Action Hampshire



2025/26 Impact Report

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Welcome to the Action Hampshire impact report 2025-26

Foreword from our CEO

Nicky Judd

In the UK, 2025/26 was characterised by political instability, extreme weather conditions and rising costs. The world is fast changing, as always, but Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations continue to work hard for the benefit of individuals, communities, and society as a whole.

At Action Hampshire we exist to support VCFSEs and communities to take collaborative action in partnership with other sectors, to improve health and wellbeing and increase fairness and inclusion. This is a refreshed impact statement that resulted from updates to our Theory of Change made in 2025/26 and we have begun using this work to update our full strategy.

To achieve this impact, and as National Association for Voluntary and Community Action described it, to be the glue supporting the VCFSE sector, you'll see our programme of activities this year has been just as varied.

We've helped underserved communities to have their voices heard in consultations around Local Government Reorganisation and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board's (HIOW ICB) winter pressures communications and their digital inclusion consultation. Our continued involvement with Healthwatch Hampshire has helped under-served communities share their views on health and social care, and alongside this our Raising Voices in Research projects have supported more people from these communities to be included in research by improving accessibility and inclusion.

We've supported those communities who experience health and other inequalities through programmes that utilise the Action Hampshire way, such as Communities Against Cancer and Safe and Warm Communities.

This year we applied this approach to a new project called Let's Be Smokefree, where VCFSE organisations support people in their communities to quit smoking, in the way they know best engages people.

Information is power, and we've continued to share information about funding opportunities, consultations, statutory-led projects and VCFSE events and projects with the wider sector. A highlight of the year for us was our Changemakers Awards ceremony, showcasing and supporting the VCFSE sector achieving lots of incredible impact. The categories reflect the areas we feel passionately about and where the VCFSE sector can especially make a difference.

The changes in society present challenges and opportunities for the sector. The increasing recognition of asset-based approaches, and community-led action, has opened doors for communities to shape what affects them. The government's 3 shifts in the 10 year health plan also all point to the VCFSE sector as key. At the same time the sector has continued to see cuts. There is an ongoing need for Local Infrastructure Organisations like us to speak out for funding decisions and statutory activities to strengthen and support the VCFSE sector rather than duplicate or reinvent.

Next year the trustees have made the important decision in this changing landscape to offer Action Hampshire membership 'free at the point of use' to VCFSE organisations. This means that we can offer our support at no cost and we will benefit from having deeper connections with the many organisations who we support every day.

We will continue to advocate, build, support and collaborate to ensure the sustainability of the VCFSE sector during these challenging times and celebrate the amazing work that is being delivered that enables communities to thrive.



Nicky Judd, CEO Action Hampshire

Executive summary

2025/26

450 VCFSEs supported

+6K people engaged *

200 VCFSEs funded

£210K grants provided

161 events delivered

* this is an estimated figure based on the number of organisations we've engaged with and the number of participants they are asked to involve in a project

As well as achieving a large-scale reach across Hampshire and beyond, our work is having an important impact on VCFSEs, their communities, and wider sectors too. Analysis of data collected across our projects reveals key themes that evidence how we are delivering our mission and as a result making progress towards our intended outcomes.

Many VCFSEs who have participated in our project workshops have stated that the sessions are "informative" and "engaging" and indicated an increased understanding of particular issues addressed within the sessions. This highlights we are building capacity within VCFSE organisations around a wide range of topics, including health and energy, which in turn has supported VCFSEs to engage with and listen to their local communities on these issues.

As a result, VCFSEs have reported that their community members have felt heard by wider stakeholders and that their views and experiences matter:

"Many of our members often feel like they have no say or are unsure about how or who to contact to raise their concerns. However, this project empowered them, making them feel valued and giving them the opportunity to contribute to positive changes that impact their health, social, and mental well-being." - Healthwatch Hampshire Engagement Participant



Our confidence to engage with local communities on energy awareness has grown enormously.
As a diverse community group, we have been able to listen compassionately to the different behaviours, lifestyles and priorities within our communities, which has helped us offer more tailored and culturally sensitive support. This has also strengthened our ability to guide people towards appropriate resources and encourage them to seek help when needed.

- Safe and Warm Communities Participant

Executive summary

2025/26

Moreover, it has supported VCFSEs to help their communities take a proactive approach to their health and wellbeing by getting involved in research, screening programmes, and sharing advice. Not only does this contribute to our intended outcomes but also wider strategies, such as the Government's 10 Year Health Plan (Fit for the Future) and their particular focus on hospital to community and treatment to prevention.

One participant beautifully summarized the project's impact by stating that they no longer felt like a "patient in hiding," but a "partner in progress. This shift in identity is the true success of the IBHO project"

– IBHO Through Raising Voices in Research Participant

"For example, some participants who initially attended group sessions later requested one-to-one help with contacting suppliers and understanding their bills. Overall, the project helped reduce anxiety around energy costs, improved awareness of available support and strengthened connections between our organisation and the community."

- Safe and Warm Communities Participant

Another key theme is that our work has provided positive networking and partnership opportunities. Data from across multiple projects shows that one of the main elements participants liked about our events and workshops is the opportunity it provided for them to network with other organisations both within the same sector but also in different sectors to their own too.

It was informative about changes in health and also gave an opportunity to really engage with different sectors.

- HIVCA Event Attendee

It was an excellent showcase of the good, and often unseen, work being carried out by those in the Hampshire community

- Changemakers Awards Partner

Executive summary

2025/26

> *Learning about NHS plan, the urban and rural pilots. Also the input by those 'in the field'. Nothing like learning from others and avoiding recreating the wheel.*
> *- Community Building Roundtable Participant*

> *It's been great to be recognised for the hard work that went into our community project*
>
> *- Changemakers Award Winner*

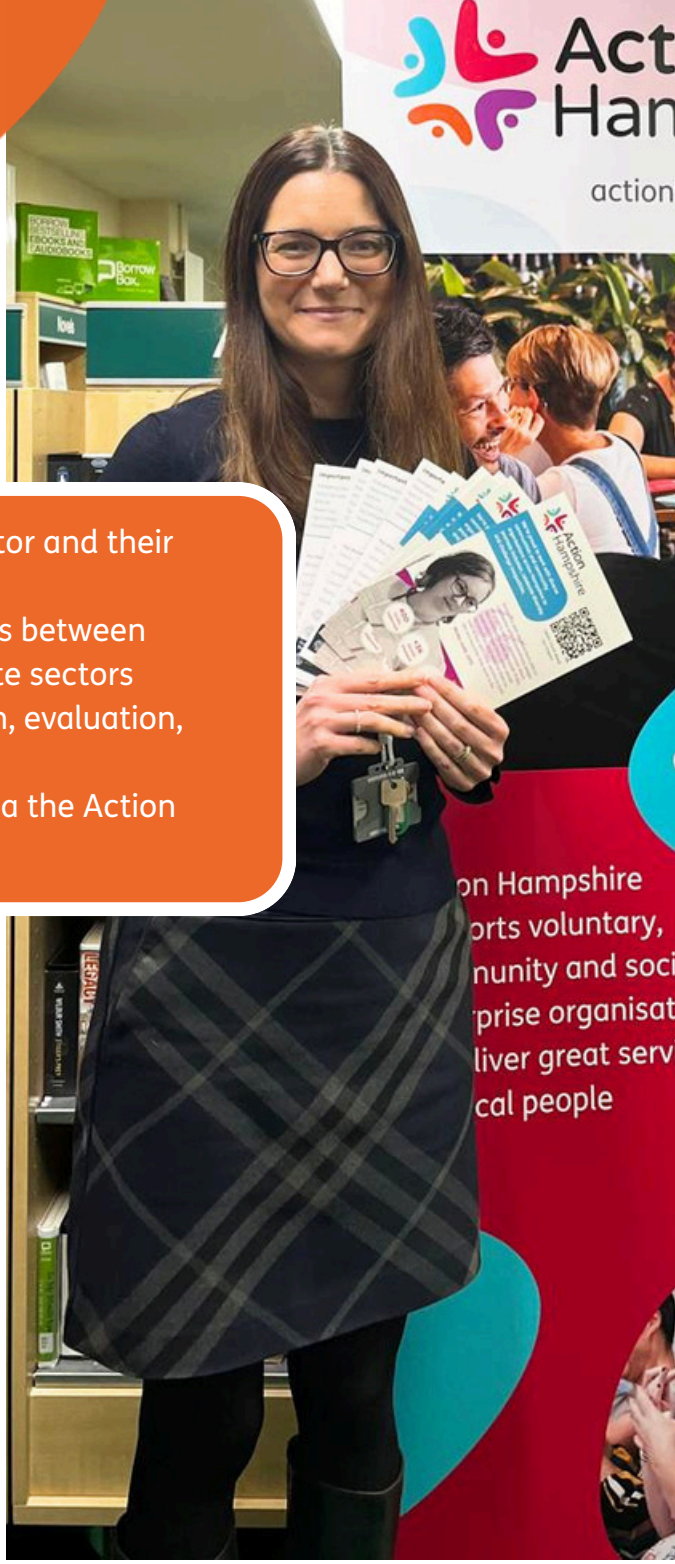
As well as building connections and partnerships, our work has amplified and celebrated the work of the VCFSE sector, contributing to an increase in non-VCFSE sector understanding of the contributions of the sector.

Overall, in 2025/2026 we have had a positive impact across VCFSEs, their communities, and wider sector stakeholders, increasing understanding of local issues, improving engagement capacity, and providing opportunities for collaboration. Looking forward to 2026/2027, we hope to maintain our contribution to these outcomes so we effectively support our stakeholders, whilst strengthening our areas of improvement so we can continue to drive positive change.



> *I came away feeling really positive. It was such a celebratory event. I loved the Changemakers bit and how lots of local people were celebrated.*
>
> – Hampshire Changemakers Awards Attendee

Introduction



Action Hampshire's mission has four strands:

- Advocate for and amplify the voice of the VCFSE sector and their communities
- Build strong partnerships, networks, and connections between VCFSEs, their communities, and the public and private sectors
- Support and resource the VCFSE sector with research, evaluation, training, and funding
- Deliver capacity-building community engagement via the Action Hampshire Way

Our aim is that together these strands of work will contribute towards our intended impact:

> *VCFSEs and communities take collaborative action in partnership with other sectors, that improves health and wellbeing and increases fairness and inclusion.*

By having this impact our vision is that: Everyone thrives in healthy, fair and inclusive communities, connected with each other and the world around them.

To understand what we need to achieve as part of each mission strand to contribute to our desired impact, we created a Theory of Change. Theory of Change is a specific and measurable description of a social change initiative that forms the basis for strategic planning, ongoing decision-making and evaluation. Through this approach, we have defined clear short-term and long-term outcomes, all of which align to our four mission strands. Our impact report outlines the key data that evidences our achievement against our outcomes for the year 2025/2026 and is split into our four mission areas

Our projects

In 2025/2026 we engaged with voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations (VCFSEs) on many different projects that addressed a wide variety of local issues. From climate action to health inequalities, we delivered:

- Community buildings support
- Communities Against Cancer
- Healthwatch Hampshire Engagement
- Let's Be Smokefree
- National Lottery Community Fund Organisational Development
- Raising Voices in Research (including RViR Mentoring and IBHO projects)
- Rural Housing Enabling
- Safe and Warm Communities
- Warmth Matters

Other services we delivered included evaluation and research, consultation, membership, training, and we provided the operational infrastructure for networks such as Hampshire and Isle of Wight VCFSE Health and Care Alliance and Hampshire Leadership Forum.



Our reach

450 VCFSEs supported

+6K people engaged*

200 VCFSEs funded**

£210K grants provided

161 events delivered

Across our work we directly supported 450 VCFSE organisations and engaged over 6000 people**. 209 VCFSE organisations applied for funding or were supported with a funding application in 2025/26*, with the total value of grants we gave out worth over £210,000 (not including individual financial reimbursements for specific community engagement activities).

The VCFSEs we collaborated with through our projects engaged a wide range of communities, meaning our work also supported:

- Faith communities
- Ethnic minority communities
- LGBTQ+ communities
- Armed forces and veterans
- People with experiences of mental health conditions
- Children and young people
- Young families
- Older people
- People with learning disabilities
- Neurodivergent communities
- People with caring responsibilities, including family members and friends providing care
- People on low incomes
- People with physical disabilities and/or long-term health conditions
- People experiencing homelessness
- Gypsy, Roma and traveller communities
- Rural communities
- Coastal communities
- People in contact with the justice system
- People with experience of sex work
- People who have experienced or are experiencing modern slavery
- People in vulnerable migration situations
- People experiencing fuel poverty

*This is an estimated figure based on internal reporting and does not account for instances where organisations have taken part in more than one project, so may contain duplicate values.

**This is an estimated figure based on the number of organisations we've engaged with and the number of participants they have reported as participated in a project.

Our communications

To support campaign messaging across all Action Hampshire projects and to grow organisational awareness, social media and newsletter channels are used to reach new and existing audiences. Our communications function also supports our mission strands of resourcing and building capacity in the VCFSE sector, as well as creating connections by sharing VCFSE and statutory news and initiatives. Below are the key results from the Action Hampshire Newsletter and Social Media channels throughout 2025/2026:

Action Hampshire social media engagement 2024/25

Total Reach

279K

Avg. Engagement Rate*

11.76%

Total website traffic**

1.6K

*Global Benchmark social media engagement rate is 3-5% according to Orlo.tech (March 2025)
** Action Hampshire website traffic from social media sources

Action Hampshire monthly newsletter engagement

Newsletter subscribers

1,655

Newsletter Avg. Open Rate (%)

27.11%*

Newsletter Avg. CTR (%)

7.73%*

*Average email Open Rate for charity/VCSE sector is 26-28% and Average Click Through Rate (CTR) is between 2.7-3.29% - According to Charity Digital

Our impact

Advocating for and amplifying the voice of the VCFSE sector and their communities

Outcomes:

- Increase non-VCFSE organisations' understanding of the challenges faced by and contributions of the VCFSE sector and their communities
- Improve VCFSE organisations' feelings of being heard by non-VCFSE organisations

Hampshire and Isle of Wight VCSE Health and Care Alliance (HIVCA)

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight VCFSE Health and Care Alliance (HIVCA) exists to bridge the gap between the NHS and the VCFSE sector, advocating for better integration, and making sure collaboration is at the heart of health and care. As host organisation, Action Hampshire provides the operational infrastructure that enables HIVCA to function effectively, including project management, communications, financial administration and network coordination. During 2025/26, we organised two in-person networking and partnership events, as well as two online topic specific sessions and disseminated a bi-monthly newsletter.



Events were well attended and rated at least 7 or over by all but one survey respondents (n=17). In particular, attendees liked how informative the sessions were and the ways in which the information was shared. For example, one participant stated that they liked:

> *Friendly positive atmosphere. Sharing of information and ability to contribute to future initiative. Opportunity to learn from the ICB and Healthcare Trust on future direction and intents*

Our impact

The second element that stood out to participants was the opportunity the event provided to network and share with other VCFSE organisations and wider stakeholders:

“It was informative about changes in health and also gave an opportunity to really engage with different sectors.”

“The ability to meet and talk to other people in the voluntary sector. The inspiring conversations about taking HIVCA forward. The chance to question and hear from commissioners.”

This is supported further by survey data that shows 16 of 17 respondents strongly agreed/agreed that the event they attended gave them an opportunity to make connections within and beyond the sector. Moreover, 15 respondents strongly agreed/agreed that the event provided an opportunity to represent their organisation within and beyond the sector. Therefore, supporting HIVCA through co-ordinating these events helped to contribute to our first mission strand of advocating for and amplifying the voice of the VCFSE sector, as well as build strong partnerships, networks, and connections between VCFSEs and the public and private sectors.



Our impact

The Hampshire Changemakers Awards

2025/2026 saw year two of our Hampshire Changemakers Awards, where we were delighted to recognise another wonderful group of people and organisations making a difference across Hampshire. These awards honour the outstanding efforts and achievements across various aspects of making Hampshire a better place to live.

Hosted by Action Hampshire, the awards were delivered in partnership with our media partner, Newsquest, and our sponsors Delivered Social, Hastoe Housing Association, and Palladium. We had over 100 nominations for the 10 award categories, evidencing the amazing breadth of work happening across our region.

The winners were:

- **Healthy Futures Award: Munch CIC**
- **Community Project of the Year: Fair Ways**
- **Youth Leader Award: Reubin Yarnold, SoCo Music Project**
- **Environmental Sustainability: Stu Mills, Winchester Action on the Climate Crisis**
- **Wellbeing Champion: Keith Hawkins, Models for Heroes**
- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Autism Hampshire**
- **Innovation in Community Partnership and Development: Dr Togu Ogbe, Kikoi Connection CIC**
- **Heart of the Community: The Venerable Bob White**
- **Lived Experience Leader: Jodie Hughes, Endometriosis South Coast**
- **Business Excellence in the Community: Blankson's Linen Hire & Laundry**



Our impact

Post-event surveys revealed that attendees enjoyed the positive atmosphere and networking opportunities. For example, one attendee said “I came away feeling really positive... such a celebratory event”, while another noted it was a “lovely event and great chance to network”. Similarly, the awards sponsors also appreciated the atmosphere at the awards ceremony, sharing, “It was an excellent showcase of the good, and often unseen, work being carried out by those in the Hampshire community”, and, “We enjoyed the whole day, great presentations, and... seeing those recognised for all the hard work going on in the community”. This data highlights how the awards provide an opportunity to celebrate and amplify the work of the sector, in turn increasing wider sectors awareness and understanding of their contributions.

The Changemakers Awards will be back for a third year in 2027 to further advocate for and amplify the voice of the VCFSE sector and their communities.

Some of the award winners have told us of the impact being recognised in this way has had on their organisation. In particular, they noted the positive publicity they’ve received and the sense of satisfaction they’ve gained from the recognition:

“We used the opportunity to promote ourselves on Facebook and LinkedIn as well as the coverage given by the Hampshire Chronicle”

“It’s been very positive with lots of social media coverage”

Hampshire CHANGEMAKERS AWARDS 2027



“It’s been great to be recognised for the hard work that went into our community project

Our impact

Building strong partnerships, networks, and connections between VCFSEs, their communities, and the public and private sectors

Outcomes:

- Increase collaboration between VCFSE organisations, local communities, and wider stakeholders

Raising Voices in Research (RViR)

Raising Voices in Research (RViR) aims to increase diversity in health and social care research participation. We believe this is important because if more under-served communities take part in health research, the outcomes are more likely to reflect their needs.

In 2025/26, RViR delivered three different strands of work:

- REN 25/26 funded by NHS England and the Department for Health and Social Care - we delivered two Research Collaborative Roadshow events, where researchers shared their current projects to encourage VCFSEs and their community members to take part in health research.
- Mentoring funded by National Institute Health Research Applied Research Collaborative Wessex (NHIR ARC Wessex) – we brought together six VCFSEs and six researchers to co-design research projects based on community interests and needs.
- Improving Black Health Outcomes funded by NIHR Regional Research Delivery Network South Central (NIHR RRDN SC) – we supported three organisations that support Black communities to deliver workshops with their community members to discuss health research and how to join NIHR BioResource's research resource.



Our impact

Across all three strands, 241 community members took part in either workshops aimed at demystifying health and social care research and/or attended a Research Collaborative event that aimed to increase understanding of current research participation opportunities. The evaluation of all three projects found that RViR helped to increase understanding of research, which resulted in improved attitudes and behaviour towards research participation. For example, in RViR Mentoring, pre-post survey data from VCFSE-led workshops with community members found attendees had:

- Increased research knowledge (91%*)
- Increased confidence in participating in research (91%*) and in discussing research with others (66%*)
- Very strong intention to take part in future research (98%*)

*Refers to the percentage of participant's who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement

Changes like this will help increase the diversity of research participation, which will ensure that research outcomes are reflective of more populations, particularly those who are under-served.

In addition to these positive outcomes, RViR Mentoring in particular has helped to deliver capacity-engaging community engagement via the Action Hampshire Way. Data from the project evaluation reveals that the second half of the project, where VCFSEs were matched with a researcher to co-design a study, increased not only VCFSE's capacity to understand and shape research but also researcher's understanding of inclusive method design, accessible materials, and the clarity of their role in co-production. Increasing both VCFSE and researcher capacity in this way will ensure sustained relationships for future research, highlighting the contribution of the project towards Action Hampshire's second mission strand of building strong partnerships, networks, and connections between VCFSEs, their communities, and the public and private sectors.



Our impact

Rural Housing Enabling



At the end of 2025-26, our rural housing enabling team had 21 schemes in its pipeline, meaning we were engaging with 21 different parish councils across Hampshire. This currently represents an estimated 80 affordable homes, although the actual figure will be higher, as 12 of the potential schemes are in the very early stages of considering an affordable housing development, so have not yet established the number of dwellings that could be built.

We hosted 4 'Roots and Roofs: An Introduction to Rural Affordable Housing' across the year, engaging with 55 individuals who attended on behalf of Parish Councils. 3 of these were online (1 in the evening to benefit those at work) and 1 in person in Brockenhurst, New Forest. These events helped to promote our work including the benefits of a Housing Needs Survey and attendance at the Brockenhurst Roots and Roofs, directly led to 1 Housing Needs Survey being requested and completed.

We produced 28 Parish Housing Profiles which are designed to give parishes a snapshot of the housing needs of their community. These are a free service and have proved popular with parishes beginning to consider affordable housing in their area.

We undertook two housing need surveys, the first in the Parish of Dummer in the Basingstoke and Deane District, this one was aimed at all residents of the parish and provides essential evidence of the scale and nature of housing need within the Parish.

The survey results, combined with demographic information, affordability data, and Housing Register figures supplied by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, are designed to enable the Parish Council and partners to make informed decisions about whether new homes are justified and what types of homes would best meet local needs.

Our impact

Our second housing need survey was completed on behalf of Fawley Parish Council, this one was targeted at those with an affordable housing need the results of which the Parish Council will be using to feed into the Fawley Neighbourhood Plan, as well as providing vital information on the need for affordable housing to New Forest District Council, the statutory body responsible in the area for affordable housing.

Now we have evidence of the homes we need, we can approach developers with more clout. It's useful to have that additional bit of backing that is independent

Schemes underway

- Twyford parish: 6 homes for affordable rent and 4 for shared-ownership, construction started and expected to be completed by the start of 2027.
- Copythorne parish: 10 new homes for social rent, building works started in Spring 2026.
- Sparsholt parish: 5 homes for social rent, groundworks on site are underway.



Our impact

Supporting and resourcing the VCFSE sector with research, evaluation, training, and funding

Outcomes:

- Increase VCFSE organisations' understanding of best practice for running a VCFSE organisation*
- Increase VCFSE organisations' understanding of local issues of inequality

National Lottery Community Fund

During 2025/26 we transitioned from the first year, into the second year of our National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) project. This work involves organisational development focussing on impact, sustainability, strategy, and equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). The first two years have been focussed on our internal staff development in these four areas, to ensure we are in the best position to support VCFSEs with issues in these areas. In 2026/27 we will be sharing our learning with our stakeholders and networks, to support organisational development in the wider VCFSE sector.



This second year of delivery saw a variety of activities take place. From EDI away days to producing a sustainability report and developing our coaching methods, lots of work has been happening behind the scenes and across teams. As a result, we have seen improvements in staff confidence in these areas. For example, results from pre and post 'Introduction to Coaching' training surveys highlighted that employees had gained confidence in what coaching is, how we can use a coaching approach and in building confidence in coaching skills. For example, in the post question responses, everyone expressed they were 'Moderately confident', 'confident' or 'very confident'. Sharing this knowledge and improving confidence in particular practices in other organisations is something we really excited for in 2026/27!

Our impact

Although, the collaboration with VCFSEs has already started. This year we involved VCFSEs in our strategy development, by hosting workshops to understand their thoughts and opinions and working together to shape our Theory of Change. This will impact how we deliver our work going forward, ensuring that it is relevant and useful for the organisations we support. An awareness survey we undertook in May-June 2026 revealed that many VCFSEs and wider sectors partners already feel supported by our work and believe that we are a collaborative organisation that advocates for the sector.

When asked how they would describe Action Hampshire to a colleague, responses included:

A supportive infrastructure organisation specialising in health and wellbeing and environmental sustainability.

"A 'one stop shop' to support identifying and enabling collaboration, supporting and information sharing. An organisation where the community is at their heart but also understands the needs and limitations faced by public, private and community organisations."

"County wide organisation which exists to support VSCE organisations and create partnerships to improve the lives of those living in Hampshire"

Therefore, we hope that in its final year the NLCF project will continue to strengthen our work with the VCFSE sector and wider partners, so we're able to effectively support a wide range of organisations even further.



Membership and Sector Support - Spotlight on Community Buildings

We have supported community buildings for many decades, firstly focusing on village halls but more recently expanding to include all kinds of multi-use community venues. In 2025/2026, we sent regular news bulletins to contacts at 262 different organisations, delivered or presented at 31 different events for community buildings, and engaged with 61 specific organisations.

Our work with community buildings covers a huge range of topics – promoting your venue, recruiting and retaining volunteers, fundraising, health and safety, to name just a few. There was one issue, however, that we returned to several times throughout the year. In April 2025, an important new piece of legislation affecting many charities was passed into law. The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, or Martyn's Law as it's often known, will require many village halls, community associations, and other VCFSE organisations to introduce new procedures with the aim of keeping people on their premises safe in the event of a terrorist attack.

As a trusted source of information for community buildings, we have been keeping our contacts informed about Martyn's Law from an early stage, ensuring we increase community buildings' understanding of best practice for running their organisation.

- We have included information about the new legislation in our newsletters as details have been released. In particular, we included an in-depth item in our January newsletter to our contacts at community buildings (this was sent to 333 contacts at 253 different organisations).
- We published a news item on our website on 26 Feb 2026 and have updated this as the Government has issued further guidance about meeting the new legal requirements.
- Martyn's Law was the main focus of one of our community buildings roundtable* and also mentioned at the other 6 roundtable sessions we ran through 2025-26 that has a total attendance 49 people from 39 different organisations.
- We ran an online briefing on Martyn's Law during Village Halls Week in March 2026, which attracted 13 participants from 10 different organisations.
- We also gave updates at local forums for community buildings across the various parts of Hampshire.

* county-wide information and networking session

We are already building on this work in 2026-27 with further sessions and newsletter items, particularly following the Government publishing its statutory guidance in April 2026.

Safe and Warm Communities

Safe and Warm Communities was a two-year project funded by SGN. In its second and final year, the project focused on helping VCFSE organisations better understand how local inequalities show up in people's everyday experiences of keeping safe, warm and well at home. For many households, fuel poverty, low confidence with energy systems and concerns about carbon monoxide safety were not isolated issues; they were linked to wider pressures such as income, health, language, housing quality and trust in services.

The project was delivered through trusted local organisations because they were already close to the communities most affected. During 2025–2026, we delivered 11 workshops to VCFSE groups, training and supporting 52 staff and volunteers across Hampshire to run energy awareness sessions with their communities. Through this approach, 33 VCFSE organisations, alongside direct community engagement from the project team, collectively reached more than 2,900 individuals with energy awareness messages, support and conversations about safety in the home. Over 800 households were supported to sign up the Priority Services Register and 324 carbon monoxide alarms were gifted to households, helping to turn new awareness into practical action.

The learning went beyond information about energy use. It helped VCFSE organisations recognise the barriers people face when trying to access help, ask questions or act on advice. Of the 43 VCFSE project survey respondents, 98% agreed or strongly agreed that the project increased their understanding of how to reduce energy usage and their confidence to talk about this with others, with 56% strongly agreeing. In addition, 95% agreed or strongly agreed that taking part increased both their confidence and ability to engage with and listen to local communities.



This example shows how VCFSE organisations developed a deeper understanding of local inequality by listening to communities, adapting their support and noticing the different circumstances shaping people's energy needs. One VCFSE group described how the project equipped local organisations to understand and respond to inequalities:

"Our confidence to engage with local communities on energy awareness has grown enormously. As a diverse community group, we have been able to listen compassionately to the different behaviours, lifestyles and priorities within our communities, which has helped us offer more tailored and culturally sensitive support. This has also strengthened our ability to guide people towards appropriate resources and encourage them to seek help when needed."

Another organisation showed how this understanding translated into stronger relationships. By creating a familiar and supportive space, they found that residents were more willing to raise concerns, ask questions and seek practical help:

"People felt more comfortable asking questions, seeking advice and sharing their concerns in a familiar and supportive environment. For example, some participants who initially attended group sessions later requested one-to-one help with contacting suppliers and understanding their bills. Overall, the project helped reduce anxiety around energy costs, improved awareness of available support and strengthened connections between our organisation and the community."

By the end of the project's final year, Safe and Warm Communities had supported VCFSE organisations to see energy vulnerability as part of a wider picture of local inequality. The project gave organisations practical knowledge, but it also strengthened their confidence to listen, evidence need and respond in ways that were relevant to their communities. This is the wider impact of the work: a better-informed VCFSE sector, more able to recognise inequality locally and act on it through trusted relationships.



Our impact



Delivering capacity-building community engagement via the Action Hampshire Way



Outcomes:

- Increase VCFSE organisations' ability to engage with and listen to local communities
- Improve VCFSE organisations' ability to effectively support local communities

The Action Hampshire Way is a community engagement methodology that seeks to build capacity within VCFSE organisations so they can increase awareness and understanding, capture community insights, and/or change attitudes and behaviours by starting conversations on different topics that are often local issues of inequality or taboo topics.

How it works:

- We contact our expansive networks of VCFSEs to share communications about a project and onboard interested organisations.
- We fund each VCFSE organisation to participate. Funding guidance suggests money should be spent on community participant reimbursement, staff time, and resources.
- We build capacity by delivering an informative workshop and providing an engagement toolkit to increase VCFSE representatives' understanding and awareness of the topic of focus.
- Participating VCFSEs deliver at least one workshop, event, or activity with their community members/service users to explore the topic. They can use any methods to facilitate this workshop as they know how to best engage their community members.
- We co-produce a resource or report based on the insights provided by the VCFSEs in their Feedback Forms.

Healthwatch Hampshire Engagement

Across Hampshire, many people have important experiences of health and social care services, but do not always know how to share them or feel confident that their voices will be heard. Funded by Healthwatch Hampshire, this ongoing project is helping to bridge that gap. Through the Action Hampshire Way, Action Hampshire is connecting with trusted VCFSE organisations already working alongside underserved communities and supporting them to open up conversations with the people they know best.



During the 2025–2026 impact report period, 84 VCFSE organisations took part in the project, creating opportunities for individuals and groups to talk about what is working, what is difficult, and what needs to change. Together, they collected more than 560 feedback forms, which have been shared with Healthwatch Hampshire to inform local NHS and social care improvements. The feedback has highlighted practical barriers including access to GP appointments, dental waiting lists, and the need for accessible information.

For the organisations involved, the project is not just about collecting feedback. It gives them a structured reason to listen more deeply to the people they support and to explore the health and social care issues shaping their daily lives. These conversations are helping organisations understand which services are most needed, where people are struggling to access support, and how communities and services could work together to remove barriers.

The project allowed us to identify which health services were needed the most. It also allowed us to discuss any problems getting the health services people needed and how we can work together to address these issues and make it easier to access health services

Our impact

For community members, the sessions offer something practical and immediate: a way to speak up in a familiar setting, supported by organisations they already trust. People who are unsure where to raise concerns, or whether their experiences will make a difference, are being given the opportunity to share what matters to them. This is helping communities feel listened to and giving VCFSE organisations a stronger foundation for supporting them in the future.

“Many of our members often feel like they have no say or are unsure about how or who to contact to raise their concerns. However, this project empowered them, making them feel valued and giving them the opportunity to contribute to positive changes that impact their health, social, and mental well-being.”

“The project provided a valuable opportunity for adults with learning disabilities to share their experiences and have their voices heard. We appreciated the focus on issues that matter to our members and the opportunity to contribute their views to help improve local health and social care services.”

What began as a Healthwatch Hampshire-funded partnership to gather feedback is continuing to strengthen trust, confidence, and connection across Hampshire. During 2025–2026, the work has shown how trusted VCFSE organisations can bring forward voices that might otherwise go unheard. Organisations are gaining richer insight into community needs, while communities are gaining a clearer route to influence the health and social care services they rely on. The feedback gathered in this impact report period shows how the Action Hampshire Way can turn trusted relationships into meaningful engagement and practical learning for future service improvement.



Many people appreciated the Healthwatch Hampshire engagement project for its strong focus on community voices and its efforts to make engagement inclusive and accessible.

Communities Against Cancer

Communities Against Cancer utilises the Action Hampshire Way to raise awareness about cancer and, in particular, the importance of talking with your GP or other health professional about any health concerns. In 2025/2026, we ran nine online workshops to train people from organisations that are trusted by the under-served communities we and our funders want to reach. These were attended by 35 VCFSEs and 50 organisations were awarded a grant of up to £2,500 for activities and events to raise awareness among their service users.

Grant recipients this year engaged almost 3000 community members via films, radio shows, events and talks, healthy cooking sessions, and much more. Several organisations noted that the funding enabled them to create safe, comfortable spaces for conversations about cancer, highlighting the project's contribution towards our outcomes focused on engaging with, listening to, and supporting communities.





Many participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to connect, learn, and relax in a welcoming community setting... The interactive quiz and open chats played a vital role in enhancing understanding and promoting early detection

One grant recipient, Kikoi Connection, delivered a Health Awareness Event in Basingstoke, with a primary focus on prostate cancer awareness within Black, African, Caribbean, and Asian communities. They reported that their event, attended by 25 people, built participants' confidence to ask questions about prostate health, screening, and early detection. Further feedback from the event highlighted that the presentations were informative, engaging, and accessible.

As a result of their Communities Against Cancer engagement, Kikoi Connection has decided to undertake a 6-month prostate cancer awareness campaign using social media and community platforms. They have also committed to embedding health awareness into all their events in future, including through the use of resources from organisations like Macmillan Cancer Support. Examples such as these evidence the long-lasting impact of Action Hampshire projects, whereby building VCFSEs capacity means they can continue to engage and listen to communities on topics that matter to them beyond the scope of the project.



"Our work has created a safe, supportive space for women to talk openly about their health – many for the first time"

"Many [of our participants] are now talking about concerns to do with health and [are] able to identify changes they need to make or could make"

Our impact

Let's Be Smokefree

In October 2025, with funding from Hampshire County Council, Action Hampshire launched the two-year Let's Be Smokefree project to equip VCFSE organisations to help people in their communities stop smoking. The programme aims to increase awareness of smoking cessation support, strengthen referral pathways into Smokefree Hampshire and build the capacity of VCFSE staff and volunteers to have supportive conversations about smoking.

Using the Action Hampshire Way, we engaged VCFSE organisations through a series of online workshops designed to build knowledge, confidence and connections. Four workshops reached 30 VCFSE representatives, with 17 organisations joining the programme. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 98% of participants rating the workshops as useful or very useful.

Participants particularly valued the practical advice and insight into the impact of smoking:



> *Highly informative, enlightening stats and useful tips on how to approach conversation*

> *The statistics were very powerful and having the information at hand is going to be really helpful to inform other people*

Our impact

In response to feedback from participants, we introduced regular Share and Learn sessions to enable organisations to exchange ideas and learn from each other's experiences. Two sessions have been delivered so far, attended by eight VCFSE representatives. Alongside practical resources and ongoing support, these sessions are helping organisations develop their understanding of how to engage local people in positive, non-judgemental conversations about smoking.

Community feedback suggests these activities are being delivered in an engaging and supportive way. When asked to describe activities they had attended, participants most commonly used words such as “informative, supportive, understandable, engaging, rewarding and inspiring”.

A key aspect of the programme has been strengthening links between VCFSE organisations and the Smokefree Hampshire Service, helping organisations understand the support available and how to signpost community members effectively.

Early signs of impact are already emerging. One participating organisation reported that people attending a smokefree session had subsequently given up vaping and smoking after learning more about the health, financial and environmental impacts.

Action Hampshire has also worked with local infrastructure organisations (LIOs), district councils and community partners to embed smokefree messaging within wider community activities. At Hart Voluntary Action's Mental Health Awareness Day, Smokefree Hampshire engaged with local residents and around 15 people were signposted to the service.

While still in the mobilisation phase, the programme has already engaged 17 VCFSE organisations, established new partnerships and strengthened organisations' ability to support their communities. Early community feedback and examples of behaviour change demonstrate the potential of this approach to create lasting impact as activity scales up during 2026–27.



Thank you to our funders



We would like to thank all our funders for their investment in our work and continued support, without which we would not be able to achieve our mission and overall vision of supporting Hampshire's VCFSE sector and their diverse communities to thrive.

- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Department for Health and Social Care
- Dummer Parish Council
- Fawley Parish Council
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board
- Hampshire County Council
- Healthwatch Hampshire
- National Institute of Health Research Applied Research Collaborative Wessex
- National Institute of Health Research South Central Regional Research Delivery Network
- National Lottery Community Fund
- NHS England
- Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks
- SGN
- Test Valley Borough Council
- Winchester City Council
- Wessex Cancer Alliance

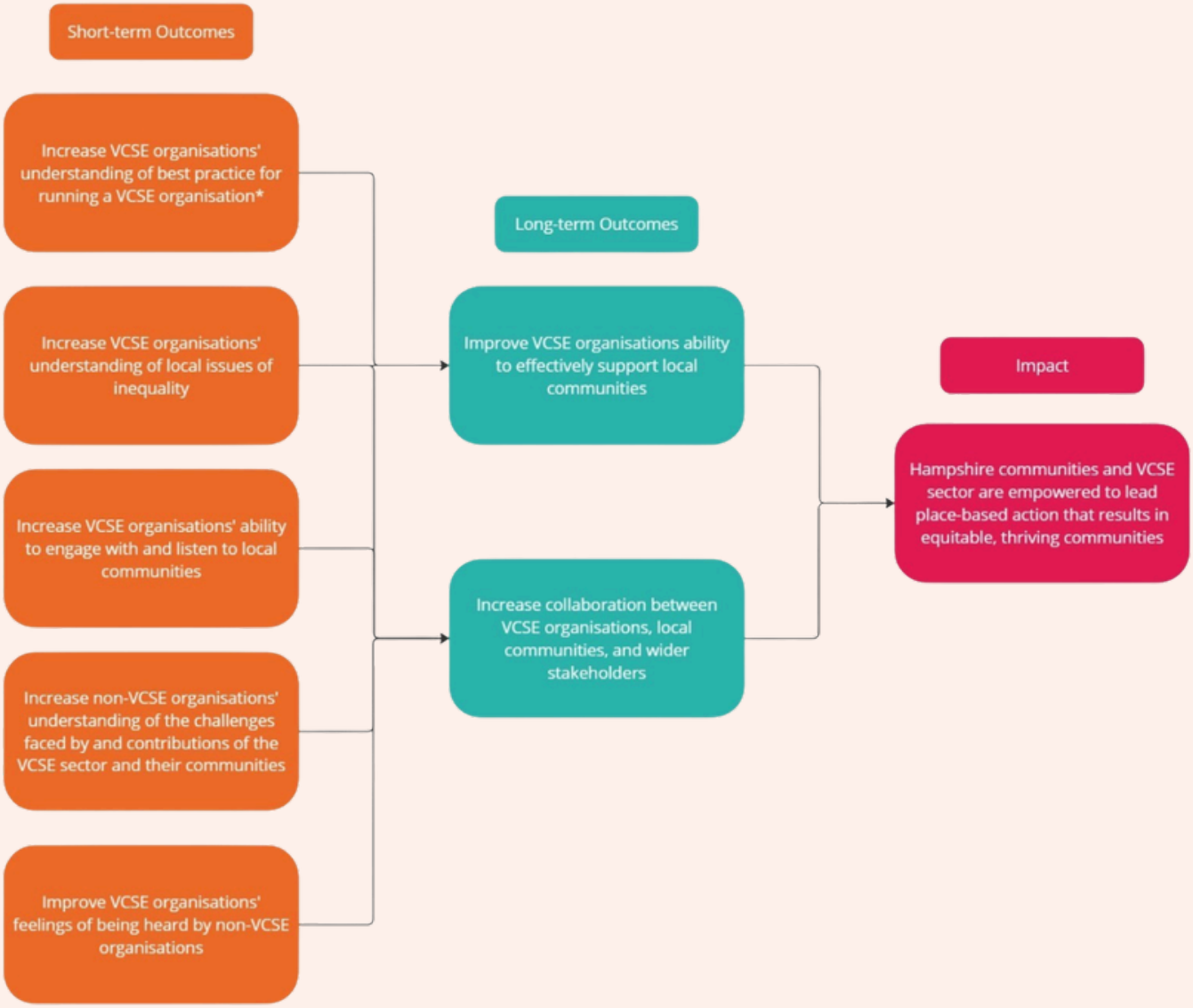
We would also like to thank all of our partners, including the VCFSE organisations that make up this diverse sector, for all your hard work to make Hampshire a place where communities can thrive.



Appendices

Appendix A: Theory of Change





A Theory of Change is a methodology for planning, monitoring, and evaluating impact; it provides a description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. Above is Action Hampshire's Theory of Change for 2025/26, this has since been updated through a series of co-design workshops with staff, trustees, and VCFSE organisations

Action Hampshire projects and services are not mapped individually on to the Theory of Change diagram below due to the volume of we deliver. However, at the beginning of each new project, teams identify which Action Hampshire outcomes they are aiming to achieve through their work to ensure it aligns with our organisation's mission and vision.

Appendix B: Methodology



To understand the degree to which we have achieved our outcomes, and therefore made a contribution towards our overall impact, we collected quantitative and qualitative data across our projects and activities in three main ways: surveys, case studies, and quarterly reports.

Staff members were required to identify which outcomes their project/activity would be contributing to and then to create a monitoring and evaluation plan to state which of the data collection methods listed above they would use.

Surveys

A set of core questions were created in relation to our short-term outcomes. Staff then amended a survey template to include the questions relevant to their project based on the outcomes it was aiming to achieve.

For example, for projects focused on helping VCSE organisations to engage with and listen to their local communities, we asked about their ability and their confidence to do this. Creating a core set of questions allowed us to collate data from across our range of projects to understand our overall effect.

One-off surveys were disseminated to training participants and event attendees and pre/post-activity surveys were disseminated to those engaged over a sustained period (typically three months or more). This allowed us to assess how much people's skills and confidence changed over the course of a project.

Case studies



Case studies were undertaken to collect qualitative data in relation to our long term outcomes as well as support the evidence collected via the surveys. This method allowed us to focus in more detail on the impact of a specific person's and/or organisation's engagement with us. The questions used varied from project to project but aimed to collect data on what the participant gained from participating, any challenges or difficulties, and what long-term effects there might be after their engagement with us.

Quarterly reporting



Finally, we collected quantitative data (such as the number of VCSE organisations we have supported and the number of events held) in our quarterly reporting across all projects. The purpose of this is to understand the reach of our work across the VCSE sector and local communities and its effects.

From time to time, our project funders required additional impact reporting and data collection. Our impact measurement approach allowed us to be flexible and take specific approaches per project to include any additional requirements alongside the general impact data we were collecting.

Analysis



All one-off surveys that asked core questions were collated and analysed using MS Excel. We did not have enough pre/post survey data to collate across projects so this was analysed using the same format on a project- by-project basis for the purpose of funder reporting. The findings presented in this report is based on all the data collected and analysed using the methods outlined in this section, as well as findings from external evaluators reports.

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