people from the LGBTQ+ community, women and girls, and disabled people.

Participants who opted to take part in the survey were prompted with the question: *'Does your organisation tailor its services specifically for older people, children, young people and families from communities of identity? (e.g. race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, women and girls)'*. 36 of the 58 participants responded 'YES' to the question.

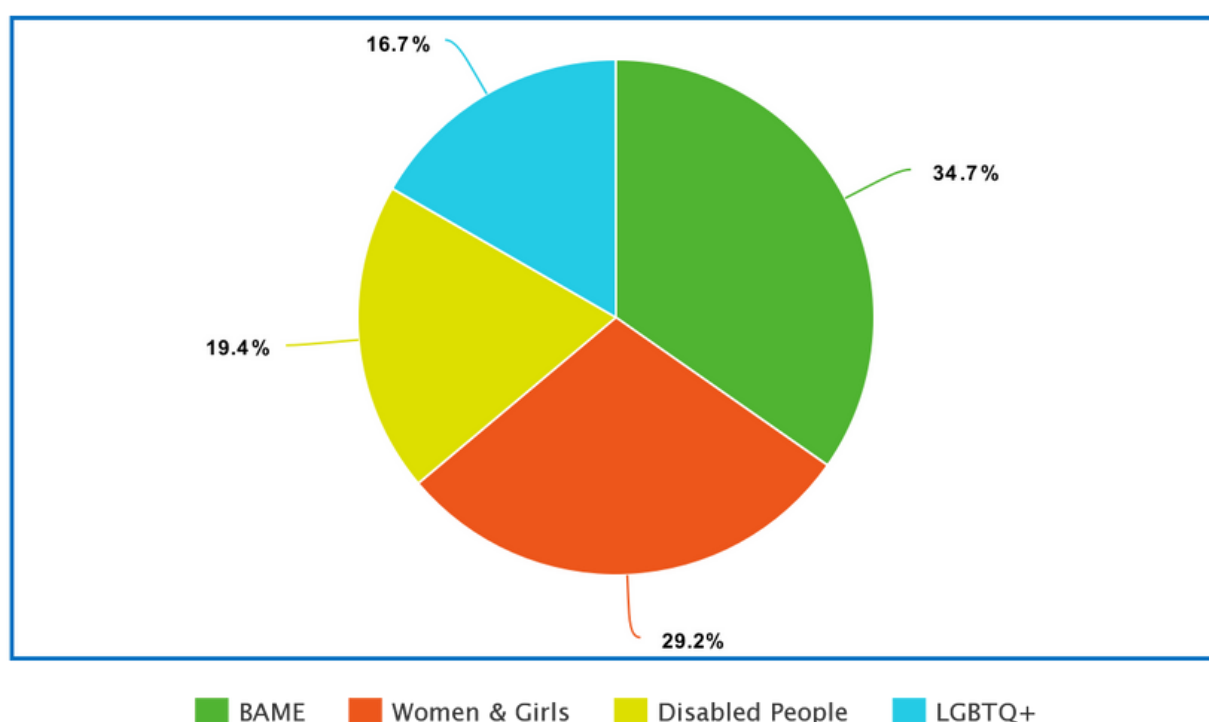


Figure 9: Chart depicting the breakdown of services offered by participant organisations to beneficiaries from communities of identity

Out of these VCSE organisations, the services tailored to beneficiaries from the black and minority ethnic communities accounted for 34.7% of the total. The second largest percentage accounted for related to services for women and girls, the third for disabled people. Services tailored for young people from the LGBTQ+ community made up 16.7% of the total responses.

During the interview phase of the data collection process, a participant representing the Eritrean community in Salford discussed the significance of their role as a conduit for new arrivals from the country into Greater Manchester and the importance of providing support for refugee families and their children.

'Many refugees from Eritrea who arrive in the country do not speak English and have difficulties accessing bank accounts, housing and understanding the culture. Through our organisation, we are able to support them through that process. It allows us to support our community in a different cultural environment.'

As is the case throughout the VCSE sector, the organisation in question contained a vast array of human intelligence related to direct lived-experience and language skills that were largely inaccessible within the context of the local population.

'Many of the volunteers at our organisation were teachers and hold various qualifications in Eritrea. We are able to teach Tigrinya and English lessons to young people in our community. It helps them to settle.'



The impact a VCSE organisation such as this has not only on the community it seeks to represent, but also Salford as a whole, is immense. These organisations work to support the integration of members of their own community into one the wider population easing the burden on the local authority. They work to address inequalities and prevent people from 'falling through the cracks' of social provision, while doing so in a cultural context and language that is accessible. At the same time, the organisation's emphasis on cultural solidarity augments the natural strength in diversity within Salford, best demonstrated through its dynamic and varied demographic makeup.

Similar initiatives exist within Salford's Jewish community. VCSE organisations running services for young people in the Jewish community constituted 9% of the project's participants. One organisation offering services for the provision of support for Jewish families living with children with special educational needs discussed the unique sensitivities accounted for in their work, particularly when engaging with the Orthodox community.

'The most important step we took as an organisation was gaining the trust of the community we wanted to work within,'

In contrast to less culturally intensive VCSE work with families, the VCSE organisation in question had to undergo the process of establishing a reputation through semi-official channels – by winning the trust of established community leaders.

'We initially made contact with a foundation operating as a membership organisation for Orthodox Jewish groups. They helped us to connect with rabbis and faith school leaders, who in turn provided us with the expertise to develop services tailored to families from the community.'



Only once this process had been completed was the organisation able to begin its work in the Orthodox community. The service itself – the introduction of professional support to families with children living with SEND – must be regarded as an asset in its own right. Not only does it open up an underserved community to a host of social provisions, including therapeutic support for parents, it also provides the potential to act as a gateway between the Orthodox community and the VCSE sector. They now possess a trusted voice with which they are able to project the complex realities of their health and wellbeing needs through the established structures of which the organisations in question are a part.

LGBTQ+

The significance of representation within the VCSE sector remains equally important with regards to young people from LGBTQ+ backgrounds. One participant organisation conducting work around HIV awareness, with elements of sexual health education for young men from the queer community, underwent a similar process of evolution. Founded during the height of the AIDS pandemic, the organisation sought to challenge misconceptions about the condition while preserving space for those living with HIV.

Although the organisation's services are not tailored specifically with children in mind, they do engage with a large number of sexually active young men and women. In addition to providing one-to-one counselling and advice sessions, as well as general sexual health education, the group offers an interpersonal support service for African men in the local area living with HIV. As an organisation they took the decision to recruit an engagement officer who shared an identity with the intended user base.



'It might sound silly, but a lot of services revolve around food. That's a big part of the culture of a lot of the people we work with. It's a really good way to connect and work around the stigma in the community.'

In this case, having a hub of cultural knowledge situated at the very centre of the service enhances the organisation's ability to project its strengths. It has a holistic approach to caring for those living with HIV – by going into communities in which enduring stigma presents a barrier to the receipt of proper medical treatment and care. The work of the organisation in question is once again demonstrative of the impact of the VCSE sector. It shows the capacity of individual VCSE organisations to project their strengths beyond the purview of the statutory sector and towards communities that have historically suffered inequalities around health and wellbeing outcomes.

Much like the organisation engaged with children and families with special educational needs within the Orthodox Jewish community, the intersectional nature of the service means that multiple indices of marginalisation can be tackled at once. This greatly enhances the process of knowledge sharing amongst VCSE organisations in Salford on how to tackle the inequalities that contribute to negative health and wellbeing outcomes in minoritised communities.



4. FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

While much of the qualitative research was conducted in the form of one-to-one interviews, the focus group presented an opportunity for like-minded individuals from the sector to discuss what the idea of good health and positive wellbeing meant to them. They did this within the context of children, young people and families, and how those ideas compared to those of colleagues from the VCSE community.

In total, twelve groups were invited to participate in the focus group. Invitees were selected based on a number of factors including; their responsiveness to participation in the survey and interview phases, the unique nature of the services they offered, the size of their organisation and their representation of Children, Young People and Families from minoritised communities.

Of the twelve invitees, five participants agreed to take part. The sample group included participants from one micro-organisation, one small, and two medium. Representatives operated in organisations working with people with disabilities, people from LGBTQ+ backgrounds, and people from black and minority ethnic communities, all with an emphasis on supporting young people.

The oldest organisation was established in 2005, with the youngest group seeking to become constituted this year.

The crucial takeaway gleaned from this process was that health, as a holistic state of wellbeing and contentment, was influenced by much more than one's own physical state. The key theme to emerge from the discussion was the idea of community, and the cultivation of that idea on the individual level by proliferating access across all walks of life. In discussion, this idea emerged around the theme of tackling barriers to entry faced by beneficiaries on account of a variety of factors, including identity, economic insecurity and location.

Participant #1 – from an organisation working with African people from the LGBTQ+ community:

'Health and wellbeing means enabling people to enjoy their lives. When somebody's mental health is in jeopardy, they are not really part of the community to which they belong. Keeping fit, enjoying life; it's all about participation...'



Participant #2 – from an organisation working to increase opportunities for people with disabilities in the local area:

'To our organisation, being healthy means being happy. We feel it's important for people to have the skills that enable them to live an ordinary life; whether that be pursuing hobbies or applying for jobs...'

Participant #3 – from an organisation supporting the local Muslim communities across Greater Manchester:

'People in our community often find it difficult to access public health services; health centres, gyms, because of cultural divides such as a lack of single-sex sessions and even due to hate crime. So it's really important for people in our community to have access to a space in which they can engage with people who have the same experiences as them...'



The group also discussed the impact of the local area itself had on the health and wellbeing of their organisation's beneficiaries.

Participant #4 – from an organisation working to support the Eritrean and Ethiopian refugee communities in Salford:

'For the people who arrive here as refugees, it can be difficult to adapt to the culture, the food, the weather. We have met a lot of nice people in Salford, the community has helped us to reach a really high level...'

With regards to volunteering as a means of improving the health and wellbeing of individuals who participate, the groups discussed the types of barriers that can impede a person's capacity to get involved. They talked about how their organisations work to open up opportunities for the young people who benefit from them.

Participant #3:

'As an organisation we understand the cultural differences that might limit the types of opportunities a member of our community is able to pursue. With us, we're actually able to speak to them, not only from a place of experience but also in their own language.

We see what needs they require and where they would be best placed and work with them to get them into a volunteering opportunity.'



As for outcomes, all of the participants expressed diverging opinions of how good health and wellbeing are demonstrated on the individual level. However, answers all converged around the idea of continued participation, whether as part of the group or independently, as evidence for the impact of the organisation on the wellbeing of the young person.

Participant #1:

'When we first engage with a client, some of the situations we find them in can be genuinely hard to observe. For example, we engaged with one person from Worsley with a condition that means that she can't stand up unaided, she can't speak and her vision is affected. Realistically there was not much she could do. Since we got the referral, she has done eight weeks at the leisure centre, and her family are paying for a personal trainer to continue the work she started with us. We have so many stories like that...'





5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Salford's shifting demographics point towards an increasingly young population, with more households including couples with both dependent and non-dependent children, as well as an overall drop in the median age of the local population. Within this context, support for children, young people and families will become more acute as needs continue to increase.

Underpinning these demographic shifts is the economic reality they are taking place within. The cost of living crisis, strains on the NHS and increasingly bleak economic projections subject are set to exert additional pressures on the lives of local residents and the public services they seek to access. Salford's robust and expansive VCSE sector network has a significant role to play as the city heads into this future, with provisions for young people and families taking an increasingly central position as the sector is further integrated into local strategies for development.

With this in mind, it is worth reviewing some of the key findings of this report, particularly as they pertain to the strengths of the sector with regards to its provisions for children, young people and families.

The VCSE sector has a crucial role to play in the city, especially as residents undergo a period of demographic change and economic uncertainty. The role VCSE organisations and the services they offer play in providing a safety net for Salford residents is an essential aspect of the mission to improve health and wellbeing throughout the local area.

VCSE organisations, in offering a variety of different means of improving health and wellbeing through the vast array of services provided, permit greater autonomy for individuals in achieving health and wellbeing goals. Sports, the arts, gardening, mental health provision and volunteering itself all contribute towards improved wellbeing and health outcomes. This imbues an elective aspect into the process of engaging with young people that is different to that which characterises mainstream education and allows flexibility for young families and parents.

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The sector boasts a suite of high-value, multi-purpose physical assets; such as community venues, sports pitches, outdoor spaces and more from which they are able to deliver these services.

The wealth of human resources, intelligence and commitment on offer in the VCSE sector means that services are adaptable and effective for young people. Similarly, it ensures that activities and interactions are safeguarded and do not in themselves have an adverse effect on health and wellbeing.

The resources on offer, both human and physical, place the sector in an optimal position to act as a link between other sectors (both statutory and private) and local residents. In many cases, VCSE organisations act as direct amplifiers of the voices of local children, young people and families; helping them to project their needs and concerns directly.

Relationships already in place within the sector similarly help to augment these strengths and assets. The sharing of knowledge, signposting, referral networks and resource-sharing on display amongst VCSE organisations helps to expand the number of services of which young people and families in Salford are aware. It also goes some distance towards allowing them to pursue a bespoke, individualised path towards improving their own health and wellbeing through accessing the support they feel they need.

For marginalised people in Salford, there exists a variety of services tailored for and run by members of minority communities living within the city. For organisations that do not specialise in providing services for children, young people and families from communities of identity specifically, inclusivity and openness emerged as a universal theme throughout the research. Nonetheless, decision-makers in Salford should continue to pursue means for representation for members of VCSE organisations working within these communities and their beneficiaries in order to reduce health and wellbeing outcome inequalities.



Below are the 4 principal takeaways taken from this research project:

- Physical assets: 75% of organisations reported consistent access to a physical site or venue from which they delivered their services, which demonstrates the importance of place
- People: The VCSE Sector is a key employer within the city but volunteering is at the heart of the sector with 65% of organisations having more volunteers than paid staff
- Interconnectivity: Partnership working is integral to the way the VCSE Sector delivers its services with 72.7% of Salford VCSE organisations engaging with other groups in the delivery of their services on a daily basis
- Equality, diversity and inclusion: 62% of VCSE organisations, tailor their services to meet the needs of communities of identity within the city

Salford CVS is confident that this report will go some way towards providing commissioners with the context they require for understanding the role the VCSE sector has to play in taking strengths-based approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children, young people and families in Salford.



6. CASE STUDIES

Recreate-U

Key Facts

Location: Swinton & Pendlebury

Established: 2020

Size: Small

Service users per week: 30

Volunteers: 5

Staff: 4



Although based in Swinton and Pendlebury, Recreate-U seeks to deliver tutoring and wellbeing services for people across Salford.

The organisation was established by a group of qualified educational specialists who sought to open up wellbeing and education services to families throughout the area.

We've got a permanent site at RHS Bridgewater, where our community plot is based. We deliver from schools, sports clubs and parks.

One of the organisation's keystone services involves working in schools. From there, the group seeks to provide a holistic service to ensure that young people are well-equipped to cope with the challenges of mainstream education.

We go into schools and deliver support for those transitioning from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. Young people come out and do wellbeing sessions with us, we try to provide support for their mental health needs.

The group also looks to support families. Offering up green spaces within which adults can undertake the types of activities that situate them in the best position mentally to be able to take care of their children.

Our family offer is based on the understanding that adults need support to do the best by their children. We have a social prescribing offer where they can come down to our plot at the RHS and engage in gardening and wellbeing sessions. We also do mindfulness walks and forest bathing.

Yemeni Community Association

Key Facts

Location: Eccles, Barton & Winton

Established: 2005

Size: Medium

Service users per week: 200

Volunteers: 30

Staff: 3



Since 2005, the Yemeni Community Association (YCA) has supported the needs of Salford's Yemeni and wider Arab-speaking community. Based in the heart of Eccles, the group offers a host of services ranging from culturally-appropriate mental health sessions, asylum and administrative language support, and a supplementary school with 180 pupils from around the local area.

We understand our community and everything is catered towards their needs.

The YCA's primary contributions to local health and wellbeing are centred on cultural sensitivity and access. The group engaged with families from the Arab-speaking community, many of whom are newly arrived in Britain and require language support in order to access health services. Through the group's body of dedicated staff and volunteers, beneficiaries are able to access the support they are entitled to.

As a multilingual group with specialists in various Arabic dialects, we are able to connect with almost 800 families in the area.

Recently, the organisation has sought to break down barriers to healthy living by hosting culturally appropriate fitness sessions for families from the Muslim community. Similarly, the linguistic affinity staff and volunteers maintain with the organisation's beneficiaries, as well as shared lived and cultural experiences means that the group is best placed to support the mental wellbeing of young people in the community.

We often engage with young people who have arrived as refugees from Yemen and Syria. In many cases, these people have undergone a really arduous journey to get here and some suffer from PTSD. It is important for them to have someone who they can talk to in their own words and share experiences with.

Mancunian Way

Key Facts

Location: Claremont, Weaste and Seedley

Established: 2011

Size: Small

Service users per week: 160

Volunteers: 0

Staff: 9



Mancunian Way is a GM-wide organisation that seeks to implement early-intervention strategies to tackle anti-social behaviour amongst young people. Within Salford, the group conducts the majority of its work within the neighbourhood of Claremont, Weaste and Seedley.

Our service is essentially street-based. You'll see us in parks, alleyways, shopping centres, wherever young people might be congregating.

The group's primary means of engagement centres on their vans. Mobile and able to seat between 10-15 young people, the vans provide staff with a means of projecting into local communities in order to offer young people a respite from the social environments that contribute to anti-social behaviour.

A key aspect of their work is securing early intervention into the lives of young people. In following this approach, Mancunian Way seeks to encourage positive health and wellbeing outcomes in the future by offering an alternative at a formative stage of development.

We look to deliver services around informal education and mentoring, signposting and offering workshops to young people. While young people may not be committing any crimes or getting in trouble yet, we're trying to challenge the behaviour that leads to them doing so in the future. It's about deterrent.

Salford Eagles FC CIC

Key Facts

Location: East Salford

Established: 2022

Size: Micro

Service users per week: 45

Volunteers: 9

Staff: 0



Salford Eagles FC is an independent CIC that provides barrier-free spaces for the development of young people in the local area. Running sessions from Salford Sports Village in Lower Kersal, the group is situated within the immediate vicinity of two LSOAs categorised as being within the most deprived 10% nationally (Irwell Riverside and Broughton).

We wanted to offer a football club for children in the local area that was accessible to all; an alternative space for development for young people in Salford.

Although the organisation's core service rests upon the delivery of football sessions for young people, their vision for the club extends far beyond competition. In addition to the obvious health benefits derived from hosting physical activity sessions, the organisation seeks to instil a culture of curiosity and respect for others and their community amongst the young people who make up its membership.

We make sure to build all of the football work we do around a wider education service. It's not just about competition here, we want to provide an environment in which young people can flourish.

Breaking down barriers to entry lies at the core of the club's mission. Through proactive and easily identifiable measures, the group has sought to create a family-like atmosphere in which people from all backgrounds can engage with.

One thing we're keen to ensure is that the young people and families who join the club don't have to worry about the outside world once they're here. It's really important for us to provide things like water and refreshments free of charge. Everything we make goes back towards supporting young people.

As an alternative road for the development of young people, the club seeks to distinguish itself from traditional, often exclusionary modes of education such as mainstream schools, while maintaining the same standards of curiosity and respect for others expected of young people.

In terms of the people who benefit the most from our service? That's probably low-income families in Salford. We have no restrictions as to who can access the club, there's an open-door policy in place and we don't tolerate discrimination of any kind. We've recently integrated a girls' side into the club and are keen to continue making progress in that direction.

Audacious Foundation

Key Facts

Location: Quays, Ordsall, Pendleton & Charlestown

Established: 2017

Size: Medium

Service users per week: 100

Volunteers: 150

Staff: 5



Audacious Foundation is a registered charity based in the heart of Salford. Their mission revolves around tackling poverty and transforming communities through education and empowerment.

Our organisation is really unique in terms of the atmosphere and the culture we generate for our beneficiaries.

While the group runs a huge array of services ranging from homelessness action to food provision and language support, they also boast an impressive offer for young people.

We've been involved in some school programmes, mainly around the holiday activities delivered in Salford. We also host a parent and toddler group on Friday mornings.

Through its holistic approach and the impressive range of services on offer, Audacious Foundation looks to challenge critical issues around poverty and inequality at the root and to integrate support at every stage of the beneficiaries' life.

We're interested in addressing the underlying causes of poverty – that's what the foundation was established to tackle. Whether that be food scarcity, poor health or family challenges, everything we learn from our programmes goes towards informing how we tackle those root causes.

Green Teach

Key Facts

Location: Cadishead, Irlam & Peel Green

Established: 2016

Size: Small

Service users per week: 15

Volunteers: 6

Staff: 2



Based in the abundant green spaces of the Cadishead, Irlam and Peel Green neighbourhood, Green Teach is an organisation focused on proliferating access to those spaces for Salford residents and implementing education-based services around food for young people.

We understood that, in many cases, children are disconnected from where their food comes from...

The group's 'Incredible Edible' soul food offer looks to introduce local young people to the health benefits of organic food, while also introducing residents to the extensive agricultural networks that exist in Salford but are seldom engaged due to the area's relative geographical isolation.

We've started to develop relationships with other local retail and food outlets. Loads of social enterprises have popped by and approached us in regards to our providing them with organic foods.

The distinctly rural location of their location at Moss Lane Farm offers a health benefit in and of itself.

Even just being out in the woodland; something as simple as that had massive benefits to not only a young person's physical health but also their mental wellbeing too.

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