



Better Together – VCS Forum

Terms of Reference Revised February 2021

Aims

The Better Together Forum brings together senior representatives of larger or specialist VCS organisations with a countywide remit with the aim of sharing information and best practice and looking for new opportunities to collaborate.

Objectives

- Provide a forum for the exchange of information
- Promote examples of best practice in the sector
- Provide peer support and problem solving to members of the group
- Recognise and celebrate success and achievements promoting confidence in the sector
- Provide expertise in areas where there are gaps in VCS provision
- Provide a forum for strategic partnership feedback and giving a mandate for the voluntary sector representatives on the County Durham Partnership Board, Thematic Partnerships and Area Action Partnerships
- Provide a forum for discussion of national and local policies affecting the sector
- Provide a forum for public sector lead officers and commissioners to share information and consult with the VCS

Membership

- Senior representatives from larger or specialist VCS organisations and networks with a countywide remit
- Chair to be the VCS representative on the County Durham Partnership Board
- Members are encouraged to attend at least two meetings per year to ensure continuity and engagement

Meeting Cycle & Format

- Meetings to take place on a bi-monthly basis (Four regular forums and two wider Policy forums)
- Meeting dates to be agreed by the group at an optimum time for members
- Members who have not attended in over 1 year will be assumed to have resigned but will be contacted for verification
- Topics for discussion to be agreed by the group with dedicated and quality time to be allocated to discuss peer issues
- Venues to have full disabled access and rotated through member organisations
- Meetings may be held online as appropriate
- Terms of Reference to be reviewed annually
- All meetings to be conducted in a safe, open and challenging environment
- Members are responsible for reporting back to relevant networks
- We will strive to make it a paperless meeting with papers available by email one week prior to the meeting date where possible



Secretariat

- Secretariat provision is provided in kind by Durham County Council's Partnerships team to coordinate, plan and attend meetings in discussion with the chair
- Notes from the meetings will be circulated to the membership following the meetings
- Copies of presentations given at the meetings will be posted on the [Better Together page](#) of the Durham Community Action website