

NDVS EVALUATION & IMPACT COMMUNICATION TOOL

NDVS exists to empower, support, connect, and champion the voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) sector – the lifeblood of North Devon's communities.

We provide essential guidance, training, advocacy, and opportunities for collaboration, helping organisations not just survive, but thrive. We also match individuals with meaningful volunteering opportunities, supporting both those who want to give their time and the organisations that need their help. In a time of rising demand, we ensure that vital support reaches those who need it most. In a region facing significant deprivation and isolation, we work to bridge the gap between grassroots initiatives and policymakers – fostering stability, reducing fragmentation, and amplifying community voices.



Through connection, compassion, and celebration, we strengthen the backbone of North Devon's charitable and social impact landscape – building a happier, healthier, and more inclusive future for all.

Our **MISSION** is to empower and uplift local charitable, voluntary community organisations and social enterprises. We believe in the transformative power of community action to create lasting, positive change. By championing these organisations, alongside providing essential support and specialist advice, whilst fostering vibrant collaborations – WE enable those who do good to flourish.

Our **VISION** is to cultivate thriving communities where everyone feels they belong and can contribute to meaningful social action, making a real difference in the lives of others!

Aim 1 - Strengthening the VCSE Sector

Actively support the strengthening of North Devon's Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector by providing infrastructure services that enable organisations to build resilience, grow sustainably, and deliver meaningful impact.

We aim to achieve this by:

- **Providing tailored capacity-building support** to help organisations strengthen governance, leadership, and operational effectiveness.
- **Supporting the development of new and emerging groups**, ensuring they are welcomed into the sector and connected to relevant networks, resources, and guidance.
- **Facilitating volunteer recruitment and development**, including DBS verification, training, and peer support forums to promote safe and effective volunteering.
- **Offering hosted project services** that provide flexible infrastructure support—such as HR, finance, and employment functions—enabling grassroots initiatives to focus on delivery.
- **Delivering relevant training and sector intelligence**, informed by local need and shared through our communications strategy and partnership offer.

We will measure this by:

- **Number of VCSE organisations supported** through one-to-one guidance, hosted services, or training.
- **Number and type of training sessions delivered**, including attendance, feedback, and follow-up actions.
- **Volunteer engagement metrics**, including number of volunteers recruited, retained, and supported (e.g., through DBS checks or forums).
- **Hosted project activity**, including number of projects supported, transitions to independence, and service uptake (HR, finance, employment).
- **Partnership engagement**, including uptake of NDVS Partner offer and cross-sector collaborations initiated.
- **Communications reach**, including newsletter engagement, website traffic (Devon Connect), and social media analytics

NDVS acts as a facilitative partner—offering guidance, tools, and connections that empower VCSE groups to lead their own development, collaborate effectively, and respond to community needs

The wider benefits include:

- Greater organisational resilience, enabling VCSE groups to navigate change, uncertainty, and growth with confidence.
- Improved sustainability, with better access to infrastructure support, funding pathways, and hosted services.
- Enhanced legal and operational compliance, through training, guidance, and access to professional tools.
- Stronger networks and peer support, fostering collaboration, shared learning, and reduced duplication across the sector.
- Safer and more inclusive volunteer engagement, with improved recruitment practices and retention strategies.
- Increased visibility and credibility of VCSE organisations within strategic partnerships and local systems.
- Empowered leadership, with more confident and capable individuals driving community-led change.

Aim 2 - Connecting, Collaborating, and Communicating

Strengthen the collective impact of North Devon's VCSE sector by facilitating strategic connections, fostering cross-sector collaboration, and amplifying community voices through inclusive communication.

We aim to achieve this by:

- **Coordinating inclusive networking and partnership development**, enabling organisations to share knowledge, align efforts, and reduce duplication.
- **Facilitating relevant forums such as Leadership Hub, Volunteer Management Forum and wider Northern Devon Community Development as well as Youth forums**, providing safe spaces for peer support, strategic dialogue, and sector intelligence.
- **Delivering high-profile events**, including the Annual Community Awards, to celebrate achievements, foster morale, and raise public awareness.

We will measure this by:

- **Forum participation**, including attendance at networks and forums (listed), and feedback on relevance and outcomes.
- Number and diversity of events held, including attendance and representation across sectors.
- Number of new partnerships formed, including cross-sector collaborations and corporate engagement.
- Feedback from forums, events, and awards, capturing qualitative insights and satisfaction.
- Engagement metrics, including newsletter open rates, social media reach, and website traffic.

NDVS acts as a convenor and connector—bringing people, organisations, and sectors together to share learning, celebrate achievements, and co-create solutions that reflect local priorities.

The wider benefits include:

- Greater visibility and recognition of VCSE organisations and their contributions.
- Improved morale and sector cohesion, through celebration, connection, and shared purpose.
- Stronger cross-sector relationships, enabling coordinated responses to local challenges.
- Reduced duplication and increased efficiency, through shared learning and aligned efforts.
- Enhanced community cohesion, with more inclusive and representative engagement.

- **Building cross-sector and corporate partnerships**, strengthening collaboration between VCSE, public, and private sectors.
- **Leveraging Devon Connect as a digital infrastructure tool**, enabling VCSE organisations to promote events, recruit volunteers, share resources, and connect with wider audiences across Devon.
- **Implementing a strategic communications plan**, including newsletters, social media, and stakeholder engagement, to ensure timely, relevant, and accessible information sharing.

- Growth in NDVS Partner network, including uptake and retention.
- Engagement metrics including Devon Connect usage — number of listings, volunteer sign-ups, and cross-sector interactions.

- Increased trust and credibility, positioning NDVS as a central connector and advocacy
- Enhanced digital visibility and accessibility, especially for smaller or rural groups.
- Improved volunteer matching and community engagement, through a centralised, user-friendly platform.
- Stronger regional connectivity, linking North Devon’s VCSE sector with wider Devon initiatives and opportunities.

Aim 3 - Funding and Advocacy

Support the financial sustainability and strategic positioning of North Devon’s VCSE sector by advocating for equitable investment, sharing funding intelligence, and enabling organisations to access and apply for resources effectively.

We will aim to achieve this by:

- **Monitoring and analysing the funding landscape**, identifying trends, gaps, and opportunities.
- **Lobbying and influencing strategic stakeholders**, including MPs, councillors, and commissioners, to secure investment and recognition.
- **Sharing funding opportunities and resources**, including templates, case studies, and guidance.
- **Delivering a proactive communications strategy**, using newsletters, social media, and targeted alerts to keep the sector informed.

We will measure this by:

- Number of funding opportunities shared
- Engagement with strategic stakeholders (meetings, briefings)
- Number of successful funding applications supported
- Feedback from organisations on funding support
- Inclusion of VCSE priorities in local funding framework

NDVS acts as a sector advocate and funding enabler—connecting organisations to opportunities, influencing commissioning, and promoting the value of community-led delivery.

The wider benefits are:

- Increased access to funding, especially for smaller or underrepresented groups
- More strategic and aligned funding applications
- Greater influence in local decision-making and commissioning
- Long-term sustainability of community services
- Recognition of VCSE sector’s preventative and social value

Aim 4 - Community Intelligence and Systems Change

Harness and amplify community intelligence to influence systems, shape policy, and ensure that lived experience informs strategic decision-making across North Devon.

We will aim to achieve this by:

- **Facilitating community development and listening**, especially among underrepresented groups.
- **Capturing and analysing impact data**, including case studies, CRM insights, and evaluation feedback.
- **Representing the sector in strategic forums**, ensuring VCSE voices are heard and valued.
- **Aligning activity with regional priorities**, including One Northern Devon/Northern Devon Futures and other place-based initiatives/strategic partnership boards.

We will measure this by:

- Number of case studies and feedback reports produced
- CRM data on engagement and support
- National Lottery Evaluation Reports – internal and external
- Participation in strategic forums and partnerships
- Evidence of community-led priorities influencing policy

NDVS acts as a bridge between communities and institutions—mobilising insight, surfacing hidden voices, and embedding VCSE perspectives in local planning and service design.

The wider benefits include:

- More inclusive and representative decision-making
- Evidence-based service design and commissioning
- Amplified community voice and lived experience
- Improved policy alignment with local needs
- Strengthened role of VCSE sector in systems change

Context	<i>This is a working document that will form part of the NDVS communications strategy. It aims to look at how our aims and objectives are linked to what we do (and visa-versa), and how this translates into impact that we can measure. We have made several assumptions that form an integral part of the logic behind this document, these should be understood as they are a key part of the logic journey.</i>		
Impact	NDVS strengthens North Devon’s VCSE sector by enabling organisations and individuals to thrive through infrastructure support, strategic collaboration, and community-led advocacy. Our impact is measured through increased resilience, visibility, and influence of VCSE groups, improved volunteer engagement, and stronger cross-sector partnerships — all contributing to a more inclusive, connected, and empowered community.		
Assumptions	- Community-led action is a powerful driver of social change. - VCSE organisations are best placed to respond to local needs when adequately supported. - Infrastructure support, collaboration, and advocacy are essential to sector sustainability. - Inclusive communication and lived experience must inform systems and policy. - NDVS’s role as a connector, enabler, and advocate is vital in bridging gaps between grassroots and strategic levels.		
What are we trying to solve?	- Fragmentation and underrepresentation of VCSE voices in strategic decision-making. - Limited access to infrastructure support for small and emerging groups. - Inequitable funding and commissioning processes. - Isolation and lack of visibility among community organisations. - Gaps in data, insight, and lived experience informing local systems and service	Inputs and resources	- Skilled NDVS team with expertise in community development, training, and advocacy. - Hosted services infrastructure (HR, finance, employment). - CRM system and evaluation tools for data capture and analysis. - Strategic partnerships with public, private, and VCSE sectors. - Communications platforms (Devon Connect, newsletters, social media, and distribution lists)
Enablers	- Strong local relationships and trust within the VCSE sector. - National alignment with NAVCA’s four functions: Support, Connection, Influence, and Voice. - Active participation in strategic forums and partnerships. - Community Awards and Leadership Hub as platforms for visibility and morale. - Proactive communications strategy and sector intelligence sharing.	Barriers	- Limited capacity and resources across the VCSE sector. - Complex and competitive funding landscape. - Policy and commissioning frameworks that overlook community-led delivery. - Digital exclusion and accessibility challenges. - Burnout and retention issues among volunteers and staff.

CONCLUSION

NDVS is dedicated to empowering North Devon’s VCSE sector through our 7 C’s of CVS: connection, collaboration, communication, communities, championing, compassion, and celebration. By investing in infrastructure, amplifying community voices, and fostering strategic collaboration, we ensure that those who do good can continue to make a lasting impact, and flourish! Our work is not just about support – it’s about systems change, visibility, and resilience. Together, we are building a happier, healthier and more inclusive future for all.