



## **South Hams Community and Voluntary Services**

### **Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024**

**Supporting local voluntary and community action in the South Hams**

**July 2021**

# South Hams Community and Voluntary Services (CVS) Strategic Plan 2021-24

## Introduction

This Plan provides the strategic framework for our development over the coming three years. It sets out our vision for the future, our mission, our values, and our strategic outcomes and priorities for this period.

We intend this Plan to be a live tool which will be used by trustees and staff to guide our work, monitor our performance and impact, and help us make decisions. We hope, also that the Plan will be valued by the groups we seek to help and champion, and by the wide range of other organisations and agencies, in the public, voluntary and private sectors, with which we work.

We also recognise that this Plan must evolve and adapt in response to changing circumstances. The experience of the Covid pandemic through 2020 and 2021 highlights how difficult it is to plan for the future. So, we regard it as a guide, not a rigid blueprint. It will be kept under regular review by trustees to ensure it remains fit for purpose and appropriate to the context in which we work.

This Plan has been informed by the views of groups we exist to support; and, in particular, draws on the findings of a survey of South Hams voluntary and community groups conducted early in 2021. A summary of results of the survey can be found in Appendix 1.

The Plan provides the overarching strategic framework for our work. Beneath this sits our annual Work Plan which sets out in some detail the specific activities and actions we will take to achieve our vision and outcomes and build the long term sustainability of our organisation.

## South Hams CVS

South Hams CVS is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. We were established in 1995 as a membership organisation and have been serving voluntary and community organisations in the South Hams for over twenty five years. We are a core member of Devon Voluntary Action (DEVA), under whose umbrella we are also members of the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO).

Our purpose is to support and represent the local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in the South Hams district, estimated to comprise around 800 organisations. We support existing organisations to develop and help new groups to start up, by providing one to one advice, training,

networking opportunities and information, and brokering collaborations and partnerships. We also act as a point of contact with the local voluntary and community sector for local authorities and other agencies, and seek to ensure the sector is able to engage in strategy and policy-making.

In 2020, a year dominated by the Covid pandemic, we supported many of the new community response groups to follow good practice and we enabled about 100 people to volunteer in 20 different communities. We established new social prescribing programmes and helped secure grant funding for a number of organisations across the area. Our expanded training programme, delivered online through most of the year, attracted a total of 250 attendances from 185 different people from 85 organisations (more information can be found in our 2020 Impact Report).

Over the years, SHCVS has established strong working relationships with many local organisations and has received valuable long-term support from South Hams District Council, Devon County Council and local health providers, as well as from other partners including the National Lottery. Due to funding cuts in recent years, South Hams CVS has had to manage with minimal resources (it no longer has its own office or office manager), and runs in the most efficient way possible. It has proved very adaptable and responsive to changing realities and has worked hard to remain relevant.

## Context

South Hams district, as Devon as a whole, has a vibrant voluntary sector providing a wide range of services and activities accessed by many different people. In 2018, South Hams district was the district with the second largest number of voluntary organisations in Devon<sup>1</sup> at 790, which was a 12% increase on the findings of a 2016 survey. The majority of these organisations are small and volunteer-led, with an annual income of less than £10,000. Based on the DeVA research, we estimate there to be around 8,000 recognised volunteers in the South Hams – a substantial cohort of people on which so many crucial services depend.

The Covid pandemic of 2020/21 has stimulated the establishment of a number of new “community response groups” (we estimate at least 20), and brought new people to volunteering and community action. We anticipate that some of these Covid response groups, and the new cohort of volunteers, will continue in the long-term, although it is impossible to predict what the volunteering landscape of a “post-Covid” world will look like.

The age profile of South Hams residents is older than elsewhere in England, with 28% of the population aged over 65. This means there is a relatively high level of need for the many services provided by voluntary and community groups. Furthermore, the rurality of the South Hams and consequent

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<sup>1</sup> According to the DeVA Third Sector Overview published in 2018. Available online at:  
[http://www.devonva.org/UserFiles/File/Voice\\_and\\_Influence/Sector\\_Analysis/DeVA\\_Final\\_Report\\_2018.pdf](http://www.devonva.org/UserFiles/File/Voice_and_Influence/Sector_Analysis/DeVA_Final_Report_2018.pdf)

limited public transport, causes particular problems for older people, those with impaired mobility and people on low incomes, in accessing public services. This creates the need for really local groups at village and community level. and a continuing and growing demand for volunteers.

## **Our Vision**

**Our vision is for South Hams to be a place where voluntary and community action thrives and where voluntary and community organisations are dynamic, resilient, sustainable and inclusive, playing a central role in building strong cohesive communities, and improving the quality of life and environment for all.**

## **Our Mission**

**Our mission is to be the leading organisation promoting, championing and supporting voluntary and community action in the South Hams, encouraging people to be involved with and using community services. We will focus on providing training, development and volunteering support, information, networking opportunities, facilitating collaboration, partnerships and enabling groups and communities to have a voice and influence, remaining relevant at all times.**

## **Our Values**

We will

- champion the voluntary and community sector in the South Hams
- enable and empower individuals and groups by helping to build their capacity, capability and confidence
- collaborate with others in the public, private and voluntary sectors in pursuit of common goals and partnership working
- embed, promote and practice equality of opportunity in all our work and strive to engage and support diverse communities, showing respect and care for all
- develop, test and encourage innovative ways of working, embracing new opportunities for delivering services, inspiring communities to meet their needs

## **Our strategic outcomes**

Our outcomes are the differences we seek for groups, communities and individuals and that will enable us to achieve our vision. We will measure the impact of our work in relation to our progress in achieving these outcomes.

We have seven overarching long-term strategic outcomes for organisations and volunteers, and three key organisational development outcomes for South Hams CVS itself, as outlined in the following framework:

## Our Outcomes Framework

We have created an Outcomes Framework (in the following table) setting out our long-term strategic outcomes, as described above, alongside a series of shorter-term outcomes which reflect and will drive our priorities over the three-year period of this plan. This Framework will be used to summarise priority actions and activities designed to help achieve these outcomes and to inform our work plan.

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES FOR SOUTH HAMS VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE (VCSE) ORGANISATIONS AND VOLUNTEERS			
	Strategic Objectives (VCSE)	Outcomes	Potential Actions
1	Local voluntary and community organisations are <b>thriving and sustainable</b>	Local organisations are more aware of SHCVS support Local organisations access and benefit from training and support around sustainability and resilience Local organisations feel more confident about their financial sustainability and resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad and varied promotion of SHCVS services</li> <li>• Trainings, skillshares and workshop provision for VCSE staff and volunteers</li> <li>• Funding and financial planning support provision in various ways</li> </ul>
2	Local voluntary and community organisations are safe and effective in <b>meeting community needs</b>	Local groups have access to and benefit from support to build their organisational capacity and development potential and deliver services, safely & effectively New and existing groups have access to and benefit from support to enable them to respond to needs and demands identified through social prescribing, community connectors and related mechanisms Local groups established during the Covid pandemic are supported to become sustainable where appropriate and existing groups build on learning from the pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One to one development support</li> <li>• information, advice &amp; signposting available on many different topics</li> <li>• Trainings, events, skillshares, networking opportunities</li> <li>• Community assets and strengths identified and communities supported in developing extra services as identified</li> <li>• Governance and set-up support provision</li> <li>• Digital skills support</li> <li>• Quality Mark</li> </ul>

3	Local voluntary and community organisations are <b>inclusive</b> and reach out to diverse communities	<p>Local groups have greater understanding of the diversity of the communities they seek to serve</p> <p>Local groups are more skilled and better equipped to engage with diverse communities</p> <p>Local groups have greater diversity in their leadership, staff and volunteers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data available on local demographics</li> <li>• Equality training available</li> <li>• Support for diversity audits</li> </ul>
4	Local voluntary and community organisations are <b>collaborative and connected</b>	<p>Local groups have access to and benefit from opportunities to share experience, learn from others, explore innovative solutions and collaborate</p> <p>New partnerships and collaborations are formed</p> <p>Groups have greater capability, confidence and opportunities to share knowledge, good practice and learning with others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trainings, events, skillshares, networking opportunities</li> <li>• Support for identified collaborative activities</li> <li>• Multi-agency forums</li> <li>• Links between groups established eg through networking, trainings</li> </ul>
5	Local voluntary and community organisations have the ability, confidence and opportunity to <b>influence</b> strategic priorities, policies and decision-making	<p>SHCVS has strong and respected relationships with key agencies</p> <p>Effective mechanisms are in place to enable groups to engage directly or through representation to influence policy</p> <p>Groups understand the roles and structures of agencies and how to engage with them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key agencies identified</li> <li>• Agency involvement in forums and events</li> <li>• Relevant Information, including consultations, disseminated</li> <li>• Mechanisms for representation and feedback</li> </ul>
6	Local voluntary and community organisations are able to <b>recruit and retain volunteers</b> to help deliver services and support the running of their organisations	<p>Groups have access to and are aware of support around volunteer management</p> <p>Groups participate in and benefit from initiatives to promote volunteering and community action</p> <p>Groups have access to and make use of effective volunteer recruitment platforms</p> <p>Groups are able to respond to the changing profile of volunteers and volunteering as we move into the Covid recovery phase</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer management support available in different places and forms</li> <li>• Activities and initiatives for promotion of volunteering opportunities</li> <li>• Volunteering recruitment platforms in place</li> <li>• Volunteer focussed networking opportunities available</li> </ul>

7	All people have the opportunity to become <b>active volunteers</b> , benefitting their communities and themselves	<p>Volunteer opportunities are widely publicised and support for people needing help to access them is available</p> <p>Volunteering is widely promoted to the public and particular communities and sections of the population</p> <p>New mechanisms for attracting and engaging “new” volunteers are developed or promoted, including use of digital tools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits of volunteering are understood and shared</li> <li>• Range of volunteering promotion is available to the public</li> <li>• Different ways of attracting and engaging people in volunteering are carried out by all SHCVS staff in different roles</li> <li>• Support for people who need help to get into volunteering is available</li> </ul>
<b>SHCVS DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES</b>			
	<b>Strategic Objectives (SHCVS)</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Potential actions</b>
A	SHCVS is <b>financially sustainable and resilient</b> in the long-term	<p>SHCVS has an appropriate level of reserves</p> <p>SHCVS has an appropriate mix of grant funding, contracts and generated income</p> <p>Generated income is increasing as a proportion of all income</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reserves policy reviewed annually</li> <li>• Funding sought from a variety of sources</li> <li>• Generate income through membership, training, donations and consider new opportunities</li> </ul>
B	SHCVS has a <b>high level of awareness</b> amongst voluntary and community organisations and the wider community	<p>Increasing proportion of local organisations are aware of SHCVS services</p> <p>Increasing number of local organisations are using SHCVS services and/or engaging with activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing and promotion of SHCVS</li> <li>• Diverse range of activities and support available to engage with the broad sector</li> </ul>
C	The <b>impact</b> of SHCVS is better understood amongst public, voluntary and private sectors and wider public	SHCVS will be better equipped to measure and demonstrate its impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring systems in place</li> <li>• Impact Report produced annually</li> <li>• Impact Report is shared widely with stakeholders</li> </ul>