

OUTCOME REPORT

Medway Voluntary Action

October 2020



Thank you from all at Medway Voluntary Action

“ Welcome to our 2020 Outcome Report highlighting our work across Medway to deliver change for the local communities with whom we work throughout the year.

Having celebrated 30 years of service in 2019, Medway Voluntary Action continues to work towards a Medway where communities are active, empowered and connected. We support local not-for-profit organisations, groups and community members to develop skills, build resources and amplify their voice.

We are delighted to share with you the difference MVA has made in Medway over the past year and, on behalf of the entire MVA team, we would like to thank all of our VCS partners and all those we serve. ”



Peter Stokes
Chair of MVA Board of Trustees



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Registered Charity No: 1042475

With special thanks to our funders and VCS partners over the past year:



“I can’t thank you enough for arranging this, and so quickly too...Please pass on my thanks to all concerned. You are wonderful.”

(Elderly resident supported by volunteer from the Muslim Association)

“..for me MVA’s VCS meetings are an essential forum and a real strength of working in Medway.”

(Antonia, regular meeting attendee)

We provided digital networking and peer-support opportunities for the sector - enabling us to all come together and address some of the most urgent issues we faced - over **107** different organisations engaged with the sessions.

Launched new Covid-19 volunteering & charity web support pages that received **4390** visitors in one month. Sharing rapidly changing national updates and news, MVA published **326** social posts and **114** new web resources in the first month.

Gave the VCS a stronger ‘Voice’ by reaching out to them to find out how they are coping in the wake of COVID-19. In **one month** we:

Received **200+** responses from a range of size and type of organisation.

£50k secured from Medway Council to specifically help VCS organisations see their way through the crisis.

Made **1,100+** email contacts and held **340+** telephone conversations.

We developed a ‘one stop shop’ for residents to volunteer during the COVID-19 crisis. **230** residents signed up and we connected them with **21** local charities.

Our Covid-19 Crisis Response

On 16th March 2020, the Prime Minister advised everyone in the UK against ‘non-essential’ travel and contact with others, as well as to work from home if possible and avoid visiting social venues.

By the 20th March, the MVA team had developed and communicated a range of response activities to support the VCS in the immediate wake of the crisis; helping to alleviate the most pressing needs of the sector and enabling a more co-ordinated response with statutory partners to help the most vulnerable in Medway.

Our Covid-19 Crisis Response

MVA's support is always focused on supporting the VCS and the residents that they serve.

So we couldn't talk about our response without also highlighting the amazing work of Medway's VCS in the wake of the crisis in helping our most vulnerable local residents.

300+
Collections & Deliveries of Prescriptions & Shopping.



150 Hot meals delivered nightly to frontline NHS staff.



Befriending Volunteers made **1000+** Phone calls on average each week to people experiencing mental wellbeing issues or loneliness. That's **120,000** minutes of chatting on the phone.

230+
Volunteers registered with us to help out during the Pandemic.

20,000+ Meals & Food Delivered to the isolated & homeless.

72% of Medway Charities were financially impacted and rallied together to support each other in their recovery.

Within weeks **69%** of Charities redirected their services in response to the crisis.



4390 Visited MVA's Covid & Volunteering Web Support pages in 1 month.

"Thank you we have been awarded ...to support our Service Users to access physical activities. This is a fund I was first made aware of via MVA meetings, so thanks so much for the very helpful information."

(Katherine, emailing about MVA support)

"...I have really enjoyed the sessions and found them really useful. We have been successful getting a COVID grant from the Lottery. Very chuffed right now! Thanks again for all your help to get this."

(Angela, member of MVA Funding & Marketing Club)

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

(Participant in VCS Covid response zoom sessions)

"... a great group representing the fantastic work that our sector provides for our community."

(Martyn, participant in VCS Covid response zoom sessions)

VCS organisations supported to generate over **£739,357** in additional income.

235 MVA and **277 VCS** Leaders Network Members.

96% Learners rated our training as Very Good/Excellent.

3262 e-newsletter subscribers, **147** digital news items and bulletins published, and **565** social posts created.

49 training courses delivered, supporting **220** new learners.

We hosted **34** Events with **1079** participants.

PASSION LED US HERE

We have supported **141** Organisations on a **1:1** basis over **630** sessions.

We have had **235,174** Web Visitors & **356,751** Page Views.

Supporting Medway's Charities and Community Groups

At the heart of MVA's mission is our work to support local not-for-profit organisations, groups and community members to develop skills, build resources and amplify their voice.

MEDWAY VOLUNTEER NETWORK

We continue to support both Residents and Organisations to engage with volunteering in Medway - and as result of the Covid crisis they have never before been so needed.

Within days of being told by the Prime Minister that 'we must stay at home', Medway Volunteer Network offered residents a fast route to register their interest in volunteering to help charities supporting the local Covid response. We also went on to celebrate National Volunteers Week in style, with virtual creative coffee mornings and an online photo gallery for everyone to share their volunteer stories.

Through media releases and social campaigns we work to promote and celebrate all local residents who volunteer their time - they are all **#MedwayHeroes.**

“MVA have been very helpful...From their support we have 5 regular volunteers, ranging from gardening to admin to helping out in a clinical setting.”

(Karen, a Medway CIC)



**591 MVN
e-Bulletin
subscribers.**



**Volunteering
promoted
at 30 local
events.**



**104 VCS Organisations
supported with
Volunteering enquiries.**

**198 Volunteer
Recruitment Ads placed
with MVN by the
sector.**

**230+ registered as Covid
Volunteer enquiries - we
connected them to 21 local
Organisations needing help.**

**Community Outreach
promoting volunteering
reached 1,700+ residents
- with activities held at
libraries, DWP, Pensioner
forums, Employment fairs,
neighborhood events and
universities...**

BEFRIENDING TOGETHER

This is MVA's Befriending scheme for adults in Medway who are socially isolated or feel lonely. Support is delivered through our Befriending Hub, allowing us to signpost residents to our VCS partners where they are best placed to support an individual. The Hub also enables partners to share resources and best practice - resulting in service improvements and efficiencies across the partnership.

We also set up a new drop-in as a shared resource for the sector and hosted a wide range of activities in there from coffee mornings to board game sessions.

We are making a real difference in local lives - people like Nicola, who we helped to connect with local services that she had previously struggled to access on her own, make friends and start getting out and about again. In her words:

"I was in the darkest place ever, I had never been so close to suicide before, please remember you guys are my saviours."

"I was over the moon to receive a call from my befriender, I really enjoy our chats and am so looking forward to the next one!"

(Befriending Together Service User)

"I'm really enjoying my befriending calls, I have lovely ladies who I would love to be able to meet up with one day!"

(Lesley, Befriending Volunteer)



53% of our service users said they feel they will now use the GP/A&E & other medical services less as a result of our service.

95% of our service users feel their health and life overall has improved as a result of the service.

We have supported 444 Referrals from 50 different local sources.

We receive on average 10 compliments every month about the service from referees, volunteers and befriendees.

We match a number of our Volunteers who speak different languages to service users in the community who struggle with English.

BEFRIENDING COVID RESPONSE

Within 3 days of lockdown we had moved all of our services online, supporting our Befriending Hub partners to do the same, and were actively taking referrals from Statutory emergency response teams as well as our usual community contacts. In addition we set up new initiatives:

The Test Bed Fund

This has funded a total of **£73,339** between **17** projects across Medway & Swale. Supporting local VCS Organisations to trial innovative solutions to reduce isolation for a wide variety of residents including those with protected characteristics such as: LGBTQ+, domestic abuse, learning disabilities, blind and partially sighted, mental health, BAME, young parents, older people, refugees and asylum seekers.

Bridging The Divide

A digital inclusion pilot to help isolated or lonely residents to join online communities and access much needed support and services. **23** local residents have been loaned tablets with internet connection and paired with **Volunteer Digital Buddies** to help them get connected.

Community & Faith Forum

Connecting over **30 communities**, who were already involved in supporting local people, to expand their reach to over **several thousand residents** in Medway over a 5 month period.



Volunteer Befrienders made over **200** calls every week.

285 New Service Users in just 8 months.

We welcomed **100+** new Volunteers, many of whom want to continue helping us even after the Pandemic ends.

“I joined some of these zoom sessions during lockdown and they were great! I would love to join more”!

(Sarah, Befriending Together Service User)

From August, we offered **2** Park & Chat and Café & Chat sessions for up to **5** service users **twice weekly** at different Medway locations.

28 online volunteer support sessions hosted.

We ran **fortnightly** online befriending sessions, coffee mornings and creative activities.

Financial Capability Support

MVA secured funding from Natwest Skills and Opportunities Fund to deliver help to build confidence and skills with families experiencing financial difficulties in the Strood area.

The 18 month project delivered positive outcomes for participants and highlighted the need for support to help residents feel confident and empowered to engage with the range of excellent existing support available to them locally.

As a result, MVA have added resources accrued through this project to their website so that the local VCS use it to support their own service users - and we have secured additional funding to deliver 121 Financial Capability support sessions to more families across Medway who may be struggling financially as a result of the Covid-19 crisis.

“Thank you for your support, I am now ready to tackle the issues that were holding me back.”

(Medway family member accessing 121 support)

“I found your kindness and suggestions were what I needed to pick myself up.”

(Strood resident accessing 121 support)

1000+ people reported that they had benefited from increased financial knowledge.

44 families accessed **260+** support sessions for **121** specialist financial capability support worker - impacting an estimated **163** residents.

5 people helped back into employment and **2** people developed enterprise skills and knowledge.

43% of those helped were working individuals and **35%** others were claiming benefits.

“Families were hugely grateful for the support that they received.”

(Manager, Strood Children & Family Hub)

“Thank you for all your work with my client, this has really helped them.”

(Support Worker, Strood Children & Family Hub)

“ We have thoroughly enjoyed supporting our service users and our Volunteers to have a voice about health services.”

(Lisa, Volunteer with Walderslade Together)

Involving Medway

MVA deliver two programmes within this Kent & Medway Clinical Commissioning Group funded initiative:

Community Health Researcher Programme

This helps ensure individual voices and experiences of local people are listened to in local health planning. Our team of volunteer Community Health Researchers are trained to engage and interview people in the community on topics being researched by the CCG.

VCS Focus Group Programme

This unique programme allows local VCS to get their service users' voices heard – whilst recognising the costs they incur to make engagement activities happen. Trained Facilitators deliver Focus Groups out in community settings, and they earn up to £150 per session (depending on the number of participants).

Giving local residents a 'voice'

Our programmes have helped people from a diverse range of, often less heard from, communities to engage and have their say on local health and wellbeing issues. Residents that have participated include those who are: domestic violence survivors, socially isolated, living with learning disabilities, have specialist physical and mental health conditions and carers.

“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 instead of staring at 4 walls.”

(Martin, Volunteer CHR)

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

(Barbara, Volunteer CHR)



141 1:1 Community Health Research interviews completed.

We have recruited and trained 33 Community Health Researchers.



We have recruited and trained 34 VCS Focus Group Facilitators.

23 Focus Groups have been held in community settings with over 270 participants.

We have supported community engagement with 8 different Community Health campaigns, including Covid-19 in BAME communities.

We have helped our active Focus Group Organisations to generate £2690 extra in income.