

## BOB ICB BOARD MEETING

<b>Title</b>	How the VCSE supports health and wellbeing alongside the NHS		
<b>Paper Date:</b>	01 July 2025	<b>Board Meeting Date:</b>	08 July 2025
<b>Purpose:</b>	Discussion	<b>Agenda Item:</b>	11
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### Executive Summary

The thriving and hard-working VCSE (Voluntary, Community, Social, Enterprise) sector generates £2.1bn of financial value in BOB, mobilises 1 in 8 of the adult population as volunteers and employs 45,000 BOB residents. Its 7500 registered VCSE organisations are often locally focused in our communities, integrate lived experience in their workforce and raise funds from a range of public and philanthropic sources. These services are an essential part of the system of support for population health and wellbeing alongside NHS medical healthcare.

The BOB VCSE Health Alliance and its members have grown partnership between the NHS and the VCSE at place and system levels. This short update paper takes stock of achievements under the 2023-25 Memo of Understanding between the BOB ICB and the VCSE Health Alliance – and outlines partnership priorities for the coming 12 months.

The Alliance proposes two items in 2025-26 Board forward plan:

- A Board workshop in the autumn with VCSE leadership about the future model of the ICB and how to deliver elements of the 10 Year Health Plan.
- A presentation by the Community Participatory Action Researchers' alumni network in the Patient Stories section at a Board meeting in public.

### Action Required

The board are asked to:

- Note the achievements of the BOB VCSE Health Alliance during the 2023–25 MoU period.
- Endorse the proposed partnership priorities for 2025–26, ensuring alignment with the 10 Year Health Plan and transition to the future Thames Valley ICB.
- Support the inclusion of the two proposed items in the Board's 2025–26 forward plan:
  - A Board workshop in autumn 2025 with VCSE leadership on the future model ICB and 10-year plan delivery.
  - A presentation from the Community Participatory Action Researchers' alumni network as part of a Board Patient Story item.

<b>Conflicts of Interest:</b>	No conflict identified
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<b>Date/Name of Committee/ Meeting, Where Last Reviewed:</b>	N/A
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## How the VCSE supports health and wellbeing alongside the NHS



### How the VCSE supports health and wellbeing alongside the NHS

2. The thriving and hard-working VCSE sector generates £2.1bn of financial value in BOB, mobilises 1 in 8 of the adult population as volunteers and employs 45,000 BOB residents. Its 7500 registered VCSE organisations are often locally focused in our communities, integrate lived experience in their workforce and raise funds from a range of public and philanthropic sources. A third of VCSE energy in BOB is directed to health and wellbeing of people with disabilities, mental illness and long-term conditions, additional to NHS services. These organisations support personal and social wellbeing, community cohesion and financial security more widely, so acting on the social determinants of health and promoting health equity.
3. These services are an essential part of the system of support for population health and wellbeing alongside NHS medical healthcare, especially in a context in which the NHS is facing rising demand with flat funding. VCSE organisations are a material partner in the delivery of the NHS 10-year plan and the three shifts from hospital to community, treatment to prevention and analogue to digital. They are already community-led and focused on prevention, reablement and recovery from illness and on digital inclusion. VCSE organisations have the trusted relationships, community assets and workforce to work alongside local NHS healthcare providers in neighbourhood health. The BOB VCSE Health Alliance convenes the diverse VCSE sector across the BOB places and system: it channels their insights and experiences into ICB governance at multiple levels. Place-based VCSE organisations have strong and enduring relationships with local authorities, which will be important as local government reorganisation and devolution progresses across the Thames Valley.

#### VCSE Organisations in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire West



### ICB-VCSE Partnership Achievements 2023-25

4. Over the last four years, the BOB VCSE Health Alliance has grown partnership between the NHS and the VCSE, enabling greater collaboration and supporting improvements in health and wellbeing for people living in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West. A memorandum of understanding was agreed between the BOB VCSE Health Alliance and the BOB Integrated Care Board for the period July 2023 to June 2025. The four co-created principles which we agreed would drive behaviours in our partnership were trust, purpose, community and inclusivity.

<sup>1</sup> Chapman, T. & Wistow, G. (2023). *The contribution of the VCSE to local health and wellbeing in BOB*: Web: <https://bobvcsehealthalliance.org.uk/our-research-2>

5. We have applied these principles through 2023-25 in seven selected partnership priorities, four of which are now green-rated and three amber-rated (see Partnership Achievements below). Progress has been made and there are now firmer foundations and stronger relationships for

VCSE-NHS partnership to deliver the new functions of the ICB in relation to the forthcoming 10-year health plan. The recurrent annual ICB grant has resourced the BOB VCSE Health Alliance to bring the VCSE and NHS together.

<b>Partnership Achievements 2023-25</b>
(1) The partnership principles and evidence about the scale and value of the VCSE have been shared with at least 750 NHS leaders across 10 system-wide events and a similar number of VCSE leaders.
(2) Engagement in BOB ICS Mental Health Governance has been deepened by nominating VCSE leaders to Provider Collaborative structures where they have promoted the value of lived experience, prevention and recovery.
(3a) and (5) Working with our Ageing Well action group, we have foregrounded the VCSE in neighbourhood health in the BOB primary care strategy and enabled VCSE leaders to be strategic partners in place-based meetings.
(3b) VCSE leaders are present on the Learning Disability & Autism programme board but have not been able to resource the often smaller local VCSE organisations in this space for their continuous engagement at system and place levels.
(4) VCSE organisations have co-designed and delivered health equity initiatives including Well Together, Move Together and Community Wellness Outreach. We have supported an alumni network of community researchers from BAME communities.
(6) VCSE leaders have served on the ICB Place & System Development and the ICS People Board, meaning that the VCSE visibility and workforce evidence and insight has been present at a strategic level.
(7) There has been good practice in allocating small grants for health creation and health equity to some VCSE organisations. The partners wanted to work together more systematically on how to enhance the transparency and accessibility of funding to the full range of sizes and types of VCSE organisations – this has not progressed to date because of not getting VCSE funding baseline data from NHS accounts.

### **ICB-VCSE Partnership Priorities 2025-26**

6. Given these complementary roles, the vision of the partnership is to see more of the NHS working with more of the VCSE as an equal partner in the interests of population health and wellbeing. The 2023-25 Partnership Principles continue to resonate so will be applied though this period to the formation of the Thames Valley ICB in 2026. The partnership priorities for the VCSE Alliance (July 2025 to June 2026) will be as follows:

#### **1. Neighbourhood Health**

The Alliance will facilitate the participation of VCSE partners in integrated neighbourhood teams across the places, emphasising the value and role of smaller grassroots organisations, which act on the wider determinants of health and seek health equity for CORE20Plus5 communities. In particular, it will identify opportunities to involve VCSE organisations in supporting delivery of the three shifts under the 10-year health plan.

#### **2. ICB Governance and Place Partnerships**

The Alliance will continue to work towards the equal partnership of VCSE leaders in the place partnerships, working with NHS Trusts and Local Authorities as local government re-organisation and devolution progress across the Thames Valley. It will contribute to the design of the future model ICB and evolve Alliance structures to work with those of the future Thames Valley ICB.

### **3. Evidence & Community Insights**

The Alliance will advocate, facilitate and mobilise community insights and intelligence to inform the design and delivery of health and care across the BOB ICB. It will continue to gather evidence of the evolving scale, value and impact of the VCSE sector.

### **4. Strategic Commissioning**

The Alliance will support the ICB's strategic commissioning functions in light of the model ICB blueprint and forthcoming 10-year health plan. The Alliance will support the VCSE sector to collaborate to be ready to operate under strategic commissioning, advising on market shaping and management as it applies to the VCSE sector. It will promote fair and appropriate funding practices for VCSE organisations of different sizes and missions. It will also explore the potential to leverage philanthropic funding in pursuit of health and wellbeing objectives.

### **Alliance structures**

7. The VCSE Health Assembly takes place twice a year online: the next one is in July 2025 and focuses on the ICB and VCSE place leadership. The Steering Group meets every two months and is composed of the CEOs of Local VCSE Infrastructure Organisations and the Co-Chairs of the Action Groups. The Steering Group interfaces with the Place & System Development Committee and the People Board as well as the Prevention & Health Inequalities Group.
8. The Mental Health action group meets every two months and interfaces with the BOB Mental Health Provider Collaborative; it also covers learning disability, autism and neurodiversity - and two members attend the LDA programme board. The Ageing Well action group meets every two months and is developing links with the primary care and UEC structures. The Alliance team core team is composed of a Director and a Comms Lead with an independent Chair, supported by Community Impact Bucks as host organisation.

### **Working with neighbouring systems**

9. The VCSE Alliance leads in the South-East Region meet regularly and are sighted on each other's plans and aware of where membership overlaps, notably Frimley membership with BOB, Surrey and Hampshire. As the plans to reduce the number of ICBs in the Region move from six to four, the VCSE Alliances will also work progressively together.

### **The Board members are asked to:**

- a. Note the achievements of the BOB VCSE Health Alliance during the 2023–25 MoU period.
- b. Endorse the proposed partnership priorities for 2025–26, ensuring alignment with the 10 Year Health Plan and transition to the future Thames Valley ICB.
- c. Support the inclusion of the two proposed items in the Board's 2025–26 forward plan:
  - i. A Board workshop in autumn 2025 with VCSE leadership on the future model ICB and 10-year plan delivery.
  - ii. A presentation from the Community Participatory Action Researchers' alumni network as part of a Board Patient Story item.