



Open Report on behalf of Glen Garrod, Executive Director – Adult Care & Community Wellbeing

Report to:	Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date:	20 June 2023
Subject:	Voluntary Sector – Annual Position Report

Summary:

The report provides an update from Voluntary Centre Services and Lincolnshire Community Voluntary Services about the work that they complete to support the voluntary sector. It provides insight from across a number of initiatives and expands on the performance information previously considered by the committee.

Actions Required:

That members of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee review and comment on the information contained within the report and highlight any further actions for consideration.

1. Background

- 1.1 Voluntary Centre Services and Lincolnshire CVS are the County's two generic infrastructure organisations, providing a range of support to community and voluntary sector organisations including the co-ordination and development of volunteering through district based and nationally accredited Volunteer Centres.
- 1.2 The Volunteering Support Service provides a range of support to volunteers and volunteer involving organisations across Lincolnshire to ensure that volunteers and the VCSE sector can thrive.

2. Supporting Volunteering

- 2.1 During the year (2022-23), we supported **1,385** volunteers (down 12% since 2021-22) to access a broad range of volunteering opportunities in Lincolnshire, including:
 - 763 people accessing support from a Volunteer Advisor to access volunteering opportunities that align with their skills, interests and aspirations.

- 434 volunteers undertaking online training through our volunteer training portal.
- 34 people volunteering through Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV).
- 154 people undertaking micro volunteering activities.

2.2 The value of volunteering in Lincolnshire through Volunteer Centres is calculated to be £1,906,091. This is an increase of 22% compared to 2021-22 which is due to increased support provided to volunteer host organisations.

2.3 This calculation is based on a selection of financial metrics within the nationally recognised Social Value Engine (SVE) which creates value and a ratio that states how much social value in monetary terms is created for every £1 of funding. Metrics used within this calculation include the value of people volunteering regularly, the value of improved volunteer support structures and efficiencies, and the value of increased volunteering and community participation.

Volunteer demographics

2.4 A breakdown of the volunteering demographics demonstrates a relatively broad split of volunteers across Lincolnshire with peaks in Lincoln, West Lindsey and South Holland.

2.5 A very broad split of ages with a large proportion of volunteers between the ages of 19 and 25 can be seen.

2.6 People continue to volunteer for a wide range of reasons. This quarter there has been a slight increase in people volunteering to improve skills and knowledge and improve chances of paid work.

2.7 The employment status of volunteers is diverse with the largest proportion of volunteers being either unemployed or unable to work through ill health.

2.8 Additional data captured during the last quarter showed that almost 50% of volunteers classified themselves as having a disability.

Geographical Area	
Boston Borough	12%
East Lindsey	13%
Lincoln	19%
North Kesteven	13%
South Holland	15%
South Kesteven	11%
West Lindsey	17%

Employment Status	
Unemployed	41%
Unable to work through ill health	16%
Retired	13%
Employed full time	7%
In education	7%
Employed part time	5%
Looking after family/home	3%
Self-employed full time	3%
Other	3%
In training	2%

Age Range	
15-18	4%
19-25	18%
26-29	7%
30-34	7%
35-39	11%
40-44	8%
45-49	7%
50-54	8%
55-59	9%
60-64	11%
Over 65	10%

Reasons for Volunteering	
Give something back to the local community	20%
Build self confidence	18%
Improve my chances of paid employment	18%
Improve my skills and knowledge	17%
Meet new people	17%
Gain references	8%
Improve my language skills	2%

Volunteers - online training

- 2.9 The online training platform continues to be popular with 434 volunteers utilising the platform during the year.
- 2.10 The platform has over 85 courses available which are free to volunteers including courses that are required as a core part of their volunteering such as GCPR, Safeguarding, and Equality and Diversity as well as a range of topic based courses such as Autism Awareness, Food Hygiene, Dementia Awareness, Unconscious Bias and Substance Misuse.
- 2.11 There are a mix of accredited and non-accredited courses which are all certified through the CPD Certification Service.
- 2.12 The most popular courses undertaken by volunteers were:

Course name	Completed
Autism Awareness	17
Data Protection	14
Disability Awareness	11
Equality and Diversity	27
Fire Safety Awareness	13
First Aid	13
Food Safety and Hygiene Level 2	34
GDPR	26
Health and Safety in the Workplace	34
Information Governance	12
Safeguarding (Awareness)	26
Safeguarding Adults - Levels 1 and 2 v2	16
Workplace Wellbeing	14

Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) & Micro Volunteering

- 2.13 Support is provided to employers across Lincolnshire to develop their policies and practices to enable their staff to volunteer within their employment, known as Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV).
- 2.14 Enabling staff to volunteer forms part of an employer's corporate social responsibility (CSR) commitment and has significant benefits for staff including building confidence and developing new skills and experiences.
- 2.15 During the year, VCS/LCVS have supported employers including Anglian Water, Serco, Arriva Road Transport Services and the University of Lincoln to enable staff to volunteer at a range of local organisations and events.

ESV case study - A team of 5 members of staff from Secro successfully completed an ESV activity at Whisby Nature Reserve's Education Centre with the following feedback:

Our Serco Volunteers volunteered with the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, to clear one of the children's educational centre areas of overgrowth.

This work will allow schools all around Lincolnshire to use the pond dipping facility, helping children learn about local wildlife and the natural world.

While hard work it was a very welcome change from the office environment and was rewarding for all our volunteers.

The Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust Team, Sam and Vicky were fantastic hosts, and very appreciative of all our hard work.

Staff feedback:

"It was a privilege to work in such a beautiful landscape, on a glorious day, it was great to see the efforts of our work, and for a fantastic cause."

"I learned a lot from Sam and Vicky, who taught me about the local wildlife and different plant species, it was tranquil, a rewarding experience and I will be certainly doing it again next year."

"I can't thank you all enough for the opportunity."

- 2.16 VCS/LCVS also promoted a range of micro volunteering activities during the year which were undertaken by 154 volunteers. Examples include the Lincoln 10k Road Race, River Litter Pick at the Haven in Boston and various flower knitting activities as part of the Spalding Flower Parade.
- 2.17 Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) and Micro-volunteering are priority areas for us during 2023 as we explore new opportunities for recruiting volunteers. This

includes wider promotion of volunteering to support corporate social responsibility and exploring online systems to support digital ESV and micro volunteering such as Zellar.

Volunteering Pathways

2.18 VCS/LVCS are working collaboratively with partner agencies involved in the Lincolnshire Community Strategy to develop a range of volunteering pathways for people that want to utilise volunteering as a route to employment and other support as well as creating alternative routes into volunteering, including:

- University of Lincoln – We have a programme in place with the Medical School to engage medical students in local volunteering opportunities across the County alongside their studies.
- DWP – Creating pathways for DWP to refer people into the Volunteer Centre to develop new skills and experiences that help to increase employability.
- Health – Creating pathways for people to utilise volunteering as a route into employment within the health and care sector.
- Social Prescribing – Supporting people to undertake volunteering to increase confidence, self-esteem and improve health and wellbeing.

Volunteering trends & emerging needs

2.19 There has been a 30% increase in volunteers accessing face to face volunteer brokerage service and the online training platform as volunteering starts to return to settle following the Covid-19 pandemic. VCS/LCVS aim this year to develop a 'one stop shop' centralised online volunteering access point to advertise volunteering opportunities.

2.20 VCS/LCVS continue to see huge demand for volunteers with over 450 live opportunities advertised across Lincolnshire. Volunteer befrienders and community transport volunteers remain sought after, alongside the need for volunteers to support with warm spaces and night light cafes. Recruiting Trustees also remains a challenge for many local charities, and we are working with local organisations to identify ESV opportunities as well as developing a campaign to dispel some of the myths about being a Charity Trustee.

2.21 In addition to supporting local groups who are helping Ukrainian refugees, VCS/LCVS are delivering volunteering workshops for Ukrainian refugees on the 5th June and 12th June 2023.

2.22 VCS/LCVS continue to see an increase in referrals for volunteers with additional support needs such as language, disability and transport issues along with broader issues affecting volunteers such as the cost-of-living crisis. These referrals are often

hard to place so we are exploring different types of volunteering (e.g., micro volunteering and volunteering from home).

- 2.23 VCS/LCVS are in the early stages of developing a 'Step into Volunteering' course to provide the tools needed to become 'volunteer ready' (e.g., increasing confidence, self-esteem and developing communication skills).
- 2.24 A monthly themed volunteering bulletins has recently been introduced which highlights and raises awareness of volunteering opportunities as follows:
- January 2023 - Befriending theme
 - February 2023 - Community transport theme
 - March 2023 - Gardening theme
- 2.25 VCS/LCVS are keen to understand the ongoing needs of volunteer involving organisations across Lincolnshire and have therefore distributed an annual survey to explore this further. Initial planning has also commenced for a Lincolnshire Volunteering conference in 2024.
- 2.26 As part of the commitment to continuous improvement, VCS and LCVS are currently undertaking the renewal of the Volunteer Centre Quality Award (VCQA) through NAVCA. This process assesses how VCS/LCVS deliver against the five core functions of a volunteer centre as well as working collaboratively with local partners. Initial evidence has been submitted and final assessment visits are planned for June 2023.

Volunteer management training

- 2.27 This year, VCS/LCVS introduced a suite of volunteer management training workshops that cover the volunteer journey from preparing your group for volunteers, to recruiting and supporting your volunteers to saying goodbye. Groups can attend any of the five sessions depending on what stage they are in the volunteer management process.
- 2.28 Workshop sessions:
- Getting Your Organisation Prepared for Volunteers
 - Recruiting and Welcoming Volunteers
 - Making Volunteering Accessible to All
 - Supporting and Supervising Volunteers
 - Developing and Valuing Volunteers
- 2.29 20 workshops were delivered during the year which were attended by 174 people (58 organisations) who work with or support volunteers within their organisations. The next programme of workshops are scheduled for July 2023 and are already attracting interest.

2.30 Overall feedback has been positive and VCS/LCVS are in the process of developing a Volunteer Co-ordinators network across Lincolnshire as a result of feedback from workshop participants.

3. Support for community and voluntary sector groups and organisations

3.1 Support is provided to local groups and organisations with advice, information and resources to help in delivering their vital services during these challenging times and providing support to their volunteers. During the year, we supported **829** individual organisations (18% increase from 2021-22) across Lincolnshire with:

- Practical advice and resources
- Forums and regular networking opportunities
- Funding advice
- Funding readiness online training and support
- Support to develop new roles and recruit volunteers
- Advice and support with DBS checks
- Online training platform for their volunteers
- Volunteering management training
- Governance resources and advice

3.2 VCS/LCVS websites, social media presence and weekly newsletters remain key mechanisms for current awareness and information sharing. There has been an increase in social media posts and interactions, with over 2,000 subscribers to e-bulletins across Lincolnshire.

3.3 On average, almost three quarters of the organisations supported during the year accessed at least two different types of support from our organisation. An example of support provided to the Trinity Centre Louth during the year:

Trinity Centre Louth

- Support given to understand their DBS requirements and undertake DBS checks for both staff and volunteers.

- Volunteer recruitment - Support with writing new volunteering roles, advertising for volunteers which has resulted in 6 new volunteers being recruited through the Volunteer Centre who are now volunteering with the organisation.

- Volunteer induction – Attendance at volunteer management training workshops and additional support to develop a volunteer induction pack.

- Regular attendance at the East Lindsey Food Bank Network.

- Funding advice and support to identify and bid for new project funding. Currently awaiting decisions and feedback on funding applications.

Voluntary sector forums

- 3.4 VCS/LCVS facilitate Voluntary Sector Forums which are very popular with a mix of area-based forums and topic-based forums. During the year, they developed the range of forums to include:
- Generic area based voluntary sector forums - operating on a quarterly basis bringing together a range of local organisations to share information and knowledge about projects and services.
 - Lincolnshire Funding Advice Network - network of 35 funders and strategic partners working collectively to share information and address the funding challenges affecting Lincolnshire organisations.
 - East Lindsey Food Network – network of 30 partners across East Lindsey who provide food and related support to vulnerable residents.
 - Full Cost Recovery & Legacy Fundraising – an open forum for anyone interested in learning more about full cost recovery and legacy fundraising.
 - Green spaces forum – local forum in West Lindsey bringing together organisations working to increase and develop green spaces.
 - Cost of living forum – An open forum to find out more about how local authorities and voluntary sector partners are working together to address the cost of living issues at a local level.
- 3.5 VCS/LCVS continue to liaise with groups and organisations to understand their needs and priority topics for future forums.

Online Funding Portal

- 3.6 The new Lincolnshire funding portal launched in May 2022 (<https://lincolnshirevolunteering.org.uk/find-funding>). The portal has four main sections:
- **Funding Support** – This outlines the group and funding support CVs can offer community groups and charities.
 - **Latest Funding News** – gives details on any latest grants that have been released or grants that are nearing their deadline. This section feeds into the VCS/LCVS Newsletter.
 - **Funding Ready Workshops** – gives details of the Funding Ready Workshops delivered via VCS and LCVS.
 - **Find a Funder** – This is the main page groups will use. This outlines details of some Funding Portals that groups can access and the funding table.
- 3.7 The Find a Funder pages have increased in reach throughout the year and are now averaging almost 200 visits per month alongside the Funding News page which is averaging around 100 visits per month.

- 3.8 The Funding Table currently (March 2023) has details of 89 grants which are currently accepting applications and are searchable.
- 3.9 VCS/LCVS have seen a significant increase in subscribers to the Funding Newsletter during the year with 371 organisations currently subscribed. The funding newsletters are also opened on average by 31% of subscribers which is above the average open rate for all e-newsletters which is 21%. We continue to promote the newsletter via our training courses, forums, social media and 1-2-1 support with local organisations.

Funding ready training, funding advice & support

- 3.10 Funding advice and support continues to be most popular, and the Funding Ready training programme supported 95 organisations through workshops and one-to-one support during the year. Organisations have also been offered follow-up support to assist them in applying for grants, develop project plans etc.
- 3.11 During the year, supported local groups and organisations were supported to secure **£581,820** external funding to deliver a range of services across Lincolnshire. This is over three times the value secured during 2021-22. Examples of organisations supported include:

Name of group/organisation	Fund	Value
Disability Network CIC	TNLCF & Mutual Gain	10,926
The Centre for Reconciliation	TNLCF	158,824
Heckington in Bloom	Heckington Living	500
Long Sutton and District Civic Society	Co-op Community Quarter	1,055
Crowland Cares	Evan Grassroots	3,675
AbilityNet	TNLCF	10,000
Long Sutton Men's Shed	Charles Hayward Foundation	7,000
Recovery Coach Community CIC	Boston Borough Council	6,132
Old Wood Organic CIC	Lincoln Lottery Community Fund	2,500

- 3.12 VCS/LCVS are looking to review and refresh the content of Funding Ready for next year and are also developing the wider training programme to include Treasurer taster sessions and workshops and around different aspects of fundraising.
- 3.13 Work continues to provide the secretariat for the Lincolnshire Funding Advice Network (LFAN) which is a forum to highlight funding opportunities whilst sharing information about the funding challenges and issues affecting organisations in Lincolnshire. Funding Fairs have been scheduled for the 28th June 2023 in Spalding and 19th September 2023 in Spilsby.
- 3.14 A recent highlight has been supporting the Ukrainian Cultural Centre Lincolnshire with developing their policies and developing their application to the Ukrainian Integration Support Fund – the result of which will be known shortly.

Added Value

3.15 VCS/LCVS have been successful with securing additional funding and resources during the year to expand our core services and provide a range of additional projects and services to meet the needs of our local communities as follows:

Local Authority Match funding

Funding secured from local authorities to match fund the LCC core grant and expand the support we can offer locally to community groups and volunteers.

Social Prescribing Link Worker Service

We have Link Workers embedded within primary care and mental health teams which support vulnerable individuals to overcome barriers and challenges within their lives and access a range of support within their communities alongside their clinical needs.

The Greater Lincs MOVE Project

The MOVE project works in partnership with a range of local organisations to provide support to people furthest from the labour market to overcome barriers and challenges to progress towards volunteering, learning, training and employment.

Multiply Project

The Multiply project provides a range of numeracy courses and support where residents of Lincolnshire can build their confidence in using numeracy skills at work or in everyday life.

Together Project (Gainsborough)

The Together project brings together a range of local organisations and residents within the South West ward of Gainsborough to work collectively and develop ideas and address issues of concern for local residents.

YES Project (West Lindsey)

Partnership project with ACIS providing support to young people to progress into work, education and training alongside engagement with local employers to increase opportunities for young people across West Lindsey.

Lincoln Neighbourhoods Together Network (LNTN)

The LNTN provides a network of support to local neighbourhood boards and community forums across the City of Lincoln to work collectively, develop ideas and address issues of concern for local residents.

Gainsborough Local Access Programme (GLAP)

GLAP is a part of a national pilot which is working to support the development of stronger, more resilient, and sustainable social economies in disadvantaged places through increasing access to social investment and developmental support.

Boston Big Local (BBL)

Project to train and support Environment volunteers who are residents in the BBL area to be involved in their community by taking part in activities such as litter picking, river cleans, planting in community gardens, naturehood activities within green spaces.

Friendly Bench

Funding to support installation of The Friendly Bench in Boston provides a space where residents, in particular those isolated and the elderly, can chat to like-minded people and take part in free activities. We are involved with many groups we work with providing activities at the bench and bringing residents and communities together. The local school are also actively involved.

Boston Youth Ambassadors

The Youth Ambassadors programme in Boston works alongside with Boston College to support young people aged 16-25 in education, young professionals, young people to become involved in the planning and management of various events and activities across Boston, linking in with various organisations to support the Boston Borough area.

Young People into Leadership

A proof of concept/pilot project funded by Boston PCN to put young people at the heart decision making by supporting them through, mentoring, training, volunteering and development as aspiring young leaders on leadership boards. Recruited first young person in country to sit on the PCN partnership board.

4. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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