

**York CVS Activity Report: April 2019 – September 2019
for the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny
Committee on Tuesday 28 January 2020**

Author: Alison Semmence, Chief Executive

Background

York CVS is a social action organisation. This means we take steps to make positive change, challenge issues and grow new ideas which strengthen communities. Since 1939, York CVS has supported thousands of local charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises to do just this. We help them focus on what they do best - making a difference for individuals and their communities.

What do we do?

We have a simple framework for our work:

- Support the sector to survive and thrive
- Represent the sector and provide a voice
- Deliver services with a social impact
- Sustain our organisational strength

We provide practical support such as room hire and office accommodation and essential services such as payroll and HR. We have a 'fixed and flexible' delivery approach - 'fixed services' which groups and organisations rely on, and a range of 'flexible' responsive offers which meet need as it occurs.

This type of bespoke support builds strength and resilience in our sector, so local charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises can provide and grow essential services for the communities they serve.

This report provides a brief summary of highlights across the six months from April 2019 to September 2019, aligned to the headings of our simple framework.

Organisational objectives	April 2019 to September 2019
<p>Support the sector to survive and thrive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our new look Voluntary Voice e-newsletter now provides monthly updates to over 1100 recipients on what is happening in the sector in York and also gives an opportunity for organisations to share their news and raise awareness of volunteering opportunities and activities. We provide a focus every month on our core work and social action projects. We have replaced the York Bulletin with a news page on our website, where VCSE groups will be able to share their news and events via this page which will also link to Live Well York. Six e-newsletters were sent during this six month period. • In addition, our social media presence supports the sector through communicating with key partners and colleagues. We have increased to 5,322 followers. • We also advertise VCSE sector jobs and volunteering opportunities on our website and via social media. • A new post of Funding and Development Officer (15 hours per week) was established at the end of April 2019. This post supports organisations with a range of issues including setting up a VCSE organisation, understanding legal structures, available funding opportunities, linking with other organisations and supporting network events. Since then we have worked with 58 organisations, providing advice and support. • In addition our HR service continues to support groups and organisations with complex and sensitive issues. Our payroll service supports many groups and organisations. • We continue to promote People Helping People working in partnership with others. The Enabling Social Action Programme aims to support the sector to understand how we can measure social action and impact volunteering in York. This work continues.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • York CVS held a Volunteering Fair on Tuesday 4 June 2019, which was held in National Volunteers Week (1-7 June). The event held in the Main Hall was very successful with 34 organisations having stalls to try to recruit volunteers. The Chief Executive ran two workshops on 'Introduction to Volunteering'. We estimated 120 people attended the Fair. We received very positive feedback about the event and the organisations who attended said many had received enquiries about volunteering with them. They also reported how beneficial the event had been for meeting up with a number of other organisations. • We have provided support to organisations who are facing challenges. We provided a range of advice including staffing, recruitment, employment law, funding and governance advice, as well as specific support for individuals.
<p>Represent the sector and provide a voice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • York CVS continues to be a senior member of several key Partnership Boards including York Health and Wellbeing Board, Ageing Well Partnership, Mental Health Partnership, Children's and Adults' Safeguarding Boards, Community Safety Partnership and Primary Care Home. These are important to ensure the Voluntary and Community Sector have a voice in how services are developed and run. • Following a consultation in April reviewing the current Forum arrangements, we have now moved away from the separate forums structure (Voluntary Sector Forum, Mental Health Forum, Ageing Well Forum and Learning Difficulties Forum) towards more open forums on specific current subject areas. We have also introduced Voluntary Sector Assemblies, which will be held twice a year, to bring York's Voluntary Sector together, at a larger event, to start conversations and to instigate social action towards some of the challenges we face here in York.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the period April – September we delivered seven events with a total of 235 attendees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Voluntary Sector Assembly: Challenging Local Issues - York Human Rights City (22 May): 80 attendees, 52 organisations ○ Voluntary Sector Forum: York: Ageing Friendly York (26 June): 44 attendees, 33 organisations ○ Voluntary Sector Strategic Forum: Procurement and Social Value (24 July): 12 attendees, 8 organisations ○ York Armed Forces Community Event (30 July): 60 attendees, 25 organisations, 12 individuals. ○ Voluntary Sector Forum: Volunteer Management (14 August): 19 attendees, 14 organisations ○ Voluntary Sector Focus Group: Tobacco Control (20 August): 6 attendees, 4 organisations. ○ Voluntary Sector Forum: Supporting York’s Armed Forces Community (18 September): 14 attendees, 9 organisations. <p>The issues discussed at these events will inform the CEO when attending relevant meetings.</p>
<p>Deliver services with a social impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ways to Wellbeing is our social prescribing service. The model is simple and highly effective. Our focus is on working creatively, pragmatically, and flexibly to identify non-medical options that can improve wellbeing. We draw on opportunities in the community, grants, information and advice, informal resources and peer support. We know that nationally, 20-25% of patients consult their GPs for social problems, e.g. loneliness – there is no pill to combat loneliness, but projects such as this can help connect people to their communities and this does help. During this period 163 referrals were received for the service. After working with Ways to Wellbeing; 82% of clients reported an increase in their wellbeing, 60% of clients increased in confidence and 70% felt more optimistic and 43% of clients noted a decrease in loneliness ‘feeling close to other people’. There has been a 32% reduction in GP appointments.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="461 236 2101 791"> <p>• York Dementia Action Alliance (YDAA) model continues to bring representatives from all three sectors together (public, private and third sectors) and to make a practical contribution to ensuring York is a dementia friendly city – there are now 54 members of the Alliance. YDAA newsletters are sent out monthly. Support has been provided to three new members and work has taken place with British Transport Police and Fleetways Taxis to update their action plans and with York Sports Village, Better York, York LGBT Forum, Sainsbury’s Monks Cross, Nuffield Health and LNER to create action plans. We held a ‘Free to be Me in Care’ event, with Healthwatch York and York LGBT Forum and visited many dementia groups and activities and Alliance members. The YDAA co-ordinator attended Dementia Champion Training in Sheffield at the end of August to be able to deliver Dementia Friends sessions to Alliance Members and Community Groups. The profile of the Alliance has been raised through social media and dealt with a variety of enquiries and requests for information. In August a new Chair of the YDAA Steering Group was appointed, Steven Burkeman, to take the YDAA forward.</p> <li data-bbox="461 823 2101 1335"> <p>• Healthwatch York was set up by the Government in April 2013 to help put people at the heart of health and social care services. It is designed to make sure that an individual’s voice can influence the design, delivery and review of local services. At Healthwatch York, we share people’s views and concerns about health and social care services to stakeholder organisations and providers, and provide information about local services, signposting people to the services they need both at community information stands and via email and phone. Every year we produce reports on health and care issues, which we present to York’s Health and Wellbeing Board. We make recommendations to the Board to improve the local health and care system. Reports have included: An update report on CAMHS Services 2019 (May 2019), What has happened since the closure of Archways? An update report (May 2019), Changes to Services: Understanding people’s experience of thresholds for elective surgery in York (May 2019), Changes to Services: The anticoagulation warfarin monitoring service in York (May 2019) Key</p>

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	<p>Messages from the NHS Long Term Plan Engagement Project in York (August 2019), Understanding People’s Experiences of the Sight Support Service (September 2019).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to Change (TTC) York a local campaign (part of the national Time to Change campaign) to end mental health stigma and discrimination, is growing from strength to strength. A new project co-ordinator was appointed in May 2019 (18 hours per week). York CVS has signed the TTC employer’s pledge. We are holding regular steering group meetings and Champions meetings and have set priority areas for TTC York; these are experiences of stigma and discrimination when interacting with GPs/health professionals and employers, in addition to the general community. People in York with lived experience of mental health, TTC Champions, are holding a number of conversations about mental health at various events, meetings, and during their everyday activities across the city by sharing their lived experiences. Awareness of the TTC York campaign is spreading as demonstrated by the increase in registered TTC York Champions to 36 (was 11) and the growing following on our social media. • Growing Green Spaces helps voluntary and community groups to play a vital role in sustaining York’s green spaces. A new project co-ordinator was appointed in July 2019 (14 hours a week). Phase 2 grant funding has been allocated across nine groups: Fishponds Wood, Hull Road Park, Holgate Community Garden, Millennium Fields, Pottery Lane, Redfearn, Rowntree Park, Yumi and Clarence Gardens. All applicants have built in a sustainability plan and future funding will depend on their capability to make their projects sustainable. An Advisory Group has been formed and will meet three times a year. • Safe Places Scheme The new co-ordinator started in post in September 2019 (18 hours per week) following successful funding from the North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. There are 19 venues registered so far across York with a further two due to come ‘live’ soon after they have completed awareness raising sessions. We are keen to develop the scheme further by widening the range of venues registered in York and by involving as many

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	organisations working with potential scheme users as possible to spread the word about the scheme; encouraging familiarity with Safe Place venues and making connections by visiting them.
Sustain our organisational strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the period we have recruited several new staff and this has enabled us to implement new ways of working and reinvigorate our social action projects. We undertook a recruitment process for a new chair and new trustees which resulted in electing/appointing four new trustees and chair at our AGM in November (our previous chair and some trustees had to stand down due to our rotation rules). • The Priory Street Conference Centre continues to cater for the meeting needs of a diverse range of customers from small local charities and community groups meeting in one of our small rooms, to larger organisations requiring our Main Hall for a full conference or AGM. We make efforts to attract private sector clients too and they are charged a premium to the VCSE sector so that we can keep their rates affordable.

Author: Alison Semmence, Chief Executive

Date: 13 January 2020

Abbreviations

AGM: Annual General Meeting CEO: Chief Executive Officer CVS: Centre for Voluntary Service DAA: Dementia Action Alliance ESAP: Enabling Social Action project GPs: General Practitioner HR: Human Resources	LACs: Local Areas Co-ordinators LGBT- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender TTC: Time to Change VCSE: Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise
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