



Bolton VCSE Strategy Review

May 2021

‘Working together to develop a strong, diverse and effective voluntary and community sector in Bolton’

Purpose

“The challenges to public funding and increasing demands on local services means that it is more important than ever for key stakeholders in Bolton to look to new, innovative and collaborative solutions.”(VCSE Strategy 2019-21)

The strategy recognised the strong foundations in Bolton but partners were clear that a number of priorities needed to be addressed.



Aspiring and Achieving

A strategy for Bolton's voluntary, community and social enterprise sector
2019 - 2021

Bolton
Council



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Co-design of the Strategy

- The VCSE Sector Strategy 2019-21 was developed by the VCSE Strategy co-design group made up of reps from VCSE organisations, Bolton Council, Bolton CCG and housing representatives including Bolton at Home.
- Engagement with the VCSE sector was carried out individually with groups, with networks such as the VCSE Forum and using a survey to establish how a memorandum of understanding could define the conditions to enable collaboration between key partners from the public and VCSE sectors.



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What the strategy looked to achieve

- Need for a systematic approach to local grant funding
- Promotion of equity in relationships
- Social value
- Co-design
- Smarter decisions and increased transparency
- The public sector as an enabler
- Shared accountability and outcome-based activity



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Key priorities (2019-21)

- **Creating the right conditions for a flourishing VCSE in Bolton**
- **A new way of distributing funding in the VCSE: The new Bolton's Fund**



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2019-2021 progress

- Co-design of Bolton's Fund programme
- 11 funding programmes delivered (inc COVID response)
- 229 investments made
- Over £1.2m of investments awarded
- Decision-making based on hard data and community insight
- Social value embedded into investment process
- Bolton CVS commissioned as VCSE local infrastructure organisation



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Current challenges

- Many VCSE groups have had to temporarily pause services, furlough staff or move services online
- Many VCSE groups have had to use reserves to continue to operate
- Additional demand on services due to increased levels of poverty and rise in inequalities
- Uncertainty within the VCSE sector - eg, impact of Council cuts, what will future commissioning look like?



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Re-designing a new VCSE Strategy

- What are the top 3 challenges that your organisation faces now?
- What would help you to tackle those challenges?
- What opportunities can you see the VCSE sector in Bolton?
- What would you like to see in a revised VCSE Strategy for Bolton?



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