

REPORT TO: Health & Wellbeing Board

DATE: 9th July 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Sally Yeoman, Halton & St Helens VCA

PORTFOLIO: Health and Wellbeing

SUBJECT: Halton's VCFSE sector and it's role in wider determinants

WARD(S) Boroughwide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To provide some context about the work of the Halton & St Helens VCA and the local VCFSE sector in health equity, addressing inequalities and the wider determinants that negatively impact people's health outcomes.

2.0 **RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 For a relatively small Borough, Halton has a strong and sizeable local sector. There are estimated to be around 724 groups and organisations providing support, services and community action in the Borough. Around 470 of these are small, micro under the radar groups.

3.2 The VCFSE sector in Halton makes a huge contribution to the economic and social wellbeing of the place. There are 1,861 paid staff in the sector, 17,671 volunteers, volunteering at least once a month, delivering 23,574 hours for local voluntary and social action. The workforce is worth £57.8 million to the Borough and the sector itself creates £44.8 million GVA.

3.3 **Summary profile of the VCFSE sector in Halton**

The majority of groups are registered charities (44%). 67% of groups in Halton are over 10 years old, with only 7% of groups reporting that their organisation was formed in the last 12 months. Groups are more likely to be working at a local authority (33%) or local neighbourhood (27%), level. The majority of surveyed groups in Halton are micro (15%) and small (46%) organisations. 33% of

groups main activities fall under wellbeing, health and social care as the most common area of work. 45% of groups report supporting “everyone” followed by 10% targeting children and young people.

The most common source of funding for organisations is from fundraising and donations (21%), and local authority grants (14% each). There are approximately 48 full-time and 33 part-time staff employed by surveyed organisations. 100% of organisations in Halton with paid staff pay the Real Living Wage or above. 80% of organisations utilise volunteers, with a reported total of approximately 215 volunteers and an average of 20 volunteers per organisation. These volunteers provide approximately 783 hours of volunteering per week. The most popular priority for Halton groups over the next 12 months is sourcing funding opportunities (19%) followed by recruiting and retaining volunteers, organisational planning and strategy, maintaining sufficient financial reserves, and influencing key decision and policy makers (9.6% each). 67% of groups reported feeling confident in being able to achieve these goals, with 25% unsure

- 3.4 A significant role for the sector is in wellbeing and much of its work is reported in this space and if we are to really get underneath the challenges for local people and communities, we need a VCFSE sector that is well supported, resourced and sustainable. The demand is increasing on the local sector as is the complexity of issues and concerns local people have. This is happening at a time when it is harder for groups to find funding for their work.
- 3.5 At VCA we have a number of ways of gathering information and data from groups, the State of the Sector report is one, alongside this we use our Forum and specific surveys to check in on the issues and challenges groups are facing.
- 3.6 One of the key issues that groups have raised is the potential impact of the welfare benefit reforms on levels of income and therefore people’s lives.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**
None Identified

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**
None Identified

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES**

- 6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence
The VCSFE plays a key role across Halton's health and wellbeing sector
- 6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy
VCSFE organisations support local residents around employment
- 6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families
VCSFE organisations are involved in supporting young people and families in Halton
- 6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need
Halton's VCSFE sector works to support the reduction of inequalities throughout the borough
- 6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future
Climate change and the environment are considered as part of the work the VCSFE carries out in Halton
- 6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community
The VCSFE sector plays an important role in supporting communities throughout Halton
- 6.7 Resilient and Reliable Organisation
The VCSFE sector works in partnership with Halton Borough Council organisation in many sectors
- 7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**
None identified
- 8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**
None identified
- 9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**
None Identified
- 10.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Core20 Plus5 Report Available from Halton & St Helens VCA
State of the Sector Summary Report Halton. Available from Halton & St Helens VCA