



Working with communities to be strong, healthy, diverse, vibrant and flourishing

Community Action Network Annual Report 2021 / 2022

We CAN

EMPOWER
THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

ENABLE
VOLUNTEERING

CONNECT
COMMUNITIES

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INTRODUCTION

Hazel Walker – Chair of Trustees

In 2022 we celebrate CAN being around in one form or another for 50 years. This is something we are all very proud about and building on that rich history. We've enjoyed another successful year, sustaining our core work and developing exciting new projects without any mission drift.

We have a hard working and committed team undertaking a huge range of work to very high standards, I thank them all and our Board of Trustees for their wonderful work.



Karen Loftus – Chief Executive

This year we've welcomed 17 new staff, bringing the team to 24 staff and 11 trustees. We've also sustained and grown our brilliant team of 763 volunteers, mainly focused on the vaccination programme, but also supporting other projects.

We've welcomed two new trustees to our Board following a campaign to recruit younger board members to increase our diversity of perspective.

Our mission is focused on three areas, each element playing an equal role in inspiring community and voluntary action:

EMPOWERING the voluntary sector to survive and thrive, by providing expertise, support, development opportunities and training

ENABLING volunteering through our Volunteering Hub, helping everyone to play an active role in their community

CONNECTING communities by helping to create conditions where everyone's voice is valued and heard by facilitating great local networking and communication

Our members are the heart of everything we do. Alongside our offer of expert support and advice we constantly promote volunteering, champion our sector and nurture collaborations. Any charity, voluntary group, community organisation or public sector service working for the good of the local community can join us for free. We also offer a Business Supporter membership, enabling local businesses with a 'social conscience' to connect and collaborate with like-minded people.

Together we **CAN** make a difference

Our values have been co-produced by trustees and staff and aspire to NCVO Charity Ethical Principles. They underpin our vision and mission and demonstrate the behaviour we expect from ourselves and others.

For us how we work is as important as what we do.



EMPOWER THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

HIGHLIGHTS

In 2021/ 2022 we've made a difference:

EMPOWERED the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to survive and thrive, by providing expertise, support, development opportunities and training

141 groups of which 33 were newly forming, supported. 77% had annual incomes under £100,000, 45 had health and wellbeing focus and 9 were ethnically diverse.

This was via 700 interactions by phone, e-mail or face to face ranging from 15 mins to a total of 40 hours each (average 2.6 hours) over 12 months.

Feedback tells us:

- 97% reported they were very satisfied / satisfied
- 91% would definitely recommend CAN to a friend or colleague
- 84% said our support had contributed a great deal or a lot to their improved governance
- 70% said our support had contributed a great deal or a lot to their improved management
- 70% said our support had contributed a great deal or a lot to their improved quality

Improved quality through training 320 attendees based on needs identified by the sector including, introduction to safeguarding, becoming a trustee, meet the funder and much more – the majority of whom report a positive increase in their skills and knowledge

Helped the sector improve its income generation to apply for £652,000 with £165,000 successful so far

Further developed the diversity of perspective on our board to ensure we are representative of the BCP community. The Board feels its governance role is robust and successful and continues to improve year on year.

Carried out a full organisational development review, salary review and hybrid working review. Consolidated our offices in Poole and opened up some desks to other charities.

ENABLE VOLUNTEERING

HIGHLIGHTS

In 2021/ 2022 we've made a difference:

ENABLED volunteering – helping everyone to play an active role in their community

- 1875 people have been supported by CAN to volunteer
- 109 new volunteering opportunities registered from local charities, community groups and public sector organisations
- 452 new volunteers registered
- 270 instances of one-to-one advice and information on volunteering opportunities to the public
- 11 volunteer fairs held – 139 stands and over 360 people looking to volunteer
- 201 local organisations supported on a diverse range of matters relating to volunteers
- Vaccination Programme – total hours of volunteering given to end of March 2022 72,304
 - 371 new volunteers registered
- Continued working on the Vaccine Hesitancy project, delivering 7 vaccine conversation training sessions to over 100 frontline healthcare staff and voluntary sector organisations
- Vision for Volunteering – CAN led locally and fed into the new ambition for volunteers in England over the next decade
- Steps Forward volunteering – 10 learners signed up

CONNECT COMMUNITIES

HIGHLIGHTS

In 2021 /2022 we've made a difference:

CONNECTED communities by helping to create conditions where everyone's voice is valued and heard by facilitating great local networking and communication

Worked with partners from across the VCS, NHS and Council partners to develop the CAN Wellbeing Collaborative whose purpose is to connect people to personalised information and support from the VCS, so they can live their best possible life at home

Became a strategic partner of Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group in the development of Wellbeing Hubs across Dorset - an innovative collaboration bringing together the local community, VCS and public sector partners to improve the communities' mental health

Supported essential public health messaging and now have 105 Trusted Voices Champions who between them support and advise a diverse range of local communities

Given grants to 5 organisations to start projects supporting people living with the detrimental impacts of Covid-19

Celebrated a year of Community Hero in the Spotlight - celebrated the great work of 12 different local charities and community groups

VCS Leaders exCHANGE - bringing leaders together to work collaboratively

Embedded the VCS into the Integrated Care System to work with over 30 different VCS organisations at pace to co-create a VCS ICS Assembly

Proactively championed our sector on 12 strategic boards - supporting and influencing public sector service development

Facilitated 21 networking sessions - geographical and thematically focussed depending on need - On average we saw 90 people a quarter engage with the networks with approximately 15 people virtually attending each network

Increased our media activity - Website visits up to over 29,000

Increased social media engagement across Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Most notably we have been mentioned in tweets on Twitter 1075 times over the course of the year

Delivering our vision for local communities to be strong, healthy, diverse, vibrant and flourishing

EMPOWERING the voluntary sector



Steve Place heads up our work to empower the voluntary and community sector (VCS). Here Steve shares data and stories to demonstrate how our work has a positive impact in supporting our sector to survive and thrive, by providing expertise, support, development opportunities and training

Improving quality and governance

We helped improve practice through our support and advice to 141 groups, of which 33 were newly forming, 77% had annual incomes under £100,000, 45 with health and wellbeing focus and 9 ethnically diverse. This was via 700 interactions by phone, e-mail or face to face ranging from 15 mins to a total of 40 hours each (average 2.6 hours) over 12 months.

Of the groups we worked with:

- 86% reported they were very satisfied and 11% satisfied
- 91% would definitely recommend CAN to a friend or colleague
- 84% said our support had contributed a great deal or a lot to their improved governance
- 70% said our support had contributed a great deal or a lot to their improved management
- 70% said our support had contributed a great deal or a lot to their improved quality

Comments include:

- “[Thanks to CAN] The Board are really confident on matters of Governance. The new CEO has had fast tracked access to key networks / stakeholders”
- “Large companies have the benefit of being able to be guided by both operation and HR departments. This expertise is not available to small companies and charities. CAN is that department.”

- “CAN is always able to provide sound advice with regard to governance and if he doesn't know the answer to a question he will always go away and research and respond at a later time.”
- “It has helped our trustees understand their role more”
- “We have been able to develop a user friendly safeguarding policy specifically for our charity”
- “It is too early in our project to be specific”

Stories that demonstrate our impact:

We've been working extensively alongside [Poole Waste Not Want Not](#), a social supermarket. It aims to move people on from food banks etc to be a half-way house to normal retail shopping by giving choice but also experience in budgeting. It collects and buys food then sets them out on shelves like any retail shop but with a suggested donation per item (25% of retail). Families in need are referred and then can visit the shop as many times as they like, which is open 6 days a week 11-3, fill a basket and go to the till to 'pay'. Poole Waste Not Want Not also want to develop cooking and financial skills and develop their volunteers (most from their client group).

We managed the application process for their new manager. This covered reviewing the Job Description and Person Specification, creating a pack, placing adverts, sourcing a DBS umbrella body, drafting new contract of employment, advising and providing the secretariat to the shortlisting and interview panel. An experienced new manager was appointed and started and has had a huge impact on the charity, winning the “best service provider of the year” for the Poole Business Awards. We have also helped them with a trustee recruitment pack and process, resulting in three new trustees.

Setting up a new charity can be a minefield. We worked extensively to achieve 4 successful charity applications and 1 CIC. [The Story Works](#) is a new Bournemouth based children's story writing charity with plans to run both weekend workshops and workshops within schools for children in the Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch area between the ages of 7-18.

Initially based on the Bournemouth University campus, both Bournemouth University and Arts University of Bournemouth students will volunteer to provide a wide variety of story writing workshops that also encompasses illustration as an integral part of each session. We provided initial advice on choice of legal structure and charity/CIC status and then helped them with a successful charity constitution and application. We provided a session for their trustees on their roles and responsibilities.

“The Story Works would not be in a position to do the work we plan to do without the support and guidance of CAN. Their advice was integral in enabling The Story Works to navigate and complete the application process.”

Another of the new groups supported is a project that was formed during Covid-19 by a group of young Muslim women, [Inara Project](#), to provide food to those in need, in particular refugees and homeless women. Initially they contacted CAN for some safeguarding policy advice which led on to advice about registering as a charity. We have advised on their draft constitution especially agreeing on objects that describe the differences the charity wants to make. Next step will be making the charity application. "The Inara team and I are extremely grateful to have your expertise to help us navigate becoming a charity."

Our work to support trustees

Volunteer trustees are the life blood of the voluntary and community sector – we work to ensure they are supported and trained to provide essential governance:

- During Trustees Week in November 2021, we launched a survey to identify what contribution they make and their support and training needs. The results will help inform CAN's support for 2022-23
- 3 virtual training courses – to increase knowledge and confidence in their role as a trustee
- Bespoke sessions to individual trustee Boards

Supporting growth and sustainability

Feedback on our 1-2-1 advice work showed:

- 54% of groups said our support had contributed a great deal or a lot to their growth
- 55% said our support had contributed a great deal or a lot to their increased sustainability
- 45% of groups said we had helped sustain their current funding, 39% said we had helped them find new sources and 42% that it had resulted in increased funding
- 48% said that our support had resulted in more volunteers
- 65% said that our support had sustained their services, 39% that they were delivering more services and 45% said they had more users
- 25 groups (68% of those who responded) said CAN helped with increased collaboration (Our work as described in the Connecting Communities section very much supports these findings)

"We are now close to submitting our CIO application. We have 2 new Trustees, have access to great marketing and funding support, which has been invaluable to us during this period of rapid growth. We were awarded Community Hero in the Spotlight and we have also been awarded funding for one of our projects via Trusted Voices – many thanks!"

“Helping restructure the charity has opened us up to more funding. We have a clearer understanding of our current legal structure and status which in turn has helped with more effective governance”

“CAN’s advice and input enabled us to revive The Friends of Churchill Gardens as a constituted community group after 5 years of being dormant.”

“The advice given was tailored exactly to what we needed and was really beneficial, and we firmly believe it will result in an increase in funds, just as soon as we put it into practice. We almost never complete surveys but felt compelled to do this one and to get in touch because your support has been so helpful.”

When asked about how the advice had benefitted their users many groups felt that being a more efficient, effective and sustainable organisation would automatically lead to better outcomes for those they work with. Some said that it will lead to increased funding that would increase services and users. For those that did mention specific benefits the most common were more and improved quality services.

CAN is leading a partnership project with Dorset Race Equality Council (DREC), Dorset Community Foundation and BCP Council to improve support for ethnically diverse voluntary and community groups in BCP to become more sustainable. Following a number of meetings CAN made a successful bid for a 6 month research programme (mainly delivered by DREC) which will start in April to inform a detailed bid for a 5 year project.

Funding support

Weekly funding updates using information from BCP Council’s Funding Advisor ceased in October 2021 as the role was no longer in place – we hope to see this re-start in 2022/2023. We continue to send any updates on funding to our membership on a regular basis.

We continue to represent the local sector on the grant panel for Communities Against Cancer which provides small grants to those across Wessex who can reach those sections of the community who are most at risk of cancer to raise awareness of the risks, signs, prevention and screening services. During this year there have been monthly panel meetings that have awarded 4 grants totalling £9,410 to BCP groups.

CAN have a place on the BH Coastal Lottery Grants panel. Two rounds awarded a total of £4,953 in grants to 9 groups.

Held funds on behalf of Sandbanks Neighbourhood Forum, who could not hold the funds themselves.

Bounce Back

This project was funded by BCP Council to give advice and support on income generation to the sector to help them recover from Covid-19. Between September 2021 and the end of March we delivered:

- 9 'Meet the Funder' one hour webinars for funders to present their priorities and process, with Q&As. These were very popular with groups (satisfaction scores 90%+) and funders
- Audits were undertaken with 52 groups to identify actions to become funding ready and concentrated 1-2-1 support. In total 665 hours of support was provided. 93% of groups were very satisfied or satisfied with the support they have received
- We contracted NCVO, the national body representing voluntary and community groups, to deliver their fundraising training online. Thirteen courses were delivered allowing access to nationally recognised, high quality training at a greatly subsidised price. Feedback was highly positive and 91% would recommend the courses to a colleague. Overall attendance at the webinars and training exceeded our targets and feedback from attendees is that they meet a need and should continue
- Provided 46 groups with 2 nationally recognised fundraising textbooks for ongoing reference

As a result of the work:

- 282 people from 101 groups attended our 24 webinars and training
- We assisted with 64 applications to apply for £652,000. Grant funding usually takes 12-16 weeks, or longer, to receive a response (we will follow up with groups in coming months). £165k has so far been confirmed from 32 out of 45 applications, which already represents a 3.3:1 return on investment from the council's grant, and a success rate of 71% which compares very well with 30-40% published figures
- 75% of groups said they have a better understanding of income sources
- 93% say they are funding ready
- 88% said it has improved their bid writing
- 38% said that the advice has made them more sustainable

We have prepared 4 case studies on the impact of support provided as part of the Bounce Back project – here are quotes from groups:

- "Our Jubilee Project Funding application was successful!! Thank you so much Kathryn. Your help was pivotal. Arts Council/Dorset Community Foundation was oversubscribed by 5 times the amount of funding available."

- “We really wouldn't have got through the last few months without the CAN Bounce Back. We hope that CAN will be able to secure further funding to continue this valuable work. It is certainly something that The Power House would apply for again to help us scale up and grow our team to ensure organisational sustainability.”
- “The support I have received through the Bounce Back Project via CAN has been invaluable to me in my role with responsibility for projects and funding at CRUMBS. The range of NCVO training sessions has been particularly useful when developing our charity's funding strategy, case for support and impact evidence. I am very appreciative of the availability and support from CAN, particularly from Kathryn Cook, who I have found to be very approachable, professional and helpful”.

Resource donation and loan scheme

Due to the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic, these services were suspended to keep our staff and members safe. Enthusiastically recommencing in Q1 2022.

Charities supporting Health and Wellbeing

We supported 45 groups that have a health and wellbeing focus, 9 being newly formed. [Deer View Equine Interventions](#) is a new charity that work with children, adults and families who are struggling with social isolation or exclusion and find it difficult to engage with or respond to talk based support. They bring the highly successful equine-assisted interventions model of [The Horse Course](#), based in Weymouth, to the east of the county (initially Christchurch). This is a high impact equine intervention which develops 8 identified and measurable skills in an active and engaging way. Participants work with a facilitator, who provide unbiased in-the-moment feedback, and specially trained horses. We worked with them to agree a constitution, make the application for charity status (which was successful) and open a bank account.

“Huge thanks to CAN (whose) invaluable help and knowledge during Deerview Equine Intervention's recent Charity Commission application made the process so much easier. He (Steve Place) was always just a phone call or email away and was a great support throughout, what a brilliant service!”

Supporting access to training

Covid-19 lockdown resulted in us looking at new and innovative ways of delivering training. Over the summer of 2021 we carried out a training survey of our members. This has been used to develop a training programme from January 2022. Virtual rather than face to face was a popular request as were webinars and half day training. These, plus requests for outcomes and monitoring training, informed the delivery of the Bounce Back project.

During 2021-22 we delivered:

- 3 Being a Charity Trustee virtual courses attended by 19 volunteer trustees, with the majority telling us our support had increased their knowledge and confidence in the role
- 24 webinars/training sessions as part of Bounce Back, attended by 282 people from 101 groups
- 1 webinar for Outset (main provider of business start-up advice and support in BCP) for 13 of their clients about how to set up a good cause organisation. Feedback from these were all very positive
- 1 webinar presented by Sonia Wilson on HR Policies attended by 6, feedback again all very positive

"These sessions are really helpful and are equipping me for the next stage of our fundraising, so it's time well spent"

"Has helped me focus"

"Updated our Articles of Association"

"Have more confidence in my role as Trustee"

"It gives me greater confidence in what we do right and to ask questions when less sure (regarding HR)"

"Excellent information that we will use at a later date for funding applications"

"We are so grateful for all the courses and consultancy, they have transformed our fundraising capacity."

Keeping the sector up to date

We continue to communicate weekly updates, Know Your Stuff, of recent changes in legal and good practice relevant to the voluntary and community sector. With sections on Covid-19, legal, charity, employment and volunteering, income and other.

We receive a steady stream of positive comments from readers. "I just wanted to reach out and say thank you for the Know Your Stuff emails that you send out. These emails have become a part of our work discussions and have allowed us to discuss and act upon subjects we may not have looked at or considered previously and has worked as a prompt to review existing practices. You break down what can be seen as daunting subjects into easy to digest bites and have given links to some tools and sites that we have found very useful. I can only imagine how much time and work it takes to create each one, so we just wanted to let you know how beneficial they have been for us."

Sustaining and developing CAN as a strong umbrella infrastructure charity

Our Board of Trustees continues to grow and develop. They provide scrutiny, stretch and support to the Chief Executive. They scored themselves with 8.4 out of 10 for how well they supported and challenged the Chief Executive over the past year and 9.8 out of 10 for their degree of satisfaction with the operational work of CAN, both showed an increase on last year. Following a review of the demographics of the board to further develop a diversity of perspective, we undertook an advertising campaign to attract a trustee under 30 (to balance the age profile of the Board). Two potential applicants were identified. One has been co-opted to the Board and the other has joined to fill one of the Member vacancies as they were from a very small community group. The Board also reviewed its induction of new trustees, and any actions will be implemented during 2022-23.

A Scheme of Delegation was agreed to give clarity to sub-committees, officers and staff responsibilities. A Finance Committee oversees the accounts and budget. Accounts have been presented to Trustees who are assured we are financially sound and on budget. The terms of reference of this committee were reviewed and the role description for its Chair. A Quality Assurance Committee has been set up to help oversee any action plan resulting from quality audits audit and our general quality assurance framework.

Due to continuing Covid-19 issues this year's AGM was again held virtually but other stakeholders, besides voting members, were invited. Following the AGM business there was the launch of a short [film](#) to highlight the responses of CAN and local voluntary and community groups to the pandemic.

Following a Governance review in order to ensure trustees' had a deeper understanding of the work of CAN, staff teams were invited to make presentations to the Board about their work which was greatly valued by trustees and staff alike. The Board continue to evaluate their governance roles of support, stretch, scrutiny, stewardship and strategy at the end of each meeting.

The Board agreed to CAN declaring a climate emergency and agreeing actions we can take. A review of our equality, diversity and inclusion policy and actions were agreed by the Board.

Membership (see Connecting Communities section) The Board agreed to extend full membership to voluntary and community groups based in Dorset. A lead trustee has been appointed for Membership to advise staff on any issues relating to accepting members.

CAN Organisational Development

Job / Salary review

Our Chief Executive has worked with our independent HR advisor to complete a review of all our job descriptions and person specifications to ensure they were up to date, and a fair wage was being paid. Our Chief Executive involved all staff in the process which has now been successful concluded.

Office and Hybrid working

As with many organisations we have reviewed our office capacity and worked with the team to co-create a new Hybrid Working policy, which gives us the flexibility to work at home and in the office. Having reviewed our office space requirements, we moved out of Boscombe Link, which was no longer fit for purpose and consolidated our offices from the 3rd floor at Beech House in Poole to a larger space on the 4th floor.

Staff recruitment:

With new projects and a growing portfolio, we recruited new staff this year:

Empower the voluntary sector team:

- Bounce Back lead recruited and successfully managed the programme
- Funding Advisor being recruited in Q1 of 2022/2023

Enable Volunteering team:

- Staff and volunteers recruited as staff and volunteers moved on to ensure our work to support the vaccination programme was maintained
- Administrative Officer is being recruited to support the volunteers assisting vaccine hesitancy programme in Q1 2022/2023

Connect Communities team:

- CAN Wellbeing Collaborative Team of 6 recruited
- Project Officer recruited to lead on Public Health Dorset project work
- Transformation Lead working Dorset Wellbeing Hubs starting August 2022
- New Membership Development Lead recruited – starting July 2022

Core Team

- Office Co-ordinator recruited to support back office functions
- Management Accountant

CAN Dorset

- VCS Development Lead
- Training and Support Administrator

Promoting equality, equity and diversity

Trustees have standing agenda item to discuss these matters and ensure they are embedded in all of our work. Not so it is seen as separate, but to ensure it remains a high priority.

Our funded work with Public Health 'Trusted Voices' has supported new and positive relationships with people across different communities and cultures that we had not reached out to successfully before. Enabling us to better engage and increase our membership of charities and community groups that support people / communities with protected characteristics, bringing this element of our membership to 108

This year we have also:

- Reviewed and updated our Equality and Diversity Policy supported by Dorset Race Equality Council (DREC)
- Created an implementation plan to support
- Been successful in securing initial research Lottery funding with DREC, Dorset Community Foundation and BCP Council to improve support for ethnically diverse voluntary and community groups in BCP, to become more sustainable to inform a detailed bid for a 5 year project
- Updated our Prejudice Free Communities page on website
- Become an active member of Prejudice Free Dorset
- Reviewed our website to ensure reflection of different ethnicities
- Reviewed our leaflets and other communications
- Received team training on trans awareness and become an ally of Chrysalis
- Our Covid Volunteer Marshals supporting the vaccination programme were representative of the BCP population – we made an extra effort to recruit across all communities
- Trustee Martin Board produced a short video on the importance of this work for our website

CAN Dorset



Avril Atkins heads up our Dorset team. Here Avril shares initial data and stories that demonstrate how our work empowers VCS groups to grow, thrive and survive.

From February 2022 we were commissioned by Dorset Council on an 18 month contract, (we hope initially) to be the local infrastructure organisation empowering a resilient voluntary and community sector.

We will be working with organisations to evolve and adapt so they can grow, thrive and survive, by providing professional and practical expertise – helping groups right from the start, empowering them to become strong and independent, with good governance and management.

Our work is only just underway in 2021/2022 with plans for significant work in 2022/2023. We've focused on building a firm foundation and recruiting experienced staff.

We've developed and further refined processes and tools for comprehensive impact assessment through effective monitoring and evaluating and have concentrated on building internal and external key contacts to partner and collaborate with to build and develop CAN Dorset going forward. We've also co-created with Dorset Council robust impact measures and reporting mechanisms.

In the first two months we have:

- Co-developed a comprehensive Dorset County wide webinar and training programme
- Agreed a communications plan to establish CAN Dorset across the area
- Started to build excellent professional relationships with key stakeholders
- Attended 8 online Partnership Meetings
- Set up fortnightly information exchange meetings with Help and Kindness
- Built a strong relationship with Volunteer Centre Dorset
- Attended the launch of the Information Centre in Weymouth
- Met with over 30 VCS organisations at the Weymouth Expo event
- Delivered introduction presentations to Bridport Local Area Partnership, Dorset Council Adult Team, Dorset Youth Association VCS Forum
- Attended the annual meeting of Carers Support Dorset

We have seen an increase already in Dorset groups joining us as members and we anticipate this will only grow further into 2022/2023 – with a focus on smaller organisations and priority areas.

ENABLING volunteering



Amy Collins heads up our work to enable volunteering, she also oversees our work to support the vaccination programme. Here Amy shares data and stories to demonstrate how our work has a positive impact in helping everyone to play an active role in their community.

Promoting the value of volunteering

Volunteer Fairs

Over the past year we organised and hosted 6 in person Volunteer Fairs across the area and 5 virtual Volunteer Fairs. In total there were 139 stands from the local voluntary and public sector, and over 360 people attended including individuals and staff from the Job Centre, NHS services and specialist schools who were looking for opportunities for their students.

Organisations were asked for feedback on the different elements of the Fairs and asked to score them out of 5 (with 1 being very poor and 5 being excellent). These were the averages across the 3 Fairs:

Recruiting volunteers – 3.9/5

Networking – 4.5/5

Organisation of the event – 4.9/5

Overall event usefulness – 4.4/5

Volunteer Story

"I just wanted to say thank you ever so much for the absolutely brilliant online events which I attended quite a few of. I have made contact with Faithworks Wessex and will be starting there as a volunteer in the coming weeks which I am very excited about. I will be recommending Community Action Network to everyone that I know and if you

yourselves ever have any volunteering opportunities that arise then please let me know as I would love to be involved with such a wonderful organisation!"

Stories that demonstrate our impact

"Thank you for the opportunity to attend the Druitt Hall volunteer fair. I went with a colleague, and we were really pleased with the turnout of people to the event. I thought it was well situated and when we asked those attending, they said they'd heard about it through a variety of different channels which was good."

"Since the fair we have had 2 people apply to volunteer. One as a DIY volunteer and one as an IT volunteer. These are positions that we needed filled so we are delighted about it. (The Water Lily Project)"

CAN's engagement with volunteers

452 volunteers registered through our online portal. As well as having access to our bank of volunteering opportunities, 173 of those volunteers also received a personalised email with details of specific roles that may be of interest to them based on their skills and interests. 16% of recipients replied to either ask further questions about volunteering or to say how useful they found the information.

Safe and Sound Dorset had 10 people apply for a volunteer role with them in the past 12 months, 3 of whom were referred by this personal email to new volunteers.

We also provided one to one information on volunteering opportunities on over 270 occasions via telephone, social, media, email and zoom calls. This was to both individuals and local groups such as the social prescribers within Help and Care, Steps2Wellbeing and Bournemouth and Poole College.

Our monthly update 'New this Month' is very well received and sent to:

- All volunteers registered with us
- Local organisations who either support their clients / services users back into meaningful activity or who work with people who may be interested in volunteering, such as job clubs, job centres, mental health support groups, Bournemouth Uni, Bournemouth and Poole College, local libraries.

Our update contains details of one-off roles, longer-term roles and forthcoming promotional events such as our Volunteer Fairs.

Provider story

One ESOL teacher was looking for opportunities for her students and she said: "Many thanks for all the links, information, and guidance you've sent me, regarding local volunteering opportunities! Didn't know there were so many, and they sound very promising!"

We Are With You (a charity providing free, confidential support to people experiencing issues with drugs, alcohol or mental health)

Every 6 to 8 weeks we give a talk about volunteering and what opportunities are available to a group of clients currently going through a drug and alcohol rehabilitation programme. This shows them the opportunities that are available to them when they leave rehab, which can act as a stepping stone to employment or vocational courses.

Young Volunteers

In November 2021, we were commissioned by BCP Council to gather insights on what young people look for in volunteering, what the young people may gain from the experience, as well as the kind of volunteer roles they had taken part in and what they might be interested in in the future.

We ran a series of workshops involving 66 students across 5 secondary schools in Bournemouth and Poole. During the course of the workshops, we looked at what volunteering meant and the ways in which the young people could get involved. They were asked to complete a survey asking if they would be interested in volunteering, the types of roles they would like to do and what barriers they feel they would face. We also discussed ideas for charity events which could be carried out in school.

From the findings, we put together a report which highlighted:

- The types of roles young people would like to get involved in
- Factors which would encourage them to volunteer e.g. easy access to information on available volunteer roles, more volunteer roles available for young people and help with application forms.
- Barriers that prevent the young people from volunteering e.g., reliance on public transport, nervousness and a concern there wouldn't be other young people there.

The report shows that there is clearly a lot of enthusiasm for volunteering among young people in the BCP area and they understood the benefits this would bring both to themselves and also their community. There is a call to action for the voluntary sector to harness this potential more effectively.

We have put forward a number of recommendations and CAN will be working with BCP Council and the VCS to better support young people to become more involved in their community through impactful volunteering.

CAN Community Volunteers

We have been developing our new scheme 'CAN Community Volunteers (CCV)', ready for launch in April 2022. CCV's will come under the CAN umbrella, ensuring they are recruited, deployed, and have ongoing advocacy and support. They will take part in an 'Welcome to volunteering' session so will be 'volunteer ready' after which they will be deployed to roles within CAN or volunteer for specific roles within the community, voluntary and public sector organisations depending on where need is greatest. This project will support development of key objectives from the BCP Council Voluntary and Community Sector and Volunteering Strategy 2021 – 2024.

Supporting the vaccination roll out

Volunteer Marshals

Since January 2021, 2228 people have come forward and attended one of our volunteer marshal induction training sessions, with 371 of those being trained in the past 12 months. Training has been offered either via Zoom or small group sessions at the Kings Park vaccination site.

Between, 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2022, the vaccination marshals have given 72,304 hours of their time at:

- 3 large scale vaccination sites
- 8 community sites including pharmacies and GP surgeries
- 2 Dorset Police lateral flow testing sites (Winfrith and Bournemouth)
- 2 pop up covid vaccination sites
- 5 school immunisation clinics
-

Volunteer story

"I have been a volunteer at the vaccination centre since its inception at the BIC. I decided to volunteer through CAN, who are extremely helpful and supportive, as I wanted to be of some use during the Covid pandemic and to meet likeminded people. I would thoroughly recommend volunteering – helping other volunteers, NHS staff and people coming for their vaccinations, has made the past 18 months personally rewarding."

Patient feedback

"Thank you to the organisers, volunteers and health professionals who are running the BIC vaccine centre. I went on Monday and was impressed by the number and welcome of the volunteers both leading into and out of the centre. The process ran smoothly and was clear and I moved on swiftly through the different processes. It is a good thing that

people introduce themselves with their name. Thank you for making this a pain-free experience!”

Our team of Senior Volunteer Coordinators based at the large-scale vaccination site are a close-knit team and very adaptable with the changes that happen. On 13th December, we were asked to oversee and manage volunteers at the new vaccination site opening at Sentinel House from Friday 17th December. Straight away, we sprang into action, created new rotas to cover the Christmas period (when we originally thought we would be shut), enlisting the help from the wider CAN team and some of our BCP Council colleagues. Our volunteers as always did us proud, and from 17th December to close of business on Sunday 6th February, 99 volunteers came forward to offer their help at Sentinel House, giving 1,329 hours of their time over 87 shifts, which included Covid-19 Vaccination clinics and children’s flu vaccinations. Many of the volunteers covered multiple shifts, providing a reliable and familiar face for the clinical staff on site.

Alongside supporting the Covid-19 Marshals on a day-to-day basis, we implemented a new electronic system for reimbursing volunteer expenses called vHelp. This enabled expenses to be paid back directly to the volunteers via BACS rather than relying on petty cash which was time consuming and not always readily available. When we first launched vHelp, we were asked by their team to provide regular feedback on how effective it was and to provide recommended improvements e.g. being able to add new cost codes ourselves. These changes were quickly implemented and rolled out to all vHelp users.

Recognition of our work

Our volunteers are an amazing team, and we were delighted to be the winners of the Bournemouth Echo Proud to Care award. This was in recognition of all the work that we achieved, through both the Together We Can scheme and at the vaccination sites.

Anna Chainey, Covid-19 Services Manager said: “I am really proud and honoured to say that we have won a trust Better Every Day Award for the work undertaken at the BIC. From the set up and delivery, to the amazing work undertaken there every one of you and your teams have played a massive part in the success of the vaccination centre.”

Volunteer Celebration event

In September 2021, we held an informal volunteer celebration event at Boscombe Beach. This was to celebrate all the amazing work that our volunteers had undertaken at the BIC since it opened in January 2021. The mayor attended to give a speech, and it was lovely seeing him engaging with each of the volunteers, thanking them for their time. Several local restaurants donated food which was really generous. The evening was a great success, with many of the volunteers saying how good it was to socialise with the other volunteers.

Vaccine Hesitancy

There are some neighbourhoods and communities where people are not taking up their jab for various reasons, so we recruited and trained 5 CAN Volunteer Vaccination Champions who lived in or worked with these communities to step up and support their friends, family and neighbours to make a more informed choice about having the vaccine.

We delivered our 1st vaccine conversation training session to our Vaccination Champions and staff from BCP Council. A further 7 further training sessions have since been delivered to local organisations that work with harder to reach groups including Help and Care, Prama Foundation, Body Positive Dorset, Epilepsy Action, Michael's House, Adult Asperger's Support, Bournemouth interpreters Group, BCP Council Learning Disabilities Team, Mental Health Team. Over 100 people have attended these training sessions.

All training sessions were co-delivered by us and a member of the clinical team from the Kings Park vaccination site. This enabled participants to be able to ask specific questions about the vaccine and its efficacy as well as general questions.

Through delivering this training we enabled staff to have:

- A better understanding of the vaccine and how it has been developed
- Increased confidence in starting conversations about the vaccine with people who they support who haven't yet been vaccinated
- Increased awareness of the myths and barriers surrounding the vaccine and how to counteract these
- Developed knowledge of accurate sources of information that they can refer people to

Organisation story

"I thought the presentation was factual and offered the opportunity for interaction that worked well. I learnt some things that I wasn't already aware of despite the deluge of public information already out there. I will be encouraging colleagues to attend future sessions as they will be the people likely to be having those 'difficult' conversations on the ground"

How we reached out

Through our CAN Volunteer Vaccination Champions, we have reached over 300 people though visiting local businesses, community supermarkets, libraries, pharmacies, attending events including World of Love festival, Africa Comes to Bournemouth Event, Reggae Festival, an arts and craft session with Safe and Sound Dorset and Bournemouth and Poole College Freshers Fair.

As a result of this face-to-face contact, we:

- Increased awareness that the vaccination site had moved to Kings Park and that walk ins were available
- Had direct conversations with people who hadn't been vaccinated and were able to talk about their concerns and provide them with accurate information
- Asked businesses to have leaflets advertising the Kings Park vaccination site on display which raises awareness of the site with the wider population
- Identified barriers to people getting vaccinated and then fed back these findings to CCG e.g., the Big Issue said they needed leaflets in Romanian

Feedback from CCG included:

"That's really helpful to have that local insight and feedback, in addition to our existing insights and behavioural science approach. Do leave this with us, and we will follow up on the feedback, and come back with a draft leaflet" (CCG)

Sensory rooms at Kings Park

We have turned two of the side vaccinating rooms into sensory rooms suitable for children or adults with anxiety / learning disabilities / sensory issues etc.

With valuable insight and input from local organisations including Parent Carers Forum, Dorset Children's Foundation and Dorset Asperger's Group we have been able to co-create the design, look and feel of the rooms.

With money donated by the Dorset Health Protection Board and a private donation, we were able to purchase all the relevant sensory equipment (including adjustable LED lights, bubble lamps, white noise machine, aromatherapy diffuser, bean bags and sensory toys). The first room was transformed in December 2021, with the second one being completed in February 2022.

We have also produced a story board in Easy Read guiding people through what to expect when they come for their vaccination.

Supporting good practice

21 new organisations including Kushti Bok, World of Love Festival, Oceans to Earth and Bournemouth Electric Youth Football Club registered on our online volunteering database and a total of 109 new opportunities registered. At its peak, we had over 170 roles for volunteers to choose from.

Alongside advertising roles, we provided one to one advice, information and guidance to 201 organisations, including Big Blue Play, Circles Southwest, BEAF, Water Sports Library, and Dorset Adult Asperger's Support. Support ranged from an email being sent explaining how to use our online volunteering database, to more in depth advice provided via phone, email or zoom on what policies and procedures need to be in place

when taking on volunteers, whether DBS checks are needed for certain roles, giving information about how volunteers cannot be used as a substitute for paid staff, proof reading role descriptions so they are appealing to potential volunteers, and suggesting different ways in which to recruit volunteers.

CAN website

We have since developed the Members pages on our website to include information on each of the above topic areas to give organisations the knowledge and confidence to manage volunteers effectively.

Organisation story

Poole Communities Trust contacted CAN as they are looking to recruit volunteers for the new Bourne Community Hub when it opens later this year. We met with the team on Zoom and outlined what support we can offer, discussed volunteer recruitment and policies and procedures needed. A follow up email was sent with information including sample handbooks, volunteer policies, agreements, induction check list and problem-solving procedures. Further support was offered to review role descriptions once they've been written. Since then, we have also helped to rewrite their volunteer handbook and they said: "That is really helpful - thank you. You have added some great stuff. You are right about adding pics"

Volunteer Coordinators meetings

We facilitate these regular meetings to discuss topical issues, share good practice and support people who have a role in managing volunteers in their organisation.

This year we held 3 virtual co-ordinators meetings. In total over 30 people from a range of organisations attend. Topics discussed included: volunteer passports, how to recognise and address concerns of volunteers returning after the pandemic, recruitment and retention of volunteers and DBS checks.

A strength of these meetings is the level of excellent peer to peer support. Being a Volunteer Co-ordinator does involve wearing many hats and for some it can be quite an isolated role.

Organisation story

"The meeting was very good. Thank you for organising and chairing it. It was beneficial to see how colleagues in the sector are dealing with issues and "Best Practice". I like the idea of Volunteers Passports. I am happy to sit on a working group or similar if this idea needs to progress."

The future of volunteering

Vision for Volunteering

Vision for Volunteering is a collaboration across the voluntary and community sector, led by NAVCA, NCVO, Volunteering Matters, the Association of Volunteer Managers and

Sport England. The purpose of the Vision for Volunteering is to set out the ambition for volunteering in England over the next decade, with a clear and optimistic plan for the future.

In February 2022, Vision for Volunteering asked the VCS nationally to complete a short survey on their views of what volunteering should look like over the next decade. We promptly held an informal discussion with 6 local organisations including Prama, Citizens Advice Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, Dorset Adult Asperger's Support and Abbeyfield Wessex and looked at 2 key questions set out by the Vision for Volunteering which were 1) What's the biggest issue you're currently experiencing in your current volunteering operation? 2) What's the one thing you'd love to develop in your volunteering operation but haven't been able to yet? All responses were collated and submitted via the online Vision for Volunteering consultation form.

The full Vision for Volunteering report will be published in May 2022 and CAN have been asked to share their initial reflections on it at the National Volunteering Forum on 10th May 2022.

Volunteering Strategy

We have been working with BCP Council reviewing and developing their Voluntary and Community Sector and Volunteering Strategy 2021 – 2024. This strategy outlines the Council's approach to how they, working in partnership with us, can support the community and voluntary sector to thrive and enable everyone to feel they can volunteer and help others in their community. It sets out the priorities and outlines the key areas for action over the next three years.

Supporting local disasters and multi-agency working

In December 2021, a number of elderly people had to move out of their flats at Wellington Court due to a major fire and were rehoused temporarily at a nearby Premier Inn. In February 2022, at a multi-agency meeting CAN attended, it came to light that the residents were still living there and struggling a little bit at mealtimes and just having someone to chat with.

Our CAN Community Volunteers stepped in and between 28th February 2022 and 8th April 2022, they helped at breakfast times and dinner times in the restaurant and also at weekly check in and chat sessions. In total 21 volunteers offered their time and companionship and provided 74 hours of support over 48 sessions.

One volunteer even took his partner's Olympic Torch in to show the residents and to provide a little bit of light relief.

Volunteer story

“Just a short note to say the evening at the Premier Inn tonight was a great success. All the residents of Wellington Court had some bad news this afternoon that they will not be able to return to their flats until at least the start of April. The Olympic torch went down very well with many photographs taken and a lot of interest about the torch, and the history behind it as many had never seen the Olympic torch in person”

As the residents began to move back home, Prama stepped in to look at the longer-term support that the residents needed

Steps Forward Volunteering

In June 2021, we launched our new project ‘Steps Forward Volunteering (SFV)’. This is a short practical course designed to develop, recognise and accredit the skills gained through volunteering. It then builds on those skills to enable volunteers to progress, be it with their volunteering, with training or towards employment.

SFV is aimed at individuals who are new to volunteering and either looking for a role or who have just started volunteering, and for volunteers who have been volunteering for a while and would like to progress.

To date we have worked with 10 individuals on a one-to-one basis, to help support them in their volunteering, either finding them a volunteering role or supporting them in their existing role and in building up evidence for their accreditation. We hope to support 16 people in total.

Current participants are progressing well. They are on target to achieve their ASDAN accreditation and working with them has highlighted their individual employability needs, including confidence, anxiety, CV re-vamps, and a need to expand their volunteering experience. We have several other participants interested in the course and they are looking to enrol soon.

The programme ends June 2022. We are looking for funding opportunities to continue this valuable project.

It’s about people ...

- A participant has been accepted onto two new volunteering placements and has already completed a first session successfully. Further potentially referring organisations have been engaged with including a local social supermarket, an addiction support charity and another Work and Health programme provider
- A participant who was very isolated is now enjoying being part of two projects and his confidence and positivity have increased considerably

- A young male participant who has not been able to volunteer regularly has just started a new volunteer role successfully
- A visit to a local food bank to see one participant has led to another referral from the same organisation
- A young man who started volunteering in a gardening role near his home last month has been attending regularly and is enjoying the role. He had not been able to volunteer for about 5 months, so this is a very positive achievement for him

Research

We carried an extensive piece of research, which aimed to evaluate the various Covid-19 response volunteer programmes that operated in the BCP Council and Dorset Council areas. The results of this survey were used to highlight strengths and weaknesses in the various programmes that used volunteers in Covid-19 response locally and to suggest future improvements, volunteer crisis response methods and the legacy of our current volunteer programmes throughout the remainder of the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond.

Promotional Work

Social Media – our Volunteer Hub has used Twitter and Facebook extensively over the past 12 months for a variety of purposes including:

- Sharing volunteer stories – these have been great to not only highlight the many different reasons why people get involved in helping the community but also to celebrate the amazing work our volunteers have been doing.
- Putting call outs for volunteers both for our CAN Vaccination Marshals and on behalf of other VCS groups.
- Linking in with national events such as Trustee’s weeks and sharing information about what the role entails and promoting available Trustee roles.
- Raising awareness of new initiatives such as the Vision for Volunteering.
- Announcing that we won the Proud to Care award

As well as sharing posts, we also follow groups on Facebook such as ‘Southbourne Community Group’ so we can respond to individuals looking to volunteer or organisations seeking volunteers.

Radio interviews – we have taken part in several radio interviews this year including talking about the work we are doing around vaccine hesitancy, promoting the volunteer

fairs and encouraging people to come along and putting a call out for people to come forward and offer their time as Covid Marshals.

Alongside this, we have also received recognition for the work that we did in developing the sensory rooms at Kings Park vaccination site.

- [Brewers News - Helping to Create a Sensory Room with Community Action Network](#)
- <https://stouravonmagazine.co.uk/issues/past-issues/issue-22/>

CONNECTING communities



Emma Lee heads up our work to connect communities. Here Emma shares data and stories to demonstrate how our work helps to create conditions where everyone's voice is valued and heard by facilitating great local networking and communication

Developing engagement

Throughout 2021-2022 we have continued to increase our engagement with charities and community groups – growing our membership to 441.

We have had a particular focus on groups who may not be aware of CAN, and what we offer, particularly:

- Groups supporting diverse communities
- Individuals of 'good will' – people within the community supporting individuals who are homeless or need food but are not part of a formalised community group
- Community Centres – with the launch of our 'Community Spaces' network

We welcome as members charities and community groups with a Dorset wide brief, and following the successful tender with Dorset Council, from February 2022 we have also been increasing our presence in that area of the county.

We have continued to develop our Business Supporter Membership to be launched in September 2022. We've worked with key businesses across Dorset, BCP Council's Economic Development Unit, Dorset Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bournemouth Chamber of Trade and Local Enterprise Partnership to ensure our offer is effective and appealing to local businesses, enabling us to further champion the work of the VCS across Dorset and help leverage funding and resources for the local VCS.

This year we worked in partnership with Dorset Community Action (DCA) to carry out a pan-Dorset 'State of the Sector' survey. We wanted to assess the impact of the pandemic on the sector. 41 organisations delivering services in Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole responded.

Highlights include:

- 27% of respondents have seen a significant drop in their funding through the pandemic, with 36% of those organisations having lost up to 50% of their income
- 51% of organisations said that they are at risk of permanent closure within 12 months if funding is not made available to them.
- 17% of organisations had to make one or more members of staff redundant due to the impact of the pandemic
- 59% of organisations have had a reduction in volunteers due to them having to shield and go into isolation for their own safety and 15% have had to close or reduce their services due to the loss of volunteers
- 46% of organisations have seen a significant increase in demand for their services since the pandemic hit in March 2020. 35% of these have seen a 50% increase of need compared to their pre-pandemic numbers

Helen Walsh, CEO of Space Youth Project said in the survey about CAN:

"Essential, effective, useful, timely information received. Help at hand when required. Friendly, supportive, caring team."

Ensuring we are engaging effectively with the plethora of voluntary organisations, charities and community groups working across Dorset is key to the success of CAN. In March we started to restructure the Involve Team which has included rebranding the team, so its name is more representative. We are now called **Connecting Communities**. We've also introduced 2 new roles

- **Engagement Lead** – focus on ensuring we are engaging effectively with a wide range of charities and community groups particularly those working in diverse communities. Working closely with our public sector colleagues to ensure key messaging is accessible
- **Membership Development Lead** – recruitment for the Membership Development Lead will begin in April 2022 and their priorities will be to promote our full and affiliate membership, launch our business supporter membership and support our existing members make best use of the benefits the membership gives them

Over the last twelve months we have led on several research projects. These have been successful thanks to our strong trusted relationships with our members and has enabled us to provide key recommendations – telling us what our communities want and need.

These have included:

- **Health Inequalities Community Insights Research Project** – conversations with the VCS and some of our most vulnerable communities across Dorset

recommended we explore the development of VCS led training and peer support for those with learning disabilities and severe mental ill health (SMI). We are now working with Dorset CCG and Public Health Dorset to develop this

- **Home First / [CAN Wellbeing Collaborative](#)** – through engagement with the VCS and patients on our Home First Research Project a single point of access was designed. The Wellbeing Collaborative is now developing this and working with key partners to help keep people safe and well at home with the support of the VCS
- **[Wellbeing Hubs](#)** – the hubs across Dorset are being co-created with the VCS and with extensive engagement with the community to ensure commitment and success of the outcome.

Promoting & valuing charities & community groups

We have celebrated a year of our successful initiative [Community Hero in the Spotlight](#). Each month we showcase the work of a particular member organisation to share their untold stories and give them the recognition they deserve. We share press releases with our press contacts, have a monthly segment on Hope FM and promote the organisation through our website and social media.

Over the year we have championed and celebrated **12 different organisations** who have joined our Partnerships Manager on Hope FM, some have been asked to speak on Radio Solent and **6** have had their press release featured by the Daily Echo.

- “What fabulous news for a Thursday! Thank you so much!” Rio, BCHA Bournemouth Women’s Refuge
- “It was great – thank you for selecting us!” Stacey, Win on Waste
- “So lovely to meet you too last week. We LOVED being on the radio so thank you so much. The press release sounds wonderful.” Poppy, The Chatterboxes

Supporting essential public health messaging

Public Health Dorset have continued to commission us to support the development of [Trusted Voices](#) Champions to help better engage with communities. We now have **105 Trusted Voices Champions** who between them support and advise a diverse range of local communities including:

- people with protected characteristics
- survivors of sexual abuse and their families
- people relying on food banks
- people who are vulnerably housed

- people in rehabilitation for substance misuse

The Trusted Voices project has **funded 5 groups**. Giving them grants to start projects supporting people living with the detrimental impacts of Covid-19 lockdowns. These are:

- art therapy for young people struggling with mental health (including refugees)
- food parcels for those affected by income loss (including those from diverse ethnic backgrounds)
- art and craft wellbeing sessions and one to one counselling sessions for vulnerable women
- cook boxes to help low-income families learn how to cook healthy meals together (mainly Muslim families)
- wellbeing therapy sessions for families who have had a child disclose sexual abuse

Due to the success of the Covid-19 focussed project we are now exploring with Public Health Dorset how we can begin to work with the Trusted Voices Champions on more general public health messaging – we have already had confirmation that the project will be extended to October 2022.

Building community resilience

This year we partnered with Dorset Community Action (DCA) and Dorset Race Equality Council (DREC) on a six month research project. The **Health Inequalities Community Insights Project** primary aim was to gather community insights and identify any areas of hidden inequality that people with enduring mental ill health, learning disabilities and ethnic minority communities face. People in these groups tend to have a higher amount of negative health outcomes than the general population of Dorset.

In addition to this we wanted to look at how the VCS sector could support health care services to overcome these barriers and to enable greater equality of service provision.

The project was co-produced as a combination of the field work carried out with individuals and the expert opinion from VCS organisations.

The [report](#) made several key recommendations and 2 projects have evolved from the research which will begin in 2022/2023:

- [SMI – Physical Health Check](#) project – we will be recording the training available from the VCS for health professionals working with individuals with severe mental ill health and gathering case studies with individuals who do not access their physical health checks
- **HEP2 Project** – we will be exploring further how the VCS can support individuals with learning disabilities through peer support and training for health care professionals

Developing collaborations and networking

We have further developed and enhanced our networking offer over the last 12 months, facilitating networking and new collaborations through our online networks. In total we have **facilitated 21 networking** sessions during 2021/2022, all successful in enabling discussion of potential opportunities, knowledge sharing and peer support with others in the same position / with a similar purpose. Our networks can be geographical and thematically focussed depending on need. Most of the networks have been requested by our members and so far include:

- **All Creatures Great and Small** – our newest network for animal themed organisations and groups.
- **Pokesdown, Christchurch and Southbourne** – an opportunity for groups working in and supporting the community of Pokesdown, Christchurch and Southbourne
- **Women's support** – our longest running network for groups who support women and girls
- **Boscombe** – a geographically focused network for groups and organisations supporting and working in the community of Boscombe.
- **Community Spaces** – for groups who run and offer community space across BCP and wider Dorset.
- **Poole Communities** – a network for groups and organisations who work across the Poole
- **Early Years** – an opportunity for groups who support children aged 0-5 years and their families
- **Let's Connect** - aims to support the wellbeing of youth workers and volunteers from all settings in BCP.

On average **90 people** a quarter engaged with the networks with approximately **15 people** virtually attending each network.

We have seen lots of great collaborations evolving from the sessions, including:

- Dorset Blind Society met SEDCAT at one of our networks and were then able to arrange for much needed transport for their service users
- Following our Women's Network, The Wardrobe Foundation are going to explore introducing a rail of clothes to be freely available to women using the new Footprints Hub in Winton
- Shelter is setting up a group for people with lived experience of homelessness to help inform future planning and provision and BH1 Project are going to support them with finding people to join this group
- Parkstone Rotary attended our Poole Community Groups Network looking for small groups with an environmental mission to give funding to. At the Network

they heard from Win on Waste and are going to have further discussions about how the Rotary can support them in the future

Since declaring a Climate Emergency we've had interest from members for a new Climate Emergency Network and taking Men's Health Week as our Community Hero theme for June 2022 we're beginning to scope interest in a network for groups supporting men. We are also exploring and speaking with members about the need for more geographically based networks such as Townsend, Somerford and Kinson focussing on the council priority areas.

The **Leaders exCHANGE** has continued this year meeting quarterly enabling leaders from across the VCS to better collaborate, share good practice and inform our work. At these meetings we have discussed how the new VCS Assembly should look and invited public sector colleagues to share pieces of work on which they need the sector's input. We've also explored the needs of the sector as we move into the recovery phase of the pandemic.

Our online presence and influence

Website and social media - We continue to be active on social media, and both our website and social media have continued to be key in reaching out and championing our sector. Our target was to increase our social media following by 20% across all platforms. We exceeded this significantly with our LinkedIn showing a 55% increase. Our Facebook and Twitter followers have levelled out more this year with 11% increase on Facebook and 5% on Twitter.

CAN website - we continue to review and update the website to ensure that it is fit for purpose and easy to use. Feedback from members continues to be really positive. This includes our refreshed Membership Zone.

We had 29,342 visitors to the website, the majority (28,504) of whom were 'new visitors'. The most visited webpages on www.can100.org over the last year has continued to be Volunteering Opportunities, Interested in Volunteering, Jobs and Volunteer to Stop Covid, all with approximately 6000 page visits each.

Twitter - our Twitter followers have increased by 115 this year to 2,184. We have seen our twitter page go from strength to strength. We tweeted 692 times and @Can100org was mentioned in 1075 tweets. We also saw a significant increase in visits to our CAN twitter page.

Facebook - on Facebook our friends have increased by 120 to 1,292 and we also have 964 likes on our page, an increase of 60. We have continued to regularly post 2-3 times a day throughout the week a mix of CAN news and member updates.

LinkedIn has continued to grow and we now have 274 followers. We have posted regularly, including updates from the organisation, job opportunities and updates from our members. Both the Partnerships Manager and CEO use their personal LinkedIn pages to share and engage with the page to encourage engagement from others. We have also seen an increase in members of the team using LinkedIn and sharing our updates with their networks which helps to broaden our reach.

We have continued to increase our PR activities to raise the profile of CAN, increase engagement, champion the sector and celebrate our members through increased media activity, promotion of events and use of external communication tools. This year we have:

- Featured in the Bournemouth Echo on 14 occasions – articles have included #TogetherWeCan, Covid Marshalls and Community Hero in the Spotlight
- Supported two of our members have been interviewed by Radio Solent to talk about their organisation as our Community Hero in the Spotlight
- Been interviewed by Blair Crawford on Hope FM 14 times alongside our Community Hero in the Spotlight
- From December through to March we worked closely with a pro bono marketing consultant through the Cranfield Trust who supported us to review and make plans to improve our external communications. As a result, we commissioned BCHA to support us with our communications on a 12 month contract, starting in April 2022, following a competitive tender.

BCHA will be supporting us to better articulate what we do along with the wider work and impact of local charities and community groups. We want to raise the profile of CAN and the VCS with the general public and our public sector colleagues and ensure that our communications with our members hit the mark.

Prejudice free communities

Engaging with our diverse communities across BCP and wider Dorset has continued to be priority for us.

We are active members of Prejudice Free Dorset, regularly attending their quarterly meetings and attending relevant sub-groups ensuring they are engaged with the wider sector. We have re-designed the Connecting Communities team with our diverse communities in mind – our new Engagement Lead will ensure a wide range of communities are members of CAN and engaged with the exciting work that is taking place between the VCS and our public sector partners.

Embedding the VCS into the Integrated Care System (ICS)

ICS are partnerships of organisations that come together to plan and deliver joined up health and care services, and to improve the lives of people who live and work in their area. We have been working with Dorset CCG and over 30 different VCS organisations at pace to co-create a [VCS ICS Assembly](#). Since December 2021 we've met fortnightly with a task and finish group which CAN is leading in partnership with #Help&Kindness and DCA to explore what model the VCS will use to ensure they are adequately represented at the ICS partnership board. Following discussions with the task and finish group we now have an initial model which will work towards the VCS being fully embedded as valued equal partners within the system.

We are now in a position to present this proposed model to the A1 Strategic Leads group which includes the ICS leadership. We will be setting out the VCS approach to the ICS in Quarter 1 where we hope leadership will confirm that our approach is acceptable and give confidence that we will be capable of delivering the Memorandum of Understanding (including key commitments from all those in the partnership), as well as operational and system integration with the other partners in the ICS.

In addition to this we were also asked by the Place Based Partnership Programme to nominate 12 individuals from the VCSE to support them with the National ICS Population Health and Place Development programme that the Dorset ICS has joined. This provided us with an opportunity to demonstrate how the proposed model could work in practice. This piece of work will be running into 2022/2023 and we will be ensuring those involved are providing regular updates and all the VCS organisations have their voices heard.

We were invited to join the ICS Innovation Hub, which is a partnership of health and social care organisations across Dorset, looking to enable faster and more effective uptake of innovations and improvements, creating long lasting impact for patients and patients' care. We have been invited to present to the network next year sharing who we are, the developments around the Wellbeing Collaborative, our work and how we can support colleagues within the network. This will be a great opportunity to promote the work of CAN across a number of different health teams from across Dorset.

Wellbeing Hubs in Dorset

In March we were asked by Dorset CCG to become strategic partners in the development of Wellbeing Hubs across Dorset.

Wellbeing Hubs are an innovative collaboration bringing together the local community, (led by the voluntary and community sector) to work in partnership with our NHS and Council colleagues. The aim is to co-create firm foundations to enable individuals and communities to improve and promote their own health and wellbeing. We are starting in Boscombe by drawing together everyone with an interest in focusing on what is strong in our communities and working together to make Dorset a great place for wellbeing and happiness.

Helping people to stay safe and well at home

Working in partnership with DCA, we completed a 9-month, Home First VCSE Research Project in November 2021 which explored the value of voluntary and community sector services in hospital discharge pathways and personalised care.

Access to Hospitals, patients and carers, was limited due to the pandemic, so we co-designed a new single point of access service model together with community focus groups. This has subsequently been adopted and utilized by several charitable organisations such as Prama Life to assist with bringing people home from hospital.

The evidence from this project informed and enabled us to successfully propose the development and delivery of a new Wellbeing Collaborative, commissioned by BCP Adult Social Care, which started in January 2022 to test and develop the concept over the next 18 months.

This will refresh the legacy project from Poole CVS and BCP Social Care Commissioning services, with the new co-designed service model for hospitals. Our purpose is to connect people to personalised information and support from local charities and community groups so they can live their best possible life at home.

Access to Food Partnership

We continue as active founding members of the Access to Food Partnership.

This year we saw the Access to Food map become an App enabling more people to find food support within a 10 minute walk of their location. Following a successful National Lottery Bid, the Access to Food group is being funded for the next three years, including the Food Co-ordinator post being secure for that time. The Group has also achieved a 'Working Together' Bronze award at the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards.

A second round of the Partnership's Listening Broadly project started in Q4 with CAN encouraging members to participate to enable those with lived experience of food vulnerability to be heard and to impact future plans and provisions to help those in need.

Networking, championing and representing the VCS

CAN has continued to represent the sector on 12 strategic boards.

We have spent time refreshing our 'representative' offer and will shortly be re-launching VCS Involvement Partners with our offer of a framework of support to enable effective communication and gathering of insights. Where there is a call for 'VCS representation' we want to ensure the most appropriate person attends so we'll be sharing opportunities to sit on Boards/meetings and will ask local VCS organisations to put forward a representative. We will be working with both the Board and the VCS Involvement Partner to ensure all are clear on roles, responsibilities, governance and how insights will be gathered and shared. This is a really exciting development co-designed with our members.

We support both the Council and the NHS to engage with communities through our extensive network – sharing and gathering vital information and data.

We continue to sit on local, countywide, regional and national groups, helping to form and influence policy at a considerable pace building on the relationships that we built during the pandemic.

We also continue to attend a diverse range of boards and meetings including:

- Aging Well Steering Group
- BCP Council led Homelessness Strategy Board
 - Leading on the engagement element of the new strategy addressing homelessness across BCP
- Building Health Partnerships – working with our NHS colleagues to:
 - build trust and mutual understanding between partners and between people in communities
 - support staff and citizens to develop shared local leadership to build on existing momentum to health priority areas
 - develop opportunities for more effective engagement
- Children and Young People Partnership Board
- Community Equality Champions Network
 - Led by BCP Council an opportunity for a range of VCS and public sector partners to come together and discuss equality
- Community Safety Partnership
- Domestic Abuse Strategy Group
- Dorset Local Resilience Forum - Volunteering Cell and Community Recovery Cell
 - Working with our Council and NHS colleagues to ensure volunteering / the voluntary sector are at the heart of response and recovery
- Engagement Leads Network

- Facilitated by the CCG bringing leads from across public and voluntary sector together to share good practice and promote collaborations
- Health and Wellbeing Board
 - We're a strong voice of the sector and advocate for volunteering
- Integrated Care System C1 Engagement group
- Safeguarding Adults Board
- SEND Improvement Board

Supporting collaboration and policy

Over the past year collaborative and respectful working across all sectors has grown quickly for the benefit of the community. We have been pivotal in collaborative working across our sector along with the Council and the NHS. We've supported our sector to flourish and nurtured new community groups and charities. We have worked closely with BCP Council in the development of their Empowering Communities - VCS and Volunteering Strategy which outlines a set of priorities and key actions that BCP Council want to attain over the next three years to achieve this vision and create connected communities.

Future priorities

Consolidate our work as we grow and develop

Continue to collaborate - work with the voluntary and community sector to champion their work and increase their influence

Sustain and develop our expert advice, support, training and fundraising offer

Launch our pop up Volunteering Hub, taking volunteering opportunities to the heart of the community