

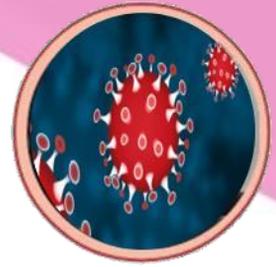


Medway Voluntary Action 2019 AGM Pledge Update Report

**Jane Howard
November 2020**

The Sector suggested we...

Work within, and monitor the health arena and feedback



MVA's Response...

This year has been a tumultuous year, particularly with regard to the Covid-19 crisis. It has though, given us the opportunity to work very closely with the statutory sector, both Public Health at Medway Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group.

We have fed back these developments in all our communication channels but particularly in the fortnightly Friday Covid Response Zoom meeting with the sector – these meetings have also included speakers from the statutory sector to ensure the VCS is kept up to date with all developments, both Covid related and strategic in terms of the priorities of each organisation.

In addition, we have invited strategic leads from the ICP to talk at VCS Leaders Network Steering Group meetings and network events. We have also facilitated the sector to access briefings on the ICS/ICP models.

*"..for me MVA's VCS meetings are an essential forum and a real strength of working in Medway"
- Regular VCS response meeting attendee*

The Sector suggested we...

Create more networking opportunities

MVA's Response...

Networking both as a result of Covid and through the VCS Leaders Group, has been a high priority for us this year. As a result the sector has told us they feel more connected and value highly the collaborative working opportunities that now exist between organisations.

We have also promoted national online events that enabled the sector to network with peers with shared interests.

Within one week of the PM's announcement to the nation that we must 'stay at home', we had arranged a Friday zoom session (continuing still today) for the sector to connect and share the concerns/opportunities they were facing as a result of the crisis.

Our Funding and Marketing Club provided valuable peer-support and networking opportunities for those within the sector responsible for income generation. In response to the impact of the Covid crisis,

MVA's trustees are offering
Free membership for
the next 6 months.

*"Just a quick thank you
for this morning's meeting.
I have certainly found them useful in
several ways – funding, good practice ideas
and linking with partners. After each one, I
have come away with something to follow up
or someone to link with"*

*- Anon – Talking about the fortnightly response
meetings*



**The Sector
suggested we ...**



**Investigate more funding
opportunities**

MVA's Response...

We continued to promote funding opportunities via MVA's website and monthly newsletter. We also provided daily updates on funding opportunities that arose as a result of Covid-19.

We ensured that these opportunities were circulated to the sector and provided additional support through specialist training in funding

applications and 1:1 support with an expert from MVA.

"...National Lottery Training workshop was very useful because we got to meet the funder face to face, ask questions and establish a relationship which is vital when one is applying for funding"!

- Anon – Talking about the National Lottery Funding Session MVA facilitated

The Sector suggested we...

Help with building communities



MVA's response...

Through our Befriending Hub, we have been active in supporting groups and organisations who support lonely and isolated residents, to share expertise and generate income to build their local communities.

The delivery of VCS Focus Groups and Community Health Researchers (CHR), through the Involving Medway programme, has enabled often less heard communities to have a 'voice' in local health developments.

Our CHR programme has also empowered volunteers from BAME communities to undertake research and proactively influence

the design of local support to help reduce Covid-19 cases in their communities.

"I found your kindness and suggestions were what I needed to pick myself up!"

- Anon – Talking about our funding 1:1's

The Sector suggested we...



Represent those not able to communicate for themselves

MVA's Response...

Through our input to the Involving Medway project, we have worked extensively to gather the views of 'less heard' communities. Some of these communities are those whose first language is not English and others who live with learning disabilities. We have as a result developed closer links with organisations working in this field – we intend to widen this aspect of our work further in the coming year.

In the wake of Covid-19, we have also secured funding specifically to support those who may not be 'heard' as a result of digital inclusion, including members of refugee and BAME communities.

"I feel very proud to have received the opportunity to volunteer for the BAME Covid campaign project. I am discovering more and more the importance and significance for the project. The training was very useful and whilst undertaking the interviews, I made new connections and learnt new facts about peoples"

- Anon – Talking about our Community Health Research programme

The Sector suggested we...



Investigate digital inclusion and brokering

MVA's Response...

Working with the CCG, we have developed a project that enables access to the digital world.

This project targets those who need either support with digital connection, equipment, or the knowledge of how to use it.

We are also part of a major pilot with MCH on digital technologies to support hospital discharge. Working with partners, this will also become a major part of MVA's developments going forward.

"I took the tablet home and I created a picture storyboard of simple step-by-step instructions for her to follow and use it independently. When I got back home I encouraged her to join a meeting while I was cooking... she thought it was great! I wish you could have seen her face. Pure joy!"
- Digital Buddy – Talking about Bridging the Divide programme

The Sector suggested we...

**Provide more opportunities
funding networking and the
development of skills**



MVA's Response...

Funders have been pro-active since the commencement of Covid-19 to support those most impacted.

We have been instrumental in connecting funders with applicants through our network of VCS organisations and have offered training to develop skills to access funding.

A number of organisations have been successful with obtaining funding this year.

"I only have lots of good feedback and positive results, our Organisation has a successful funding claim through the meetings"
- Participant – Talking about F&M Club meetings

The Sector suggested we...

Broker spaces

MVA's Response...

As part of our Covid-19 Transformation Proposal, we are approaching funders inviting them to support the delivery of a 'VCS Alliance'.

The VCS Alliance will provide a space for organisations and groups to come together and identify potential efficiencies (for example; shared meeting space, preferred suppliers).

This could then be accessed by the whole sector – needed more than ever in the wake of the financial impact Covid has had on the VCS.

"...the meetings have helped local authorities to understand better the issues our members are having in these difficult times"

- Anon – VCS fortnightly response meeting attendee



The Sector suggested we...



Provide spaces for Volunteers

MVA's Response...

Through the Medway Volunteer Network we continue to connect local residents who are interested in volunteering to VCS organisations who need help. We have continued to support VCS partners to upload their opportunities onto our website and to develop their volunteering recruitment and support skills.

As a result of Covid-19 and the need for many volunteers to be supported remotely, we are currently in the process of uploading new remote volunteer resources and guidance to our website.

"I have very much enjoyed the CHR programme. I found the training very interesting and it has all been extremely interesting and enjoyable."

- Anon – Volunteer talking about MVA's Volunteer Health Research

The Sector suggested we...

Provide more guidance for Volunteers



MVA's Response...

Prior to Covid-19 we were attending local events to proactively promote volunteering and helping residents to engage with volunteer opportunities. Unfortunately, Covid-19 has put a temporary stop to these activities.

We have however supported residents who wanted to help during the crisis - registering over 200 people who wanted to help, connecting them with local VCS opportunities and thanking and updating them on a regular basis. We also offered all volunteers' registered with us access to our free online safeguarding training whilst they were on 'lockdown'.

Finally, despite lockdown, we found a way to celebrate Volunteers Week this year – with online coffee and creative sessions, along with a Media Release with some fantastic Volunteer stories using the hashtag #MedwayHero

"Volunteering has been a tremendous help for me to gain confidence and improve my communication. It's something to get up for in the mornings of staring at 4 walls."

*- Volunteer – Talking about
Volunteering with MVA*

**The Sector
suggested we...**

**Link communities to
support networks**



MVA's Response...

Since March this year with the commencement of 'Lockdown', MVA has risen to the challenges presented by communities in need by matching them with organisations who can help. We have used our networks to do this as well as working closely with Medway Council and our health partners.

Through our VCS network, we have also linked VCS organisations so that resources can be shared, information exchanged, and peer support offered to maximise the assistance communities received during the Covid immediate crisis, in addition to working nationally to access other resources outside of Medway.

***"... a great group representing the fantastic work
that our sector provides for our communities"!***

- Anon – Talking about our overall support

Summary



With all of these developments, there has been a focus on the groups itemised in this document. Our ambition remains to give greater focus on homeless people and refugees and this will be a priority for us for the coming year. In addition, during the last few months we have recruited more than 250 volunteers, many of these have been from the groups itemised .

We would like to thank the VCS organisations in Medway who have worked tirelessly to provide for the communities and individuals impacted by Covid-19.

Unfortunately, many of these organisations have struggled during this time and that struggle may not be over yet.

We will continue to help those organisations as best we can and have extended our support offer particularly for those in need of financial help.

As the year progresses, we have pledged that we will report back on these actions provide a full update at our AGM next year. Connect Well & Simply Connect were also formally launched at the AGM by the Mayor.

“I just wanted to offer my appreciation of the amazing job that you and your team are doing at a tough time. This is seriously impressive”.

- Anon – Talking about MVA’s services



Medway Voluntary Action

Supports • Enables • Empowers

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