



LCO's and the VCSE in Greater Manchester.

A summary report of the one to one interviews with Local Care Organisation leaders and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector locality leaders from across the city-region.

18th December 2018.



**GREATER MANCHESTER VCSE
DEVOLUTION REFERENCE GROUP**



1. The '30 seconds outside PP3' summary for really busy people:

1.1	All 10 localities identified a system leader within the LCO (or equivalent structure) to participate in this exercise. 8 locality infrastructure (or equivalent) VCSE leads and 2 VCSE provider leads were also interviewed.
1.2	There was a clear sense of optimism from the Local Care Organisation and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector interviews.
1.3	There was a strong view from LCO leads that VCSE participation at the strategic, operational and front-line meant that divergent thinking was 'on the table'.
1.4	The capacity of the VCSE to engage strategically is limited and more recognition of the value and impact of that engagement is required.
1.5	Emphasis is focussed on the relationships between the locality and Greater Manchester or the relationship between the Local Authority, Foundation Trust, Mental Health and Commissioning and this needs to be more inclusive of the relationship with the VCSE.
1.6	Not every locality engages its VCSE strategically and in some areas there is no formal VCSE voice or identified VCSE role on formal structures or boards. Where there is, they are not always an equal member at the LCO Board level or a signatory.
1.7	There's a lack of strategic funding for the VCSE in localities and across Greater Manchester. The funding models that have enabled participation in the development of the LCO have less than 2 years funding confirmed and the majority funded through Transformation Funding allocations. There's genuine intent for continuation funding but there is no clear plan in place for investment beyond 2 years in localities (with most ending in 6 months - 12 months).
1.8	Whether it's a Memorandum of Understanding, a PACT, an agreement or a contract, there is a need to have an agreement in place for the benefit of both the VCSE and the LCO in each locality.
1.9	The VCSE is an effective way to build connectivity and capitalise on social capacity at the neighbourhood level and therefore must be engaged and enabled to do so.
1.10	The role of the VCSE is more than prevention and social prescribing; there's a clear service design, service delivery, leadership, culture, workforce, organisational development, 'organisational form' knowledge and understanding, transformation, social value, financing and philanthropic skill base that is under-utilised. The very nature of the VCSE is transformation.
1.11	There is a complex picture that assumes that the VCSE has to fit into new funding arrangements and delivery models. It is equally important for the LCO to understand the local structures and natural neighbourhoods in the design, development and delivery of the local offer and ensure a VCSE role in that.
1.12	It is essential that there is a clear understanding of the reach, scope and value of micro, small, medium and large VCSE organisations by the LCO in order to enable them to participate and deliver.
1.13	Relationship management is a critical success factor and LCO's should ensure that they have effective mechanisms to engage their local VCSE in their structures.
1.14	There is a need for clarity on the role of commissioners/ing and clear understanding of tactical and strategic commissioning models and approaches by both the LCO and the VCSE.
1.15	This piece of work was delivered through 10GM on behalf of partners.

2. Introduction

2.1	This summary report outlines the approach and headline findings from interviews with Local Care Organisations (LCO's) or equivalent delivery models and key Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) leaders from across the 10 districts of Greater Manchester.
2.2	The findings of the interviews were necessary to form the basis of a workshop on the 19 th December 2018, hosted by the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership's LCO Development Network.
2.3	The findings and workshop will inform the further development of strategic and operational relationships between VCSE organisations and the evolving local care offers in the 10 localities and across Greater Manchester.
2.4	This small project was led by a cross-sector team, which included: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paul Lynch, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership.• Lisa Stack, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership.• Nathalie Haslam, GMCVO.• Ben Gilchrist, Action Together and project lead for 10GM.• Darren Knight, Bolton CVS on behalf of 10GM.
2.5	The project team ensured connectivity across other related activities through the Greater Manchester VCSE Reference Group, through Warren Escadale and the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership (GMH&SCP) Person and Community Centred Approaches programme, through Giles Wilmore.
2.6	The interviews were undertaken during November and December 2018.
2.7	For simplicity, 'LCO' is used throughout this document to describe collectively the operational delivery model for Local Care Organisations, Integrated Care Partnerships, Integrated Care Alliances and single organisation led approaches for each locality.

3. Approach

3.1	The agreed approach was to engage each locality identified LCO lead and VCSE lead through a semi-structured interview process.
3.2	The process was to speak to the Public Sector and VCSE leads separately in order to provide the space to probe and explore the challenges from an sector perspective.
3.3	The individuals contacted defined as LCO leads in each locality where derived from a list provided from the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership.
3.4	The individuals contacted defined as VCSE leads in each locality where identified through the existing 10GM partners and their locality relationships.

4. LCO lead interview response summaries

Question 1: "Please describe your relationship with your local voluntary and community sector"

- The LCO lead interviewed from each area talked about the value, potential and essential need for a strong, thriving and active VCSE in their locality in order to deliver the change needed to improve health and wellbeing.
- There were very different local arrangements in place in each borough based on a myriad of factors and there was recognition this does position the VCSE differently, depending on the locality.
- Not all localities had a strong relationship or consistent view of the local VCSE.
- A key aspect of strong relationships was a specific individual or number of individuals that had trust, respect, agency and social capital.

"There is potential for great synergy between the Local Care Organisation and the Public Service Reform agendas and we need to be aware of that. There may be learning and design of aspects or whole models that could influence the future for both."

Public sector insight.

Question 2: "How and where are your local relationships co-ordinated and nurtured within your LCO structure?"

"If public services are continuously looking at neighbourhoods for their delivery; what does that mean for voluntary sector organisations that are borough-wide or multi-borough?"

Public sector insight.

- The relationships in all localities weren't equally mature across the 10 boroughs of Greater Manchester.
- There were significant challenges identified around how those strategic relationships work at the neighbourhood level and how the VCSE engages in the emerging neighbourhood governance structures.
- LCO leads recognised that they could better utilise VCSE structures for co-design and engagement.

Question 3: “Who or where is your local connection point?”

- There was acknowledgement of the role of local infrastructure organisations as the local catalyst, connector and knowledge hub for VCSE provision and where those organisations didn't exist or are 'developing', a strong recognition of the value of that provision.
- There were comments around how the VCSE often 'lead beyond their organisation' with no sense of which groups or communities they represent and that was recognised as a valuable tool in whole system re-design.
- There was a positive view from across the localities about how the VCSE takes advantage of opportunities and is proactive in building relationships.

*“A challenge is how does the (VCSE) sector get the right people to participate and how do they ensure consistency and connectivity?
It is difficult to share from a pool when you need skill and consistency to support some of this development.”*
Public sector insight.

Question 4: “What has been your experience of working with your local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in the development of your LCO, from your perspective?”

“There's lots of people who get different grants from across the system; can we make a system-wide investment in key partners. The time and energy wasted in multiple minor contracts could really help us focus efforts in other areas.”

Public sector insight.

- All localities defined the experience as a journey with both sides learning from each other.
- There was a strong sense from across the city region that there are 'larger' VCSE groups and organisations that people often 'go to' or 'select'.
- Most areas had strong and effective relationships with key VCSE organisations and local infrastructure organisations before this process began.
- There was a strong sense from all participants that the genuine and robust challenge from the VCSE was welcome and needed.

Question 5: “Any valuable learning that you’ve picked up from your journey.”

The responses to this question have been summarised under the following headings:

Change:

- It was recognised by a number of localities how important it is to better understand the impact of all the strategic change for voluntary sector leaders, teams, organisations and their beneficiaries.
- There was a view that even when local engagement is strong, people don’t realise what’s happening until something is put into place, including decommissioning plans with such elements needing to be spelt out clearly to the VCSE.
- There’s a need to not overloading the voluntary sector and being clear on what the big ticket items are so they can prioritise their time and engagement.



“There needs to be a willing appetite to do things differently from traditional organisations - regardless of the sector they’re in.”

Public sector insight.

Size matters:

- Every area recognised that strategies and plans must be inclusive of the grass-roots VCSE as well as larger operations.
- It was widely recognised that the fragility and vulnerability of the VCSE needs to be more considered in local decision making.
- It was equally clear from all areas that VCSE investment needs to be much more than small grants/investments.
- There was a wide recognition that the VCSE’s capacity to engage often relates to the size of organisation and its income source(s).
- Breaking localities down into districts and neighbourhoods means that organisations need to spread themselves across, it’s a challenge for us in the public sector so imagine what impact it is having on the VCSE.

Leadership:

- From a system perspective, there is a need to be clear about what it is that the VCSE is wanted to do.
- People highlighted the need to understand what motivates and enables people to take up leadership and governance roles in the VCSE and to support them to do so, particularly where those roles are on behalf of the sector.
- It was recognised that individual and personal values and drivers can make a big difference.
- A number of areas highlighted that those people in key leadership positions in the VCSE that are outward looking and future focussed in their approach are critical to the success of local and Greater Manchester delivery models and approach.
- There was a sense from some areas of the sheer size and diversity of the VCSE and the fact that it isn’t one homogenous group with various connection points and there is a need to better understand that landscape to navigate it effectively and utilise key links.

→ Connectors and local infrastructure are invaluable and there was the recognition of connecting to VCSE providers too.

Culture:

- It is essential that confidence to influence from all aspects of the sector is enabled. This is exactly the same from the statutory services engaging the VCSE; we're all learning about each other.
- There is a critical role for the VCSE in workforce design.
- There is a culture piece for the existing public sector workforce on the role, reach and potential of the VCSE.

Language:

- A number of areas talked about how the system uses different words and language and the fact that what is meant in strategies needs to be clear and consistent.
- Plans and strategies need to reflect the realistic intent of practice through being clear.

Investment:

- Areas identified that there is a need to move away from the transactional relationships and that means there is a need to invest in the VCSE differently and genuinely focus on the change that will improve the lives of people.
- A number of areas highlighted the limited links between commissioning and the VCSE and the consideration of where both 'tactical' and 'strategic' commissioning landed and what that would mean for the VCSE.
- There was a wide recognition that there needs to be more focus on supporting the VCSE to collaborate for funding and to devise collaborative models to enable the best outcomes for people in communities.
- A need to understand what are the levers available to commissioners that they have at their disposal to invest in the VCSE.
- Areas did highlight how the VCSE needed to fit into new funding and delivery models to benefit from opportunities.

Trust:

- There is a need to trust the VCSE more to simply 'get on with it'.
- There was strong feeling about being honest, open and pragmatic and the sense of establishing the VCSE as a truly equitable partner.
- It is essential for trusted relationships at all levels, not just at senior leadership levels and this requires significant culture change.

Question 6: “What is the actual or planned investment into the VCSE through your LCO?”

- No area was able to provide a figure for the VCSE investment ‘post-Transformation fund.
- All localities signalled a positive intent to continued investment into the VCSE.
- There was a lack of clarity on ‘who’ held the responsibility for VCSE investment in each area which could prove problematic as LCO’s evolve.
- There was a recognition of the need for increased investment in all aspects of the VCSE.



“It’s important for us to increase the level of social value we deliver through our local offer.”

Public sector insight.

Question 7: “Anything else?”

- A number of localities used this as an opportunity to reflect on the progress made and that although relationships were strong, there was still a recognition of the distance to be travelled.

5. VCSE lead interview response summaries

Question 1: *“Please describe your relationship with your Local Care Organisation.”*

- All areas identified a positive and evolving relationship with their Local Care Organisation.
- All areas identified a positive and evolving relationship with their Local Care Organisation.

“It’s all very typical of the previous iterations of transformation over the years, however I do this time feel a more genuine commitment to embrace the principles of what we’re trying to achieve and to include the voluntary and community sector within that as a true partner; that does feel different and I’m optimistic.”

VCSE insight.

Question 2: *“How and where are your local relationships co-ordinated and nurtured within your LCO structure?”*

“We can’t forget the business analysts; we have so much which could aid planning and design and our data and grass-roots intelligence is overlooked.”

VCSE insight.

- The VCSE have access points at all levels and this varies by locality for how often senior leaders engage the VCSE.
- In some areas, the relationships are often in areas such as ‘Communications and Engagement’ and not necessarily in the same space as decision makers which inhibits the ability to influence.
- It is important to ensure that the senior leads champion the VCSE when the sector is not around the table.

Question 3: “Who or where is your local connection point?”

“There are a number of plans, teams, strategies, investments and approaches that are around at the moment that are creating confusion and duplication for the VCSE, and to be honest, the public sector doesn't seem to have a grip of it either.”

VCSE insight.

- VCSE strategic contacts had strong links in to the LCO structures, however this wasn't mirrored through the provider experience.
- There are many champions and allies in and across the system for the VCSE.

Question 4: “What has been your experience of working with your local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in the development of your LCO, from your perspective?”

- The experience across the 10 districts was positive but quite different due to the nature of different examples of historic relationships and recent changes in key personnel.
- There are a number of localities where the VCSE didn't feel that it was within the right structures to influence decision making.
- In areas that are further ahead, VCSE involvement in proposing and developing business cases has been limited and there would be value in providing more space for co-design.
- There's a challenge in some areas about where relationships change when money is a factor and the VCSE isn't necessarily an equal or equitable partner for those conversations.
- It can be challenging for local connectors to translate to the VCSE what's going on as it is often unclear and ambiguous.
- The co-design and co-production dimensions to developing local agreements has been critical to defining and developing relationships.

“There's a disparity in the conversation and I don't think senior people realise the impact of their position or influence when engaging the VCSE sometimes.”

VCSE insight.

Question 5: "Any valuable learning that you've picked up from your journey."

- There was a view that the public sector does need reminding of the potential and role of other partners. They're often keen to say 'we can do it', opposed to engaging partners on 'who's best to do it'.
- When the VCSE is brought together for conversations, there's a need to ensure that people are brought up to speed and people who live and breathe the LCO need to really understand that to avoid dis-engaging the sector.
- The VCSE does want more strategic engagement generally, but it needs to be relevant, accessible and clear information.
- The capacity required to engage in all local change programmes needs to be costed and valued for the VCSE in the same way that it is for other key system partners.
- Until there's strength in relationships across sectors, it can be helpful when external organisations (like Nesta) state what the VCSE has been highlighting as challenges as it can remove some of the conflict.
- There was a recognition of the value (as above) on the role of consultants and partners, however this was caveated by a number of localities about the lack of value and intelligence retained in the locality after a piece of work is completed.
- There is a significant shift from the VCSE to the 'ask' and 'offer' and more support is required to enable the sector to be more sophisticated with this.
- There's a need to recognise how we build and move away from the competitive environment which has been created through some commissioning approaches and invest energy into establishing new partnerships.

"There's a sense that the Directors responsible for delivering the LCO work that are well aware of the VCS and it's potential, but sometimes there's a challenge around how they see the VCSE fitting into their puzzle."

VCSE insight.

Question 6: *“What is the actual or planned investment into the VCSE through your LCO?”*

All localities signalled the investment (or planned investment) to the VCSE through social prescribing.

- A number of the Local Infrastructure Organisations were delivering grants and community investment programmes where it would benefit and contribute to the work of the LCO, but formal agreements aren't yet in place in all cases.
- There's a concern from the VCSE about how the commitment will translate into actual investment in the future funding landscape and what levers are available to define specific investments for types of interventions, activities, themes and geographies.



“Social Prescribing I’m hoping will come to the VCSE, but nothing specific other than what was in the Transformation Fund money.”

VCSE insight.

Question 7: *“Anything else?”*

- There was a really strong view that the VCSE is an enabler of transformation and that perhaps there is a need for system leaders to view that potential differently.

Contact for more information:

Darren Knight, Chief Executive, Bolton CVS.

01204 546 010 or 07860 819 429.

darren@boltoncvs.org.uk.

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