



# Voluntary Action Coventry

## ANNUAL REVIEW

Supporting voluntary and community activity in  
Coventry

2023 - 2024





# About VAC

Achieving public benefit through the following:



**Voluntary Action** Coventry

Voluntary Action Coventry  
exists to promote and  
support social action and  
community resilience in  
Coventry

- **Volunteer Centre Coventry** – promotion and brokerage of volunteering opportunities
- **Supported volunteering** – tailored support to help people with barriers play an active part in their communities through volunteering
- **Healthwatch Coventry** - enabling the public to have a greater say on the health and social care services provided within the city; helping to address issues, problems or barriers within particular services.
- **VCSE Alliance** – providing information and advice to voluntary, community and social enterprises
- **Involvement** in local networks, partnerships and collaborations that address disadvantage/inequalities



# Volunteering

We relocated to our new home at Harp Place over the summer. Despite a brief lull in service and a condensing of our Volunteer Drop-in to eight hours over two days, we achieved:



Our new location, Harp Place



Drop-in Session

289

Volunteer roles advertised across the year

666

Volunteers registering interest in roles

54

People registering for our Introduction to Volunteering Workshops



# Volunteering



239

239 accessed face-to-face volunteer support



592 online registrations made

592



Some of the new and unique volunteer roles on offer this year included

- cat foster care
- energy saving community champions
- radio show production
- pupil safety escort
- archiving the history of Riley's Cars

We ensure that the benefits of volunteering and how to access community engagement reach a wide network

- On average, we delivered outreach to promote volunteering 1x every 3 weeks (equiv.)
- A wide range of settings and audiences which included:
  - + adult ESOL classes in Coventry College
  - + Social Prescribing events to SEN 6th Form students in schools
  - + Coventry Community Celebration event at Coventry Peace Orchard





# Chat Central



Chat Central is a National Lottery Funded project where we help people to find others with similar interests, to have fun, get out of the house, join in with a hobby, get involved with their community and to find new friends, tackling loneliness and isolation in all its forms in Coventry.

## We worked with over 160 people.

- 180 x events including 48 Mission Possible Group Volunteering sessions.
- 502 hours of group volunteering including 45 litter picks
- 25 x online Zoom meet ups
- 70 x group meet ups with a variety of activities including yoga, song writing, pool, craft, Zumba, darts and games sessions.





# Connecting people, reducing isolation and building confidence.

- A person-centred approach
- We find out what interests, hobbies and skills participants have
- We listen to what people want and match them to a wide variety of activities
- We involve people in their community



- 10 x one to one Occupational Therapy sessions
- 10 x introductions to community groups
- 10 x participants accessed training or entered employment
- 9,763 reach on the Chat Central Facebook page for the year.



## Our activities include:

Bowls  
Bollywood dance  
Craft sessions  
Canoeing  
Tennis  
Tai Chi  
Film clubs  
Photography



# Improving Lives

We supported adults aged 18+ and over who were unemployed/NEET and who were deemed 'furthest away from the workplace' on a six-week volunteering course called "Improving Lives".



“ I have goals for myself, and I believe I can achieve them

75% increase in participants identifying with this statement



Participants shared they had barriers that included anxiety and depression, social withdrawal, low self-esteem, and low self-confidence, preventing them from focusing on their futures and realising their potential.



# IMPROVING LIVES

VOLUNTEERING COURSE

82

82 participants benefited from attending the course,



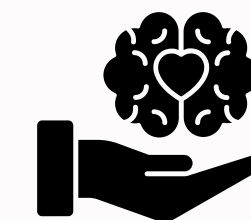
26 participants are now volunteering

26



10

10 participants have volunteered at 2 or more charitable organisations



7 progressed into employment,

7



1

1 moved into an apprenticeship





Healthwatch Coventry put a clear focus on hearing and understanding the barriers that local people face in accessing health and social care.

3,326

people shared their experience of health and social care with us, helping us to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

37,421

people came to us for clear advice and answers to their questions about topics such as diagnosis and referral issues, delays in complaint responses and where to go for out of hours support.

37

outstanding volunteers gave **815** hours of their time to make care better for the community.

We highlighted people who were not included in a local NHS equalities assessment. The approaches we suggested were taken as a model for wider use.

**healthwatch**  
Coventry





- We influenced the priority given to addressing delays in complaints and incident responses, following a call for actions from the hospital.
- We highlighted the impact of community pharmacy closures on local people, to those who review local access.
- Our visits to the hospital wards led to swift actions on a ward where we identified concerns. We revisited the ward and saw improvements in care.



- We have reached different communities by working in partnership with voluntary groups, with a focus on communities in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

- We were awarded the annual Healthwatch Impact award for changes made to maternity care for asylum seeking and newly arrived women and our partnership approach.





# VCSE Alliance

Our Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Alliance is a free membership service that brings together third sector organisations based in Coventry or operating services in our city.

- **Membership grew:** 36 new members joining
- 31 unique organisations attended **Volunteer Coordinator Support Network (VCSN)** meetings
- **Monthly VCSN** meetings provide an informal peer-to-peer sharing and support format.
- **Vision for Volunteering** information session delivered to introduce and raise awareness of the call to action to revitalise volunteering on a national level over the next 10 years.





# VCSE Leaders Network



## VCSE Alliance leaders engagement:

- Explored opportunities to promote and raise awareness of the Sector's role, working with our system colleagues to shape up the VCSE role in the **integrated care system**.
- Discussed common issues affecting organisations in the city
- Established a **Coventry and Warwickshire Leaders Alliance** with our sister organisation CAVA, which is evolving into the reference group of the newly forming VCSE Collaborative.
- Launched **Perspectives**, our e-news bulletin to highlight examples of local VCSE impact to non-VCSE agencies and to share opportunities for partnership working and collaboration.



# Community Mental Health Transformation (CMHT): VCSE Engagement

In partnership with Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action, we ensured that VCSEs were part of the conversation around transforming mental health services





# Community Mental Health Transformation: VCSE Engagement

## HIGHLIGHTS

140

VCSE groups contacted - of which 48% became actively engaged

1

Counselling Organisation Network formally established

8

Mental health and wellbeing projects received funding from the CMHT VCSE Microgrant (£22k)

16

Mental health and wellbeing projects received funding from the CMHT VCSE Innovation Fund (£337k)

**£359,659** has been distributed to **24 VCSE** organisations spread across Coventry, North Warwickshire, South Warwickshire and Rugby.

A total of **1,936** participants have benefited from these projects with **412** sessions delivered.



The Horse and People Project

a therapeutic approach using horses





# Voluntary Action Coventry



Voluntary Action Coventry  
Harp Place, 2 Sandy Lane, Coventry, CV1 4DX  
[www.vacoventry.org.uk](http://www.vacoventry.org.uk)

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