

# Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support

Commissioning Model Consultation

September 2017



## Contents

a) Introduction .....	3
b) Background .....	3
c) Proposal .....	4
d) Timescales and Next Steps .....	7
e) Contacts .....	7

## a) Introduction

Between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2017 the Council undertook stakeholder consultation to review the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) infrastructure support that it invests in, and what this infrastructure support should look like in the future.

Existing contracts in scope included:

- A service currently provided by Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service (NCVS), offering organisational support, networking and representation to a range of voluntary and community sector organisations across the city, including registered charities, community groups, social enterprises, foundations and CIC's;
- A service currently provided by Volunteering Matters through the Volunteer Centre that offers: brokerage and signposting to individuals who want to volunteer, good practice development in relation to volunteering, support to individuals and organisations in relation to volunteering, strategic and opportunity development for volunteering across the city

More detail on the [consultation and its findings](#) can be accessed via the link.

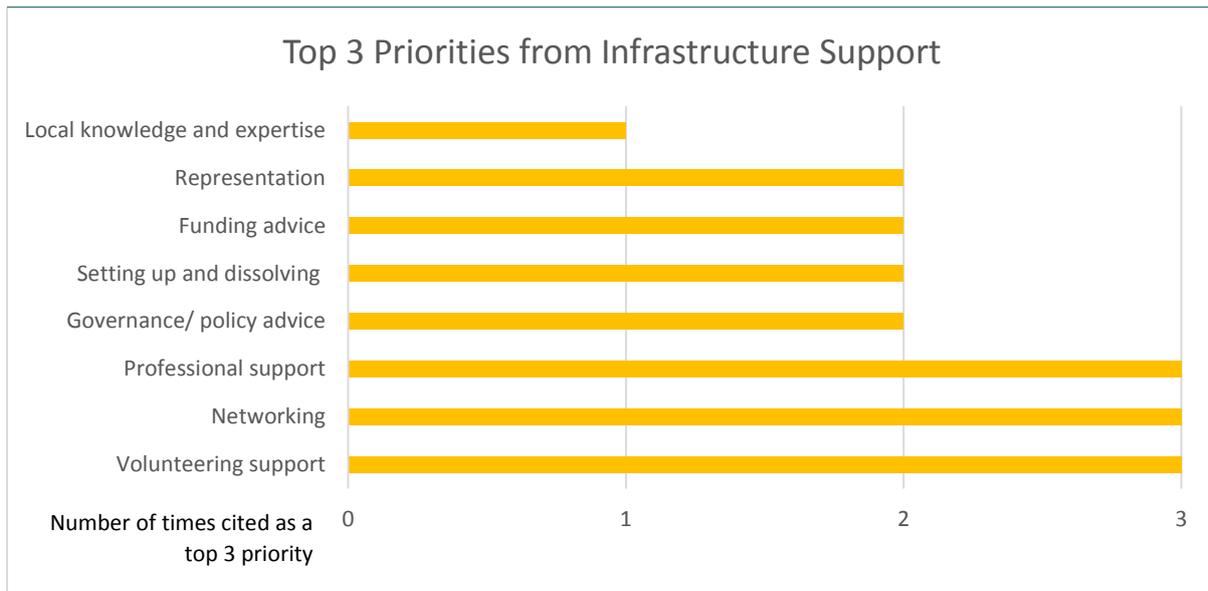
*It should be noted when reviewing this document that the Council are currently exploring a joint commissioning exercise for VCS Infrastructure support with Gateshead Council. This will not impact on the content of the proposals set out in this document, however, it may mean that the overarching contract structure in section c could change.*

## b) Background

The current contract structure for the services that were consulted upon is set out below:

Contract 1	Contract 2
<p>Organisational Support, Networking and Representation</p> <p>c. £170,000 per annum</p>	<p>Volunteering Support, Development and Capacity Building</p> <p>c. £40,000 per annum</p>
<p>Informal joint working and communication</p>	

The consultation in June 2017 identified a number of priorities for the future of these services. The table overleaf gives a high level overview of the priority areas that VCS representatives said were most important to them.



While much of the feedback praised the above existing aspects of the current services, a number of areas for future development were also highlighted:

- Support around new funding models
- A review of existing forums/ networking arrangements
- Support around evidencing impact, particularly evaluation and monitoring
- Support to improve the two way communication between the VCS and public sector
- Support to Trustees to adapt to new ways of working
- More operational and strategic volunteering capacity

There was also common themes around improving communication, reviewing and enhancing the provision of self-help support via web sites, and clarifying what support services different providers offer.

### c) Proposal

Based on this feedback (which can be read in full [here](#)) the Council has developed a proposed commissioning model for the future of the VCS Infrastructure Support services.

The proposed commissioning model will bring the organisational infrastructure support service and volunteering infrastructure support service into a single commissioning structure. Both services will remain as discrete services in their own right and may be delivered by 2 different organisations, however, the connections and allocation of roles between these services will be clarified through a single overarching contract arrangement.

The proposed structure is set out below:

VCS Infrastructure Support Contract	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Lot 1: Organisational Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational Support, Development and Capacity Building £170,000 p.a.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Lot 2: Volunteering Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Volunteering Support, Development and Capacity Building £40,000 p.a.</li> <li>• Dementia Volunteering Support, Development and Capacity Building c. £75,000 p.a. (IBCF funded)</li> </ul>

As illustrated above, it is also proposed to include within the volunteering infrastructure service an additional time limited project on the development of volunteering capacity and capability specifically focused on supporting people with dementia. This project, which will be funded for 12 months via the Improved Better Care Fund (IBCF) with an option to extend for a further 12 months depending on impact, is proposed by the Council and CCG partners both in response to the strong feedback arising from this exercise that additional volunteering support capacity is required in the city, and the existing and expected future growth in demand for informal support to complement or reduce the need for statutory services among people with dementia and their carers.

The sections below provide further high-level detail of the areas of focus we propose that the two services will deliver, based on the feedback received through the VCS Infrastructure Consultation.

### **Lot 1: Organisational Infrastructure**

It is proposed that the organisational infrastructure service will focus on, but not be limited to, the following broad areas of activity:

- Representation and networking for the local sector. Working very widely across the sector to coordinate stakeholders for joint working opportunities and to create partnerships, and drawing on this broad engagement to build a representative voice of the sector.
- Representing the voice of the sector at key forums with public and private sector partners, supporting a two way communication flow between these partners and the sector. Contributing to ensuring that these forums remain fit for purpose.
- Working with the volunteering support service to make strategic links across the sector, promoting best practice and proactively contributing to an evidence base of sector specific analysis in the city, drawing on a range of research and information sources.
- Translating national and local policy/ legislative changes into the local context in a format that is relevant to local VCS organisations.

- Professional organisational support, delivered through a combination of in house capacity and brokerage, facilitating access to advice on:
  - Constitutional matters, including advice on organisational set up and close down
  - HR and legal matters
  - Policy development
  - Organisational finance and accounting
  - Funding opportunities, particularly engagement with new funding models including but not limited to social investment
  - ICT and digital development
  - Public sector commissioning, procurement and bid writing

There is an expectation a core advice offer will be available to small organisations free of charge, and that any charges for advice over and above this core offer will be proportionate to the size of the organisation.

- Providing an effective and up-to-date online web presence for dissemination of self-service information, key points of contact for support, and publication of sector specific advice and analysis. Working with the Council, volunteer support service and other related Newcastle specific online information and advice partners to ensure clear and coordinated provision of web-based VCS advice.
- Provision (via a combination of direct delivery and brokerage) of a training programme developed by and for the sector, to include mutual areas of interest including: support for trustees to transform services, asset based working, evidencing impact, and evaluation and monitoring.
- Proactively responding to emergent issues facing the sector, in collaboration with public sector partners.

## **Lot 2: Volunteering Infrastructure**

It is proposed that the general volunteering support, development and capacity building service will focus on:

- Strategic volunteering development, seeking out opportunities to join up volunteering programmes in the city and region and develop new opportunities for volunteering.
- Development and promotion of good practice in relation to volunteering, and activities to increase awareness of the issues impacting on volunteering, working with the organisational infrastructure support provider.
- Engaging with host organisations and through them with volunteers to build a representative voice of volunteering, working with the organisational infrastructure support provider.
- Representing the voice of the volunteering at key forums with public and private sector partners, supporting a two way communication flow between these partners and the volunteering stakeholders. Contributing to ensuring that these forums remain fit for purpose.
- Brokerage and signposting to individuals who want to volunteer.

- Maintenance of a central web-based register of volunteering opportunities which is publically accessible.
- One to one mentoring and coordination between the provider and prospective volunteers/ organisations seeking volunteers.
- Training for host organisations in recruiting and retaining volunteers.
- Support in set up and management of volunteers.

In addition to this core service, the proposed time-limited project around social care volunteering support will focus on:

- Designing and delivering a project to establish a Newcastle focused partnership to drive, develop and lead volunteering opportunities in support of social care, particularly related to people with dementia and their carers
- Engaging with national and regional leaders in the field of volunteering to grow a capacity building programme for local volunteers in support of social care.
- Encouraging, engaging and supporting skill development among volunteers working with people with dementia and their carers.

We propose to work with the appointed provider, VCS representatives and public sector partners to further develop the project specification leading up to contract implementation.

#### d) Timescales and Next Steps

Consultation on the proposed commissioning model will remain open for comments until the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2017. You can comment by visiting our [Let's Talk pages](#), or by emailing using the contact details in the next section.

The final model will be published during week commencing 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017.

Following consultation close, we anticipate that the procurement process will commence in mid-October 2017, with the new services expected to start on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

#### e) Contacts

To comment or for additional information, please email Laura Choake, Commissioning Programme Manager at [laura.choake@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:laura.choake@newcastle.gov.uk)