

# Outcome Report

## Medway Voluntary Action

2022



# Thank you from all at Medway Voluntary Action

“*Welcome to our Outcome Report for 2022. It is with huge gratitude that we reflect on the achievements of the last year - the vital support of our funders and partners, and the generous leadership that abounds within Medway’s VCS, have meant that we have been able to make a real difference to the lives of people living in Medway.*

*Once again the VCS, and communities we all serve, are facing complex challenges presented by the ‘Cost of Living’. As we look towards the year ahead, I am encouraged by the passion of and commitment of Medway’s VCS, to work collaboratively to help respond to this new crisis and deliver better outcomes for the people of Medway. MVA are proud to be providing continued support and guidance to the sector and communities alike; together we can achieve something quite remarkable.*



**Peter Stokes**  
Chair of MVA Board of Trustees



Medway Voluntary Action, 5a New Road Avenue, Chatham, Kent, ME4 6BB

Registered Charity No: 1042475

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



# VCS Transformation Academy

With members from across the VCS, the Academy held its inaugural meeting on 5th April 2022 and since then has gone from strength to strength.

Academy Members have agreed their first year's objective - *'To improve the sustainability of Medway's VCS groups and organisations (whatever their size).'*

Academy members are well underway with developing plans to achieve this aim. They have heard from experts in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), welcomed local businesses as guest speakers and established Task & Finish Groups to explore CSR and Recruitment Challenges faced by Medway's VCS.



**700+** organisations from the wider VCS given access to Transformation Academy resources and training.

**27%** quarterly increase in membership

**90%** of target groups in year 1 signed up as members

Over **260 hours** of 'Generous Leadership' given to Transformation Academy to date

Quotes from Members:

*"Now, it is about thinking differently"*

Martyn Reeves – Friends of Wisdom Hospice

*"The benefits of working together only make us more resilient and more prepared for future challenges"*

Rupa Sen – Medway Diversity Forum

# Befriending Together

The Befriending Programme is delivered by MVA in partnership this year, with Carers First and wHoo Cares.

This is the third year of the pilot funded by Kent and Medway CCG and now Medway and Swale Health and Care Partnership.

The Befriending Programme is an innovative way of connecting lonely and isolated people from across Medway to be able to interact with volunteers and connect to social isolation projects and other local VCSE and statutory services within their communities.



Isolation (45%) and Loneliness (39%) are the primary reasons for referrals to our service

328 people were referred to the programme for befriending this year alone

77% reported their mental wellbeing stabilised/improved

66% reported an increase or stability in physical activity

70% life satisfaction scores remained stable or increased

*"Thank you for all you do for our patients. The feedback has been amazing. Two patients I spoke to today were pleased with the assessment and support they have had from their befriender and the initial assessment."* Medway Social Prescriber

# Befriending Together Projects

## Couch 2 Community

This initiative, funded by the Kent Community Foundation, started in October 2022.

The main objective is to assist isolated people to re-engage with activities following the pandemic. Offering a series of interesting, fun sessions to encourage people to step out of their “comfort zone” to attend; these activities are helping local people to grow in confidence and re-connect to their community.

## Test Bed Fund

Test Bed Funding from Medway & Swale’s Health & Care Partnership was awarded to local VCS organisations to deliver bespoke befriending projects and helping lonely and isolated people.

In 2021-2022 16 organisations took part. In 2022 we launched the 2022-2023 campaign for projects to take place.



Over **30%** of participants were new to our programme following the event

**16** VCS Groups and Organisations received funding - totaling **£64,800**

The first 2 events had full attendance of over **60** people and a waiting list for more

**31%** of organisations were able to further develop existing projects

Quotes from participants:

*“When I first arrived, I thought I wouldn’t enjoy it and wouldn’t come back but I have had lovely time. I have changed my mind and will come again.”*

*“You are my guardian angel, I finally feel like I can meet people and go out and beat my anxiety.”*

**38%** of organisations supported specialised conditions/communities

# Medway Volunteer Network

For Volunteers Week this year we went BIG and launched:

- **#MedwayHeroes** - A new area on our website where local volunteers can share their stories.
- A range of free resources celebrating trustees and the benefits of diversity.
- We also hosted Afternoon Tea and gifts for our lovely volunteers and posted over 100 hand written thank you cards and pins to all of our volunteers and trustees.

Here's what some of the sector had to say about our volunteering support services:

*"Thanks for your kind words and support. I'm very grateful for all of your support, Both for today and in all of our community engagement activities – a true partnership".*

Becky Farley - Mid-Kent College

*"We have now filled the Secretary volunteer role which we advertised through you, the person we have appointed found the role on your website so that's great. Thank you".*

Sara Close - Read Easy Medway

**Have you thought about supporting your employees to volunteer?**

Employer Supported Volunteering programs are a great way to engage employees, meet corporate social responsibility goals, all whilst supporting local causes & communities in Medway.

**5 great reasons for your organisation to get involved:**

- 1 It will raise your organisation's profile and reputation in Medway
- 2 It will boost employee loyalty
- 3 It increases staff skills
- 4 It can improve staff morale
- 5 It can improve staff retention

**Want To Find Out More About Becoming A Charity Trustee?**

**#MedwayHeroes Becky**

**#Medway Heroes Stories**

"My name is Becky and I do a variety of volunteering roles including being a Governor at Bemix, a community first responder with emergency responders and a fundraiser with MVA. One of my volunteering projects has been at Medway College as a trustee of the Food Programme. These roles have helped me to be a volunteer governor with Bemix but have also helped me to be a trustee of the Food Programme. These roles have helped me to be a volunteer governor with Bemix but have also helped me to be a trustee of the Food Programme. These roles have helped me to be a volunteer governor with Bemix but have also helped me to be a trustee of the Food Programme."

**Becky Farley**  
Volunteer Governor at Bemix & Volunteer at MVA & Allington Alligators



**219** VCS Organisations supported with 1:1 volunteering enquiries

**New Employer Supported Volunteering** resources launched

Over **100** live volunteer opportunities listed on our webpages from **60+** local VCS organisations and groups

Attended **12** local 'in-person' events to promote volunteering.

**New Volunteer Manager Support Network** launched - over **20** VCS members signed up already

Recruited **236** new volunteer e-bulletin subscribers - that's a total of **781** local people interested in volunteering

**21** Barry Clout Volunteering Award Nominations.

**4303** visits on our volunteering support - nearly a 50% increase on last year

# Macmillan 'Year of Listening' Medway & Swale

A 'Year of Listening' is an exciting new 12-month community engagement project seeking to understand the barriers and challenges local people are experiencing in accessing local cancer treatment and support services in Medway & Swale.

The programme will engage with and support Medway and Swale residents to identify strengths, weaknesses and opportunities within the existing system (in relation to accessing treatment and services), and their views will be shared with key decision-makers who have committed to taking action based on these insights.

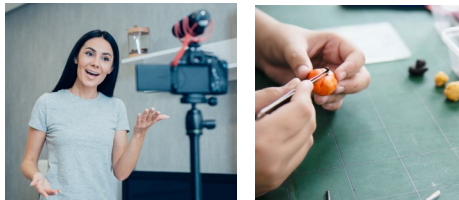
Launched September 2022, this project has already formed an independent Stakeholder Steering Group, made up of cancer professionals and those who have lived experience of cancer, who will support the development and successful delivery of this project.

Funded by

**MACMILLAN  
CANCER SUPPORT**



**icl** **Interactive  
Community  
Listening**



**MACMILLAN  
CANCER SUPPORT**

**MVA**  
Medway Voluntary Action



**'A year of listening'**

Stakeholder steering group formed with **12** members from health and local communities

**New Interactive  
Community Listening**  
model developed to support 'listening without barriers'

1000+ VCS groups invited to get involved and to share information with their community members

*"A year of listening' is all about dedicating time to listen and gather feedback from communities about the cancer services they have received so that, moving forward, we can help to shape and improve them. We are delighted to be partnering with MVA who will help us to have these conversations so we can identify the barriers many people in our local communities face when accessing cancer treatment."*

Annamarie Frenchum, Macmillan Engagement Lead –  
Kent, Medway & Essex

# Kent and Medway Listens

To deliver this programme we were delighted to be working in partnership with Medway Diversity Forum, Befriending Together, MEGAN CIC, Centre for Independent Living, Medway Gender and Sexuality Diversity Centre and Medway Plus.

The programme's three main objectives were:

- To give people from seldom heard communities a chance to share what they have gone through and how it has left them feeling
- To provide quick-win funding to address immediate needs
- To provide senior decision makers with insight to help them take informed decisions.

Along with a series of engagement activities, collectively we co-developed community 'quick wins' and left a legacy of learning through our 'Let's Talk Mental Health' training sessions.



This VCS partnership model of delivery was shared with wider sector and other local stakeholders

A successful collaboration with **7 VCS** organisations in Medway & Swale

**92** in depth interviews with seldom heard communities from **21** diverse nationalities

**£24,900** allocated to **8** Quick Win community led initiatives - including counselling & mental health campaigns

*"I Feel confident to have conversations regarding mental wellbeing with service users, friends, and colleagues and to make appropriate referrals on to high quality services if the need arises."*

VCS Learner, Let's Talk Mental Health



# Community Health Catalyst Programme

Funded by the Medway and Swale Health and Care Partnership, the programme launched September 2022 and is designed to help reduce health inequalities within the NHS Core20+5 communities.

We have two Community Activator roles, one in Medway Central and one in the Isle of Sheppey, which are the two most deprived areas in Medway and Swale. Our Community Activators are working out in the community and currently engaging with people from the following groups: BAME, Coastal Communities, Homelessness, Learning Disabilities, Mental Illness, Vulnerable Migrants, Drug & Alcohol Dependent, Gypsy Roma and Traveller, Sex Workers, ExOffenders and LGBTQIA+



We have engaged with other VCS organisations across Medway & Swale **288** times in just 3 months

In the first 3 months we have engaged with **248** people from the **NHS Core20+5** Communities

**56%** of Medway people we have engaged with already feel they know more about the Health and Care Partnership

**21%** of Swale people we have engaged with already feel they know more about the Health and Care Partnership

*“It’s good to be out building relationships with communities experiencing some of the worst health inequalities in the UK. Everyone seems so grateful to have us listening to them.”* Community Activator

# Involving Medway & Swale

A partnership between community organisations and Medway & Swale Health and Care Partnership aimed at building healthier communities.

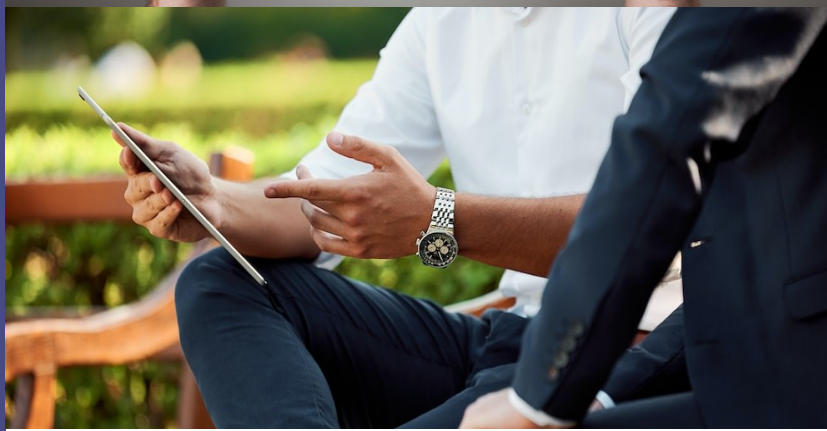
In 2022 the Involving Medway & Swale programme engaged with residents on the topic of Vascular Services, Health Data Sharing and Diabetes.

This year, the programme also provides VCS groups and organisations opportunities to access community grant funding to co-develop 'quick win' initiatives with their service users in response to the issues they identify during the Focus Group activities - supporting a goal of 'meaningful engagement, lasting change'.

We have also developed a framework to monitor for other health outcomes, such as increased understanding of the role of the Health & Care Partnership, to help improve broader strategic ambitions.



“Meaningful engagement, lasting change”



**303** Participants across **31** focus groups on 3 health topics. With **60%** of participants from BAME background

We supported our active focus groups organisations to generate **£6,850** extra in income

**38** 1:1 Community Health Research interviews completed

Engaged with **70** VCS organisations to help facilitate focus groups with their service users

*“It should be all one service – it should be holistic. Pre-diabetic, weight, smoking, etc all in one service”.*

Sample Carers Focus Group response

# Supporting Medway Voluntary & Community Sector (In Numbers)

Funding & Governance club had **58** attendances, representing **36** members from **33** different organisations.

**311** views of MVA training videos on YouTube.  
**13** Training sessions delivered, supporting **146** learners and **1695** page views on our web pages relating to training.

**27,649** visitors to our web site, with **1,948** of these viewing our VCS volunteering support pages and **3,457** to our support pages for volunteers.

**100%** of organisations supported with Funding & Governance gave feedback that they felt they had been supported with: advice and information, and income generation.

**840** e-newsletter subscribers, over **230** digital news items, bulletins and press releases published and **3942** social posts created.

Community Update Group Membership has grown to over **200+** individual members from **122** different local VCS organisations and groups.

Medway VCS organisations supported to generate additional income to deliver their services totalling **£1,058,855**

Hosted **11** Monthly Community Update Meetings with average of **30+** attending most sessions.

# Cost of Living Crisis

Impacting the sector, this is being described in some circles as 'the perfect storm' for the VCS—operational costs are rising, donations and income decreasing and the demand for services increasing (as service users experience a multitude of problems arising from cost of living pressures).

MVA have been carefully monitoring the impact on the sector, with a live Cost of Living Poll - results from this indicate 91% of VCS organisations are being impacted.

In response, MVA having developed dedicated Cost of Living crisis support webpages for both the VCS and local residents - updated regularly, these are becoming recognised by local stakeholders as a valuable source of local support available to everyone. These can be viewed using this link:

[www.mva.org.uk/about/cost-of-living-crisis](http://www.mva.org.uk/about/cost-of-living-crisis)



The top 3 areas of VCS pressure identified in our poll were:

- Delivering Activities **70%**
- Staff and Volunteer Costs **66%**
- Utilities **60%**

Over **71** resources have been uploaded to our dedicated Cost of Living webpages - and continue to be added weekly

The Cost of Living pages have had **335** visits in the 3 months since launch

*"As a volunteer I am also counting pennies, and the extra mileage I do for the charity comes at a cost I no longer can afford. I also am reducing what I can do and car sharing with other volunteers which isn't always ideal"*

Cost of Living Crisis Impact on local volunteer

# Going Greener Campaign

There is no question that sustainability is gaining momentum in Medway and within the Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) generally. Sustainability is about finding ways for your charity or community group to operate that does not harm the environment. It's also about being mindful of how your actions affect the local area & communities in Medway, and ensuring resources aren't wasted or destroyed and that they are used in the most effective ways.

Responding to the needs of the sector, MVA created a new 'Going Greener' space on their website full of free resources on how VCS organisations can 'Go Greener' including a free downloadable 'Go Greener' guide full of lots of quick and easy ideas to help promote environmental sustainability.

To help them further to embed any new sustainability commitments, MVA encouraged the sector to take MVA's new digital 'Our Going Green' pledge, where the VCS can make their environmental commitments public on MVA's website for all to see.

Think Green!  
Act Green!  
MVA are here to support

MVA have 'Gone Greener'

Why not check out our 'Going Greener' webpage. This new area is full of free resources & ideas on how VCS organisations in Medway can 'Go Greener'.

Visit here to get involved:  
[www.mva.org.uk/advice-and-support/going-greener](http://www.mva.org.uk/advice-and-support/going-greener)

Or mail us:  
[info@mva.org.uk](mailto:info@mva.org.uk)  
or call:  
01634 812 850

MVA  
Medway Voluntary Action

Our 'Going Green' Pledge  
To help protect our environment & communities in Medway:  
Medway Voluntary Action

**Pledge to:** MVA are committed to minimising the impact of our activities on the environment. We pledge to:

- Maximize printing/copying options and enable default settings to double-sided printing, edit our documents online rather than printing, use email where possible in place of hard copy and recycling all recyclable office waste.
- Enable and set to default the eco-friendly options on all copiers, printers and electronic equipment. Switch off computers, office copiers and printers when unused, enable 'energy saving' modes after long periods of inactivity.
- When planning events we will minimise disposable products and encourage the use of biodegradable and reusable products, including dining items and cups. We will also limit the need for printed materials where possible and use electronic versions where possible.

Date: 8th June 2022  
Name: Jane Howard  
Position: CEO at Medway Voluntary Action

Want to find out more about how your charity or group can 'Go Greener'?

MVA have created this FREE resource and tips pack to support Medway's VCS to explore 'going greener' - read on to find out more...

MVA  
Medway Voluntary Action

*"We try to do our bit. We recycle all the large cardboard and plastic items where we can. We're also holding a recycle surgery once a month in collaboration with Medway Council. As part of this anyone can bring small electrical items in to us to be recycled or taken away to the tip. We're also looking at linking up with local litter pickers and the possibility of supporting them by running a 'Green Drinks' afternoons"*

Jaye Nolan – The Net Community Hub

*"Our customers and supporters are certainly environmentally aware appreciating the steps we are taking together. Across all of our operations we think of our environmental impact first. Yes this has meant that some of our costs have gone up, but there have been no barriers to our environmental policies as we all agree that, collectively, The Friends must do their bit to support our environment"*

Martyn Reeves – Friends Of Wisdom Hospice

Medway Voluntary Action has a strong history of evolving to meet the developing needs of Medway's VCS and local communities, and 2023 will be no different. Here is just a snapshot of activities and support planned for the next 12 months:

# Looking Ahead to 2023...

- ◆ Review the services and support offered to Medway's VCS to ensure it remains relevant and agile.
- ◆ Promote the positive outcomes that can be achieved by utilising MVA's services to connect and collaborate with our VCS peers. Including finding more ways to encourage small/micro VCS groups and 'start-ups' to engage with MVA's support and services; helping to ensure they can develop and grow sustainably.
- ◆ Explore how our Befriending Hub and services can support more people in Medway and Swale who are experiencing the damaging effects of loneliness and isolation.
- ◆ Accelerate plans for an effective Volunteer Passport scheme for Medway.
- ◆ Expand our bank of free training resources and continue to offer Free membership to our Funding & Governance Club (Trustees have committed to continuing to fund these from reserves to help alleviate the financial impact of the Cost of Living Crisis on local charities).
- ◆ Build on the success of recent VCS collaborative projects and aim to secure new opportunities for the VCS to work collaboratively.
- ◆ Continuing to monitor and report on the impact of the Cost of Living crisis on VCS, helping to give them a 'voice' across strategic boards and initiatives.

*The Medway Voluntary Action team are happy to talk if you have any comments or would like to discuss any of the above initiatives in further detail - 01634 812850 or [info@mva.org.uk](mailto:info@mva.org.uk).*