



Supporting Rotherham's Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector

SIG Impact Report 2012/2013







WELCOME

Rotherham has a diverse and active Voluntary, Community & Faith sector (VCF) that contributes enormously to the health & wellbeing of local people and to the area as a whole. The VCF in Rotherham consists of over 1200 independent and unique groups & organisations, the sector performs a wide range of tasks, including the delivery of services and supporting some of the most vulnerable, disadvantaged and excluded people in the Borough.

A small number of organisations exist to provide dedicated support and services to the VCF in Rotherham. Known as VCF Infrastructure organisations, a number of us have formed a partnership through the Rotherham Infrastructure Network (RIN). Our vision is:

We will support a thriving and effective third sector that has independent, innovative, flexible, responsive and sustainable voluntary, community and faith organisations who are achieving their full potential in meeting the needs and aspirations of all the diverse communities they serve.

We do this by: working collaboratively to ensure that high quality, sustainable and accessible infrastructure support is available to voluntary, community and faith organisations throughout Rotherham.

The RIN partnership is made up of 5 organisations: Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR), Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance (REMA), South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau (SYFAB), Together for Regeneration (TfR) and Rural Action Yorkshire (RAY). The RIN partnership was formed to ensure that the core 'basket' of services and support required by the Rotherham VCF are available and provided in an increasing 'joined up' way. This annual report, using case studies and some key facts, highlights the crucial role that VCF Infrastructure organisations preform.

The services and support we provide to the VCF in Rotherham are underpinned

by the LSP VCS Strategy and are based on need. Although there are many different services and support needs, they fall broadly into four themes:

Develop and increase volunteering (helping individuals and communities 'to help themselves').

Provide access to funding / financial / legal advice and small group development.

Strengthen the VCF to respond to new market opportunities and increased service delivery.

Ensure VCF continues to have a voice to influence decisions at a strategic level and the support to network and collaborate.

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GROUPS WORKED WITH

Below is a selection of the 500 groups that we have worked with over the last year:

- ABC Forum
- Action For Us
- Age UK Rotherham
- All Hallows Church Harthill
- Armed Forces Group
- Asian Older Men's Group
- BME Carers' Group
- Bramley & Wickersley
 Neighbourhood Watch
- Brampton Action Group
- Broom Allotment and Neighbourhood Community Association
- Bully Knuckle Down
- Change 4 All
- Community of African French Speakers
- Dearne Valley Bulldogs
- Friends of Laughton Common
- Friends of Nilese

- Get Sorted
- GROW
- Hellaby Community Project
- High Hopes
- High Street Centre
- Holy Trinity Thorpe Hesley
- Hope & Dignity Hearth
- Inspirability
- JADE
- Kimberworth Park 50+
- Kimberworth Park Community Centre
- Kip Magras
- Laser Credit Union
- Maltby Phoenix Sword
- Maltby Pit Project
- Nayi Zindagi
- Parent to Parent
- PTC Sports
- RAIN

- Rivers Team Deaf Church
- Roma Khamora
- Rotherham Arts Events
- Rotherham Community Transport
- Rotherham Foodbank
- Rotherham Older People's Forum
- Rotherham Parents Carers Forum
- Rotherham Rambling Club
- Rotherham United Sports
 Trust
- Rotherham University of the Third Age
- Rotherham Youth Dance Network
- SAFE@LAST
- Shiloh
- Silverdales Community Group

- Speak Up
- Spires Venues Ltd
- St Andrews Centre Brinsworth
- Swinton Lock Adventure Centre
- Tassibee
- The Children's Sleep Charity
- The HUB
- The Sewing Club @The Miners
- United Multi Cultural Centre
- Unity Centre
- Wah Hong
- Wath Festival
- Women's Refuge
- Yemeni Centre
- YMCA White Rose



Key Facts & Figures

- Provided services and support to over 500 groups and organisations
- Bespoke support to migrant and emerging communities: over 100 people from diverse countries –from Russia to Sudan and Slovakia to Yemen benefited from the "Into Work" Programme
- Raised almost £1.2 million for Rotherham groups
- Supported over 150 organisations to recruit and manage volunteers
- Over 2000 volunteer enquiries and 1342 individuals brokered into volunteering (Inc. 15% + BME)
- 51 VCF bespoke Information bulletins to 529 organisations
- £673,000 secured and given out as grants to groups in Rotherham
- Over 6000 visitors to the website, viewing on average 26,000 pages per month

- 644 Rotherham groups now registered on GISMO online
- Over 500 regular visits to Rotherham GISMO website per month
- 15 Strategic consultation sessions –attended by over
 100 different organisations
- 54 Training and Support Sessions including Funding Workshops
- 77 one to one funding advice sessions
- 110 groups supported with Disclosure & Barring Service
- 84% of VCF survey respondents had their needs met effectively
- 300 + Roma residents accessing advise surgery
- 337 Rotherham groups receive funding news
- Rotherham groups did 721 funding searches
- 256 downloads of funding resources by Rotherham groups
- 95 attended funding related events

GROUPS WORKED WITH

The number of groups and organisations that we have supported and worked with during the year exceeds 500. We have provided services and support to groups of all shapes and sizes, from small community groups, ran entirely by volunteers to organisations delivering a range of 'contracts', ranging from a few thousand pounds to six figure sums.

Groups accessing and receiving infrastructure support are spread across the Borough, both in rural and urban areas. The sector is engaged in many aspects of the Borough's life; 50% of local organisations are involved in leisure, recreation and sport, 33% in education, research and training, 29% in welfare and social care. while 27% are involved in health. Children and young people are the focus of 54% of voluntary and community groups in the Borough. Older people, people with disabilities and special needs, and those from minority ethnic

communities are also regular beneficiaries of VCF activities.

Most organisations report that they helped people to feel they belonged to their neighbourhood and felt they helped people from different backgrounds to get on together, a significant number encouraged people to take part in things happening locally. Most also report that they help to address the needs of disadvantaged communities, with many organisations focusing on vulnerable and excluded people. The impact of this work in reducing

costs to statutory service providers is impossible to calculate but clearly significant.

VCF organisations perform many different roles in

Rotherham; at the most basic level they 'fill gaps', providing many services that statutory organisations do not deliver. Some advocate on behalf of the most vulnerable and marginalised communities in the Borough, championing their cause, campaigning for change and for greater recognition of their needs. In certain situations they also act as advisers on service design.

Much of the work VCF organisations do is preventative and focuses on early intervention to tackle problems. The benefits of this work cannot be over-stated, both for the individuals and families affected, and for society as a whole. At the most basic level, services provided by small groups in local communities such as bingo sessions, coffee mornings and mother and toddler sessions provide opportunities for much



needed social interaction and help to build a sense of community. Although the impact of this type of activity is largely intangible and hard to measure, it is still vital to the health and wellbeing of local communities and neighbourhoods in Rotherham.

Other types of VCF organisations focus on particular groups of people who are excluded or vulnerable, working intensively with them to solve problems and support them. One example of this is the work done by some VCF organisations with disaffected young people, helping them to develop the skills they need to engage in mainstream society. This often leads to positive outcomes, not only for the young people involved, but also their families and the communities in which they live, reducing problems such as crime and antisocial behaviour and avoiding other costs that statutory organisations would have to bear.



Collectively their focus, scale and methods of operation mean that VCF organisations possess certain strengths that other sectors lack. These include:

- specialist knowledge of their service users and the areas they work in, arising from their proximity to local people and communities
- flexibility and freedom from institutional pressures, allowing them to be more responsive, innovative and user-centred in their approach
- a perceived independence from government which means they are trusted. This enables them to work with those the public sector finds hard to engage with and to reach vulnerable people who often perceive public sector institutions negatively.

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering underpins everything we do in the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCF). Without volunteers we would not be able to provide the help and services we give to individuals and communities in Rotherham and we know that our smaller voluntary and community based organisations are run completely by volunteers.

Over the last year all partners within the Rotherham Infrastructure
Network (RIN) have worked hard to strengthen and improve the volunteering offer and support in the Borough. This has included increasing and retaining the number of people volunteering and supporting those that do volunteer to feel valued, recognising the contribution they are making to



improve the lives of individuals and communities. We have been keen to increase volunteering from the diverse communities within the Borough and encourage more corporate volunteering, linking in to businesses and public sector bodies within the Borough. Alongside this we have also worked hard to support organisations who work with volunteers so that we can increase the range and type of volunteering opportunities available and spot new opportunities to increase civic engagement and social / individual responsibility through volunteering. The work on volunteering has aligned to the priorities of Rotherham Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Volunteering Strategy.



The Volunteer Bureau operated by VAR was once again successful in being nationally recognised and accredited to use the Volunteering England quality mark. This has enabled it to continue its work brokering 1200 individuals into volunteering opportunities, supporting over 150 organisations to manage volunteers, providing bespoke training and workshops

for organisations using volunteers and promoting volunteering through a range of media including social media and a regular feature in Rotherham Advertiser on the benefits of volunteering. Over the last year we have also worked with businesses and RMBC to increase the number of employees within their own organisation who volunteer as well as supporting good practice and developing potential new volunteering opportunities.

For example VAR was able to match law firm Irwin Mitchell with local charity Rush House as part of our Employer Supported Volunteering programme and as a ten-strong team of solicitors, trainee solicitors and legal executives from the firm's Sheffield office, transformed a day room for young people at Rush House.





REMA's work in this area has enabled a number of individuals from the BME community to get involved in volunteering activity which has ranged from supporting work within **REMA** itself including helping out with consultations, supporting the Diversity Festival, promoting volunteering in sport and helping Ayslum Seekers and Refugees present their experiences and life stories at a major conference.

In particular **REMA** has worked with the ROMA community to provide a Drop-In at the Unity Centre and engage people from the ROMA community as Health Champions. Sessions have included Fire Safety, Drugs Awareness, Oral Health, Children's Health, Mental Health and the role of Health Visitors. The ROMA health champions are now helping to promote positive messages about health within their community.

SERVICES SUPPORT

If we are to capitalise on the full potential of the estimated 1200 Voluntary, Community & Faith sector (VCF) operating in the Borough it is essential that we provide them with the support for them to continue and thrive. This includes supporting them in their management of resources (both money and people), ensuring they are clear and focused in what they want to do but with the flexibility and creativity to spot new opportunities, deliver different and appropriate activities led by the needs of their users and through this help them bring in additional funding to the Borough.

Essential to this is the need for everyone to have the skills, knowledge and confidence to manage and govern their organisation and have access to timely, high quality and relevant information.

All partners within the Rotherham
Infrastructure Network (RIN) deliver
on this, coming together to provide
joint packages of support and
providing specialist help where
needed e.g. for rural communities,
BME groups etc. SYFAB's Funding
News and new website enables
groups to search for a range of

funding sources. This work is backed up by individual support offered by all partners to groups, many of whom are small in size, sometimes newly formed and who frequently rely entirely on fundraising and donations. By working with the groups and liaising with funders we are able to maximise success and draw down significant additional resources which not only help the groups and communities/ individuals they serve, but the Borough as a whole.

A few examples of this work can be seen in the work of SYFAB with

Premier Learning, a group who teach English as a second language to individuals in the East of Rotherham. By working with SYFAB on funding searches, advice on bid writing and attendance at training sessions this relatively new group have now secured over £30,000 in funding. SYFAB's work with the High Street Centre at Rawmarsh has helped the group raise over £1,450,760 from over 160 approved funding bids. SYFAB Customer feedback shows 93% found that the funding advice was useful in developing a project, 80% learned specific things from the funding advice which helped them write a funding bid and 84% felt more confident applying to funders following their advice.



Yorkshire Venues

Run by the community for everyone to enjoy

TfR work has helped over 31 groups with a range of support including tailored packages of organisational support to small groups and RAY have run rural community building sessions to enable rural communities to promote their buildings and village halls and increase their use.

REMA's work with the Friends of Nilese group has brought together a group of enthusiastic individuals who have now formed a group and successfully drawn down £10,000 to start delivering services to help the African diaspora with social and welfare issues.

RIN partners have developed an accredited process that evaluates the services they offer ensuring they are of high quality and meeting the needs of organisations. In addition to levering in significant additional funding we have also enabled the start-up of new areas of activity, provided joined up and specialist back office services for the sector, improved the efficiency and effectiveness of groups, helping them to be more robustly governed and able to manage risk.



One of the key examples of our work to support the sector has been in the provision of a regular flow of information. The VAR bulletin continues to go out weekly to over 500 organisations and provides information on national and local news and events, funding and training opportunities, jobs and volunteer vacancies and feedback from the major decision making meetings in the Borough.

Over the year we have continued to develop Rotherham GISMO as a joint information and referral point for VCF, Partners and the public. Over 644 groups are now registered on GISMO, this is over a 75% increase since its launch in 2011 and through this shared online directory information is now easily available on what groups exist, what support is available in specific areas, how groups can work together, fundraising opportunities including how to increase giving and donations and get involved in volunteering.

SERVICE DELIVERY

The current external environment and challenges that are facing the Borough through increasing demand especially amongst the older population and within the deprived communities, the reducing public sector funding and the impact of welfare reforms mean that more than ever the Voluntary, Community & Faith sector (VCF) needs to respond with flexible, effective and innovative forms of service delivery.

For this to happen the Rotherham Infrastructure Network (RIN) partners have been working with the VCF and a range of different partners to influence the development and commissioning of services and supporting partnerships and collaboration within the sector.

We have worked with the key VCF consortia in Rotherham – Children, Young People and Families Consortia, Adult Health and Social Care Consortia, Advice and



Financial Inclusion Partnership and Rotherham Ethnic Minority Consortia Network to support a range of partnership and collaborative initiatives.

This has included support from TfR and VAR to the Rotherham Older Peoples Forum and initiatives such as the Rotherham Less Lonely Campaign.

REMA has worked specifically to develop an Older Asian Men's Group. VAR and RAY have worked on events to help groups develop their evidence and impact frameworks and perhaps the most significant development has been the Social Prescribing Service that VAR manages and which provides VCF support to individuals with long term conditions who are most at risk



of an unplanned emergency admission to hospital. REMA has worked very successfully with Home Instead, a private adult care provider, and through this work has increased the knowledge amongst the BME community of adult care services and specifically enabled 8 people from the BME communities to be offered employment as carers within the company. VAR and REMA have also worked with VCF groups to link in with the Connect to Support initiative and REMA has

undertaken some focused work on take up of social care services by BME families.

Both VAR and REMA have targeted work in the deprived communities and as the impact of welfare reform starts to hit within individuals, families and whole communities within the Borough, we have continued our work as part of the overall approach to welfare reform in Rotherham. Over the year we have implemented the Financial Inclusion Strategy and provided financial capability training.

RAY have worked with AGE UK Rotherham on Stay Warm, Stay Safe events to highlight the issue of fuel poverty especially amongst vulnerable older people.

As a result and despite the challenges that the external environment poses to everyone, the VCF in Rotherham has been able to build up its resilience and respond to the challenges and emerging trends facing specific communities and the Borough as a whole.



We have undertaken significant work to support the growing demands on the Food in Crisis partnership and enabled them, through increased resources (money and food), to provide services to individuals and families who are struggling.

In particular we have focused activity and support to frontline groups and their users over the winter and Christmas period.

VOICE, ENGAGEMENT & F

Being able to network and collaborate together, to work in partnership and have a co-ordinated voice, to engage and represent the diverse and vibrant Voluntary, Community & Faith sector (VCF) is a fundamental aim and value of all the Rotherham Infrastructure Network (RIN) partners.

It is as essential now, as it has always been, for us to support the involvement of frontline VCF organisations in the shaping and delivery of services, to make sure that service user voices are heard – especially those that are most marginalised and to provide strategic leadership and representation on behalf of the VCF. We can only do that by having strong links to our members and organisations and maintaining good relationships with our partners and

we have continued throughout the year to maintain work on the Compact between all LSP partners. Membership of our organisations has increased significantly – VAR's membership is now over 600 – over 2/3 of the sector locally are now members of the RIN partners.

Last year saw VCF representatives recruited and supported and active on all the main strategic boards and decision making bodies in the Borough including the Local Strategic Partnership Board. Representatives undergo a rigorous selection process managed by VAR. They are informed of issues raised by their wider consortia and in turn feed back to their consortia on joint areas of work. VAR brings together the Chairs of the Consortia



and representatives monthly and they are able to share expertise, knowledge and support ways the sector can work more effectively in the future. In addition we have run a number of information and advice sessions enabling VCF groups to find out about new developments and influence commissioning and service developments. These include consultations on the Health & Well Being Strategy, Carers Charter and Action Plan and Census information.

REPRESENTATION

To make sure the VCF is fully engaged and informed all partners have improved their websites and both RFMA and SYFAB have launched new websites, we have increased our use of social media with VAR, SYFAB and REMA increasing their use of Facebook and Twitter to engage with people that have not traditionally received our communications and newsletters. REMA/ RECN have produced a very successful youth edition of their newsletter and all partners have once more taken part in a combined Annual Survey to assess satisfaction and effectiveness of their services and the current state of the sector and sector needs. The results of this survey are used to identify any gaps in services and enable all partners to collaborate with joined up solutions to help support sector and partner organisation's needs.



Last year also saw the RIN partners support individuals and the sector to respond to and be engaged in specific initiatives. REMA has undertaken significant work in regard to growing community tensions within the ROMA community and has specifically worked with the local community, groups and partners to minimise the damage caused by the EDL and National Front marches in the Borough and has promoted Community Cohesion celebrating events such as Black History month and the Diversity Festival at Rotherham Show.

TRANSFORMING HOW WE

Supported by the Cabinet Office for Civil Society, working through the BIG Lottery, the Rotherham Voluntary, Community & Faith sector (VCF) Infrastructure organisations embarked on an innovative, collaborative project to ensure we worked even better and harder in partnership to deliver 'more streamlined' services. The Transforming Rotherham Infrastructure Services (TRIS) Project aims to rationalise support and improve access to infrastructure services.

As TRIS partners we want to make our offer of VCF and infrastructure services clearer, easier to access and more streamlined - partly through the new 'GISMO' on line platform. As well as being a directory of local groups GISMO also allows those wanting information and availability of VCF infrastructure support services to find these in a single place. With all services published having gone through a robust quality and validity check process the website will also include a straight forward diagnostic tool.



TRIS is also about supporting the VCF in a further 3 key areas:

Transforming and targeting volunteering

The TRIS project has been working with frontline VCF groups and organisations (small and large) across the Borough to increase volunteering opportunities, particularly targeting young and old people.

Hundreds of new volunteers have been recruited by VCF projects.

We worked alongside the local authority to map existing provision, develop policies and procedures, promote opportunities and identify 160 new volunteer opportunities within the authority. Our aim is to



continue to progress this work beyond the end of the TRIS project, with RMBC to be supported by the Rotherham Volunteer Centre.

Evidence, Impact, Quality and Risk Analysis

The TRIS project has developed 'Know Your Impact' workshops for VCF organisations. Working with CRESR we have been able to offer support to VCF organisations to understand and implement appropriate impact tools.

WORK

This has included groups implementing the Community Matters – Know your Value framework – enabling them to better assess and evidence the impact of their work.

Creating new sustainable partnerships

We are supporting new partnerships between different sectors so there is mutual benefit and better service delivery. In February 2013 a Business Network event at Rotherham Football Club enabled Rotherham businesses and the VCF to 'have the space' to foster partnerships. A total of 130 participants from 42 VCF organisations and 60 private businesses attended the event.

The TRIS project is also supporting new partnerships for example between My Place and Hundredth Monkey a partnership understanding has been reached for these two organisations to provide social media training workshops.

FUTURE WORK



We have used this report to provide a brief snapshot of the impact of our work over the last year in supporting the Voluntary, Community and Faith (VCF) sector in the Borough. Changes in the external environment are bringing significant challenges and opportunities to all VCF organisations and our public partner agencies. As VCF infrastructure organisations, our promise is to work together to provide high quality, coordinated services and support which is responsive to the needs of the VCF, partners and Rotherham as a whole.

Our future work will concentrate on achieving the following outcomes:

- Increasing individual and community engagement, resilience and self help
- Increasing high quality VCF service delivery, innovation and effectiveness
- Targeted support to some of our more deprived communities and responding to the Welfare Reform agenda
- Increasing the resources to the Borough and maximising value for money

KEY EVENTS

April - June 2012

- Start of Social Prescribing Project
- Initial BIG Local meetings at Thurcroft
- Volunteer Week events including Volunteer
 Centre open day and town centre celebrations
- RIN Annual Survey findings
- Audience With sessions CEO of RMBC and District Superintendent, South Yorkshire Police
- British Council trip to Armenia
- Customer First re-accreditation
- One Town One Community Follow up seminar
- Early Help Strategy Launch and Child Health Summit
- Community Trade Union session with Voluntary,
 Community and Faith Sector (VCF)
- Session with Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to look at links with the VCF
- Volunteer Centre at Rother Valley College Open Day
- Sport Makers event to increase participation and promote volunteering in Sport
- BME Families experiences of Direct Payments Event
- RECN BME Involvement in LSP Structures
- Meet the Funder Session Children in Need and Santander
- Big Lottery Fund Training Day

July - September 2012

- Olympic Torch relay through Rotherham
- High Sheriff Summer reception
- VCF consultation sessions on Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Recruitment of VCF reps to Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)
- LSP summit
- Audience With session on LSP and welfare reform changes
- Audience With session with Rotherham MP's
- VCF tent at Rotherham Show
- Volunteer Centre re-accreditation
- First publication in Rotherham Advertiser of articles on volunteering
- RECN BME Awareness Role of Police and Crime Commissioners
- Ice and Fire –Stories of Asylum Seekers
- Diversity Festival
- ROMA Health Information Open Day
- Mosque Teacher Training Event



October - December 2012

- Community Achievement Awards
- Follow-up celebration event for Community Achievement Award nominees
- Visits with High Sheriff to VCF groups in Rotherham
- Action Learning Sets with Children and Young People Consortium on Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Question Time session at Oakwood School
- Meeting with MP's on Work Programme
- Meetings with Sheffield and Hallam University on the needs of the sector
- VAR reaches its 600th member
- Adult Services Consortium (ASC) involvement in Making it Real and Strategic Provider Forum events
- Consultation on Carers Charter Action Plan
- 26 GP practices involved in Case Management Pilot
- First round of grant funding to VCF organisations involved in Case Management Pilot
- Food in Crisis Christmas Appeal and Launch of Festive Food Vouchers
- Information sessions on Buying Health Services and Support, Auto Enrolment Pension Schemes
- VCF consultation on Clinical Commissioning Group Annual Commissioning Plan
- Launch Of Kashmiri/Yemeni Older Men's Group
- RECN Understanding Far Right Extremism
- Walk-in Centre Pre consultation
- New REMA website launch

January – March 2013

- Launch of VAR's monthly members bulletin
- Volunteer Centre working with RMBC on volunteering offer
- Launch of Disclosure and Barring Service
- Children, Young People and Families Consortia
 Safeguarding event
- Information session on Making the most of your website
- Carers Charter Action Plan consultation
- Information session on Census 2011 Summary
- 600 groups now registered on GISMO
- Recruitment of 5 VCF reps for Safer Communities
 Network
- VCF and Business event attended by over 80 VCF and business organisations
- Judging and attendance at High Sheriff Awards
- Judging and attendance at Athena Awards
- VCF Reading at High Sheriff Service
- Start of development of new GISMO website
- 6th Birthday of Volunteer Centre
- ASC working with RMBC on Shaping our Future Event
- New funding round for VCF organisations in Case Management pilot
- Joint workshops with TRIS and Community Matters on evidencing impact
- Transitional support agreed for VCF advice providers pending Big Lottery decision
- Visit to Foodbanks with Leader of Council
- VCF attendance at Health and Wellbeing conference
- Rotherham Disability Network Launch
- A revamped SYFAB website launched









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