

**VSNW**

Voluntary Sector North West

Accountability | Knowledge | Equality

# Annual Review

# 2008/09

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**VSNW** (Voluntary Sector North West) is the regional voluntary sector network for the North West. The purpose of VSNW is to ensure that the voluntary and community sector (VCS), in all its diversity, takes its full part in shaping the future of the North West

# Introduction from the Chair and Chief Executive of VSNW

Annual reports are strange documents, you write them at the end of a financial year and attempt to 'stop the clock' for a second while the rest of life carries on at pace and with no consideration for things like 'financial years'. This Annual Report however does provide an opportunity to reflect upon the first year of both a new Chief Executive and a new Chair of the Board of Trustees.

At the 2008 AGM we set out a vision for VSNW and this led to the adoption of three values, **Accountability, Knowledge and Equality**, which now underpin everything we do. We also developed our five strategic objectives:

To influence and shape the agendas and policies of statutory sector partners by:

- Developing, supporting and engaging with networks
- Pro-actively establishing and enhancing dialogue with geographic and thematic support providers
- Gathering and making use of information and knowledge relating to and for the sector
- Increasing recognition as a reliable voice of the sector
- Developing VSNW as a well governed and financially sound organisation

We believe we have made positive strides in delivering these objectives, developing and supporting networks as appropriate and ensuring the VCS has a voice at the regional level. We have seen the VCS included on all the major boards that operate at the regional tier and the annual report provides a flavour of our contribution to the Joint Economic Commission, in the ever evolving arena of learning and skills and on the health & social care agenda, to name but a few.

This is just a snapshot though – none of it possible without the continued commitment of the VSNW staff, the Trustee Board members and the VCS partners who continue to work with us to ensure the sector as a whole can play a role in shaping the future of the Region.

The next few years will throw down challenges to VSNW and the sector and we are all going to have difficult choices to make – but to stop the clock for the moment, and reflect on the last twelve months, we believe we have had a successful year and with our core values to guide us, we can build on this for the future.

Debbie Dalby: Chair &

Richard Caulfield: Chief Executive

## New Chief Executive

Mary Nicholson was replaced by Richard Caulfield as the Chief Executive of Voluntary Sector North West on 12 May 2008. In many senses, 2008/09 was Richard's Year 1.



The key tasks that Richard identified for VSNW were:

- Building strong working relationships with core VCS leaders, organisations and networks in the North West
- Building strong working relationships with key regional public sector agencies
- Setting a clear strategic role for VSNW that adds value i.e. by complimenting current activity and building capacity where needed
- Developing a strong identity for VSNW focused on its mission



## New Chair

Debbie Dalby took over the role of Chair in September 2008 following an interim spell for Lesley McCarthy as Chair. Debbie and Richard have worked hard, with the full support of the board and staff teams, to develop a strong identity for VSNW focused on its mission and the development of its core values. This was a process that had worked well for Halton Voluntary Action, of which Debbie is the Chief Executive.

In many ways, the strengths of Halton VA were goals for VSNW: clear focus on local communities and local VCS groups, and a good working relationship with public sector partners. Debbie is one of a number of North West local VCS infrastructure Chief Executives who are respected nationally for their personal skills, organisational models of good practice and intelligence.

Debbie and the trustees are currently working to ensure that VSNW remains a well governed and financially sound organisation, which has a clear strategic direction and is supportive of Richard's work as Chief Executive and of the VSNW staff team.

# Mission, Values and Strategic Objectives of Voluntary Sector North West

Working with staff and a trustee board that already reflected a reinvigorated relationship with VCS sub-regional partners, VSNW sought to re-establish its purpose and strategic role.

VSNW re-affirmed its **mission** to:

*Ensure that the voluntary and community sector, in all its diversity, takes its full part in shaping the future of the North West.*

And identified **three core values** to shape and provide the context for VSNW's work:

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** VSNW will express this value by enhancing communication and two-way dialogue with the sector and stakeholders and by supporting sector representatives at the Regional level.

**KNOWLEDGE:** VSNW will express this value by generating an evidence base for action and demonstrating integrity through informed actions and decisions. VSNW will use its knowledge base to provide leadership, promote the sector and show foresight.

**EQUALITY:** VSNW will express this value by not working in isolation: valuing what people can do together, whether part of community of interest, identity or place. VSNW recognises that from diversity comes strength and quality knowledge and we will challenge prejudice and intolerance wherever we encounter it.

VSNW therefore quickly developed its strategic objectives which were to influence and shape the agenda and policies of statutory sector partners by:

- Developing, supporting and engaging with networks
- Pro-actively establishing and enhancing dialogue with geographic and thematic support providers
- Gathering and making use of information and knowledge relating to and for the sector
- Increasing recognition as a reliable voice of the sector
- Developing VSNW as a well governed and financially sound organisation

# Building strong working relationships with VCS leaders, organisations and networks in the North West

VSNW worked to ensure direct engagement with thematic and geographic VCS networks in the North West.

Central to this was developing a strong relationship with the core regional and sub-regional infrastructure organisations that come together as the North West Infrastructure Partnership (NWIP).

Originally established by the Five Counties Partnership (5CP) partly to address perceived weak regional VCS representation, it soon became apparent in 2008/09 that VSNW was strategically capable of facilitating and chairing NWIP and of having the potential to effectively lead and support strong regional VCS voices. For many, this was seen as a distinct turnaround by VSNW. GMCVO, who host the 5CP Coordinator post, recently stated in their annual report that “**NWIP supported the renewal of Voluntary Sector North West**”. At the start of this year, 5CP passed the facilitation and chair roles to VSNW.

5CP and VSNW have worked extremely closely and effectively together throughout the year. Prue Yeoman’s (5CP Co-ordinator’s) ongoing support for our “renewal” has been greatly appreciated. Key pieces of close work include:

- work with the North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership on standardising contracts so that they are less likely to preclude VCS bids
- the development of the regional Compact; besides public sector partners, this work has also involved North West Network, 1NW (regional voice for BME organisations), and Social Enterprise North West.
- 5CP subcontracted VSNW to research VCS engagement in local and sub-regional economic agenda; this work has established a baseline for a key goal of 5CP’s Strategic Plan.

*NWIP is a partnership that nearly represents the full spectrum of geographic, thematic and equality VCS interests in the North West and includes:*

*Voices for BME, disability, LGB, and faith; for rural, housing, care, European policy, ICT, refugee and asylum seekers, social enterprise, children & young people and volunteering as well as voices representing the VCS interests of the five sub-regions of the North West.*

Alongside a strengthened partnership with key infrastructure organisations, VSNW has sought to ensure that it links in with the major VCS networks in the North West:

**Equalities:** As part of being a member of the NW Equalities and Diversity Group (NWEDG), VSNW has developed a close working relationship with the VCS representatives on this group. As an attendee of the English Regions Equality and Human Rights Network (EREN), VSNW works closely with Christine Burns, the Chair of NWEDG.

- **Disability organisations:** VSNW has played a key role in supporting the development of the regional Disability Partnership. Further VSNW support has included jointly nominating Manchester Disabled People's Access Group (MDPAG) and Merseyside Disability Federation to the Planning sub-group of 4NW.
- **LGBT:** A strong working relationship with the Lesbian and Gay Foundation who are now represented on VSNW's trustee board.
- **Older people:** Developed links with 50/50 Vision, the cross-sectoral regional forum on ageing which included representatives from Age Concern and Help the Aged, and with regional Age Concern representatives through our debt advice work.
- **Younger People:** Besides links to key networks delivering services to Children and Young People, VSNW works closely with Liz Harding at the Regional Youth Work Unit.
- **Faith:** VSNW has a long-standing relationship with Monsignor John Devine and the North West Forum on Faiths. John is a member of VSNW's board.
- **BME:** VSNW works closely with CEMVO in the region and exceptionally closely with 1NW, the OTS-funded voice for BME groups in the North West. Both are now part of the NWIP partnership.

**Children and Young People (C&YP):** VSNW is a member of the VCS Engage NW steering group which supports a regional network of local strategic C&YP representatives, is a member of the Children England NW regional group and works closely with Charles Shaw as VSNW Vice-Chair and Chair of NW CVYS. This enables VSNW to have direct contact with C&YP organisations ranging from local strategic representatives to large delivery organisations like Action for Children and Barnardos.

**Citizen's Advice NW:** Allyson Whisker (Citizen's Advice lead officer in the region) has worked closely with VSNW and enabled us to readily make direct contact with Citizen's Advice Bureaux, and to work with Citizens' Advice research people.

**CVS Network:** VSNW has traditionally had a good relationship with the CVS (the generic local VCS support agencies) in the North West and the importance of this key relationship has not been lost on the new staff of 2008/09 who bring with them strong links to the CVS network: Richard Caulfield (ex-Salford CVS Chief Executive), Warren Escadale (ten years at NAVCA), and Karen Rigg (officially seconded from GMCVO).

**Debt and money advice agencies:** Through work to minimise the impact of the recession, VSNW has developed strong working relationships with key regional representatives of debt and money advice agencies such as Advice UK members, Age Concern, Shelter, the Law Centres Federation, as well as Citizen's Advice.

**Development Trusts:** A number, but not all, of the Development Trusts in the NW are in membership of VSNW. VSNW has a strong working relationship with Jeff Scales (regional DTA lead) who is also a member of VSNW's board.

**Empowerment:** VSNW continued to facilitate the NW CEN Forum and looked to draw in a broader range of empowerment practitioners. This development work led to the launch of the VSNW-facilitated Regional Empowerment Practitioners' Forum earlier this year.

**Environment:** VSNW has maintained a good working relationships with North West Environment Link (NWEL) and Merci, and developed strong links with Groundwork NW. VSNW is a member of NWEL and regularly attends regional NWEL meetings. NWEL's skills at influencing planning and detailed understanding of regional and local environmental issues, in turn, are an extremely strong part of VSNW's policy and representation work.

**European policy organisations:** As a partner in European Policy Group, VSNW has developed a close working relationship with the VCS technical assistance bodies for Merseyside (Merseyside Network for Europe) and the rest of the North West (North West Network).

**Groundwork NW and Groundwork Trusts in the NW:** VSNW has worked closely with Groundwork NW in a number of areas, supporting hot-desking to build closer working relationships, facilitating closer working between Groundwork and other support agencies, working closely on the development of the regional strategy, and feeding into Groundwork's joint work with CLES to influence future direction of regeneration thinking. The flagship partnership has been the *Target: Wellbeing* project (see page 14). A number of the trusts in the NW have also been members of VSNW.

**Health:** VSNW continues to facilitate a growing regional Health & Social Care Network that includes over 150 VCS contacts from throughout the region.

**Housing:** a growing relationship with North West Tenants and Residents Association whose nomination, through James Devlin, to the regional Housing Board was supported by VSNW.

**Rural:** VSNW works closely with the NW Rural Communities Councils who came into membership of VSNW. Throughout the development of the regional strategy we have worked in partnership with key rural VCS agencies in the NW, proactively sought 'rural' perspectives, and campaigned on rural issues the consultation processes so far.

**Learning & Skills:** VSNW not only facilitates a regional VCS learning and skills network (funded from VSNW reserves last year) but also a highly strategic network of sub-regional learning & skills consortia. This means that we can effectively facilitate two-way dialogue with the key third sector learning and skills providers in the North West; knowledge and issues-arising can often be productively cross-referenced with the knowledge and issues-arising of the members of the European Policy Group.

**Skills for Care:** VSNW works with over 90 key VCS network contacts who are promoted through an online directory.

**Social Enterprise:** VSNW has good working relationships with Val Jones (Chief Executive of Social Enterprise North West), Jeff Scales (Development Trusts Association NW and VSNW trustee) and a growing direct relationship with a number of small, medium and large social enterprises like UnLtd.

**Transport:** maintained a strong relationship with the North West Transport Activists Roundtable. VSNW supported the nomination of Lillian Burns, Chair of NW TAR, to sit on the regional transport sub-group of 4NW.

**Volunteering:** A growing relationship with Volunteering NW, the cross-sectoral regional volunteering development council (EVDC) as a whole and a close working relationship with Emile Pinel, the chair of EVDC

# Communicating with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in the North West

There are over 30,000 voluntary and community sector groups in the North West who employ over 50,000 people and work with 100,000s of volunteers.

To connect, VSNW works with over 150 members which

- work across the region directly supporting and delivering services for individuals, or
- are VCS infrastructure organisations (LIOs) that work with local voluntary and community groups.

VSNW members provide community services, regenerate neighbourhoods, support individuals, promote volunteering and tackle discrimination. The 40 generalist LIOs in membership of VSNW have a membership of 6,780 VCS groups and are in contact with 19,800 local voluntary and community sector groups in the North West – just under two-thirds (63%) of the region’s VCS groups.

## Draft key communication strategy objectives

	Accountability	Knowledge	Equalities
<b>Audience: NW Third Sector</b>	1.1 Develop effective two-way dialogue, especially around VSNW and third sector representation and VSNW’s activities in general. 1.2 Support effective regional third sector representation, especially in terms of linking representatives back to and drawing on third sector knowledge (expertise and experience).	2.1 Develop VSNW as a known Regional Policy Resource for the third sector 2.2 Promote a better understanding of the third sector in NW, especially in relation to policy relating to health, the economic agenda, empowerment and VSNW’s networks 2.3 Build VCS knowledge of how to better influence statutory agencies and the policy agenda (at all spatial levels) 2.4 Build VCS knowledge of useful resources, especially those available from the third sector in the North West 2.5 Support third sector representatives, especially in regard to providing policy support (plus 1.2)	3.1 Ensure that VSNW is accountable to the full diversity of the third sector in the North West. 3.2 Provide a platform to promote key relevant VCS NW services that reflect the full diversity of what the VCS in NW has to offer 3.3 Provide a means to bring together the full diversity of the VCS in the North West; it is a key function of VSNW to strengthen connections between the many sub-sectors of the VCS in the North West and support closer cross-subsector working (i.e. across policy, equality or geographic, etc, subsectors).
<b>Audience: NW regional statutory sector</b>	1.3 Demonstrate VSNW’s accountability to a broad third sector in NW 1.4 Demonstrate VSNW’s support for third sector engagement with statutory sector	2.6 Objective as above: 2.1: Develop VSNW as a known Regional Policy Resource for the third sector 2.7 Objective as above: 2.2: Promote a better understanding of the third sector in NW, especially in relation to policy relating to health, the economic agenda, empowerment and VSNW’s networks	3.4 Demonstrate that VSNW is accountable to the full diversity of the third sector in the North West. 3.5 Demonstrate that VSNW is an effective source and broker of expertise on equalities issues. 3.6 Communicate clear messages about gaps and under-support in the VCS in the North West.

VSNW also works with networks within the region – VSNW’s own or established VCS networks. At the end of last year VSNW bulletins were distributed to over 400 key VCS contacts in the North West a good proportion of whom we would expect to recirculate or use elements of the bulletin in their news services.

Our main distributed publications are the following e-bulletins:

- **VSNW Bulletin**: a general bulletin distributed every three weeks
- **VSNW Health Bulletin**: a specialist health and social care bulletin distributed every 4 -6 weeks
- **PROMiSE Bulletin**: a specialist bulletin for members of our network for third and independent sector providers of mental health services in the North West.

Alongside this we run a policy briefing service (one every two weeks) and a central website:

<http://www.vsnw.org.uk> which has recently been upgraded. The website is becoming far more of a resource for VCS groups: accesses per month have increased 6-fold and distinct IP address visits have trebled in the last 18 months.

# Building strong working relationships with key regional public sector agencies

## **Public sector partner recognition of the potential strategic value of VSNW and VSNW's links to VCS groups in 2008/09:**

- Appointment of Richard Caulfield to 4NW's Leaders' Board.
- Invitation to join and membership of the Joint Economic Commission for the North West (JEC).
- VSNW membership of the Regional Skills and Employability Board (RSEB) and sub-groups at the invitation of Steven Broomhead, Chief Executive of NWDA.
- Member of the Regional Strategy Advisory Group.
- Member of the English Regions Equality and Human Rights Network (EREN).
- Member of NWIEP's Tackling Worklessness Taskforce.
- Member of North West Regional European Partnership Board and chair of the Demographic Change sub-group.
- VSNW becomes Chair of the North West Together We Can regional empowerment partnership.

## **VSNW has supported a number of initiatives to build stronger links between the VCS and public sectors. This includes:**

**Development of a regional compact:** VSNW and key third sector partners have worked closely with GONW, NWDA, NHS NW, 4NW, LSC, and Job Centre Plus to develop a more formal approach to addressing VCS / public sector partnership challenges, equalities issues, and issue around volunteering and funding, commissioning and procurement of VCS organisations. Between VSNW, GONW, and NWDA, over 120 VCS organisations were consulted on the remit and detail of a regional strategy for the North West.

**Key strategic engagement with NHS NW:** Besides support from Mike Farrar (Chief Executive of NHS NW), the VSNW-facilitated VCS involvement in NHS NW's 24-hour Scenario Planning Exercise and Richard Caulfield's contributions to the Missouri Added Social Value exchange visits have been critical to the growing strength of regional VCS / NHS partnership working. (see pages 13-14)

**Strength of third sector engagement in the development of the Regional Strategy for the North West (RS2010)** has laid a clear marker. During the development of the regional strategy (May 2008 to c. June 2010), VSNW has been a strong and constant voice on behalf of the voluntary and community sector making significant contributions to:

- The Regional Evidence Base consultation: helping to develop a greater understanding for statutory sector partners of the voluntary and community sector in the North West and a better

understanding of community-focused economic development. We now have strong links with the Regional Intelligence Unit.

- Supporting significant involvement of the voluntary and community sector in the Principles and Issues consultation which looked to identify a sense of where the region is, what its priorities are and where it wants to be in 20 years time. Over 200 representatives of 150 key VCS organisations, from six VSNW-partnered events, gave an overwhelming message to focus on people, communities and to tackle health inequalities. This strength of commitment from across the VCS network in the North West has been absolutely imperative.
- The health and equalities impact assessment processes.
- Ensuring that VCS perspectives have been an inherent part of the development of the strategy through the representations we have made at key strategic tables such as the Leaders' Board, the Economic Development sub-group of 4NW, and the Regional Strategy Advisory Group.

#### **Close working with Government Office North West that has included:**

- Running a joint event on LAAs: *Promoting Third Sector Involvement in the Negotiation and Delivery of Local Area Agreements*
- Use of GONW's Interchange Scheme to develop the regional compact, and support local prioritisation of the stronger communities LAA indicators, especially NI7. Promoting NI7 and NI4 toolkits and guidance to public and third sector leads.
- Supporting VCS involvement in GONW's LAA task and finish group.
- Assurances that the Liverpool Objective 1 research will seek to explore the specific value of VCS tackling worklessness interventions where possible
- Working closely with the communication leads of members of the JEC (an informal network facilitated by GONW), with links to the Regional Minister, in order to promote VCS profile.

#### **VSNW and VCS representation**

A much fuller map of the extent of VCS representation and engagement with public sector bodies in the North West, that involves or is supported by VSNW, is available from our website:

<http://www.vsnw.org.uk/activities/representation/reps> This developing resource already details over 30 contactable, formal points of representation at a regional level in the North West.

This is part of VSNW's core work to increase the influence and engagement of VCS groups and to better support leading VCS representatives in the North West. VSNW's work also aims to increase public sector confidence in the accountability of VCS representatives through:

- Helping organisations build their capacity to influence through a *How the Region Works* training programme
- Support greater influence through a clearer understanding of the regional and national policy context
- Support greater influence through undertaking relevant research
- Helping organisations to access information and communicate with representatives through an online information portal
- Equipping representatives to speak effectively by developing suitable mechanisms, protocols and skills
- Having a specific focus on traditionally under-represented groups.

# VSNW work to tackle the impact of the recession.

We have three key aims:

- to support VCS groups to help individuals, families and local communities
- to minimise the impact of changes and reductions in funding on VCS groups
- to enable VCS groups to develop and access new opportunities, particularly those linked to supporting communities to thrive and recover from the recession.

Following consultation with the sector, we made an active decision at this stage to prioritise work that supports the sector to support communities and families.

## **Besides, whenever possible, supporting and facilitating government initiatives, VSNW activities have included:**

- Progressing a **10 Point Plan** (VSNW: December 2008) to support VCS work to tackle the effects of the economic downturn.
- Work with regional public sector partners to minimise the impact of recession and appropriately promote the VCS in the NW as a means to aid recovery through such bodies as the Joint Economic Commission for the North West (JEC) and the Regional Skills and Employment Board.
- Promote VCS apprenticeships and the development of a sector-specific Group Training Association (GTA) to support VCS apprenticeships.
- Promote VCS engagement in the Future Jobs Fund through lead sub-regional public sector bids.
- Lobby for increased VCS engagement in local and sub-regional economic agenda, for example through the *Third Sector Action Plan consultation* response (VSNW: 31st December 2008).
- Promote Train to Gain opportunities to voluntary and community sector groups.
- Support the development and promotion of VCS service provider networks (eg learning providers consortia work, PROMISE).
- Develop a Special Purpose Vehicle capable of winning large prime contracts (eg DWP's prime contracts) for the increased benefit of small to medium sized VCS organisations.
- Lobby for national initiatives aimed at supporting the voluntary and community sector to be implemented in a way that makes best use of resources and ties in effectively with current local, sub-regional and regional activities.
- Lobby for national initiatives aimed at supporting communities and families suffering the consequences of the recession to be implemented effectively with minimal inadvertent effects, e.g. the Targeted Support Fund and through the NW Money and Debt Advice Group:
- Through the NW Money and Debt Advice Group campaign for increased support for local advice provision: *Debt counselling in the North West* (VSNW: December 2008).

Support  
North West

## The Joint Economic Commission



The Joint Economic Commission (JEC) first met in November of last year in order to address the impact of the downturn and to support recovery in the region.

Its objectives are to review information and intelligence on the economic and social impacts of changing economic circumstances and to agree a regional response.

Members of the JEC include all the major agencies and senior figures from across the public and private sectors in the region. Given VSNW's inclusion, this means, in effect, that VCS issues are effectively heard at the highest levels in the region.

*The JEC is chaired by Regional Minister Phil Woolas and membership comprises key regional bodies including the NWDA, 4NW, the CBI, Greater Manchester Chambers of Commerce, the North West Business Leadership Team, Private Sector Partners, the Government Office for the North West, the NHS, Jobcentre Plus, the Highways Agency, the Homes and Community Agency, the Learning and Skills Council, the Voluntary Sector and the TUC.*

Key achievements of the JEC involving VSNW have included:

- Reduction in the time that public sector payments are outstanding (the goal is 10 days)
- Supporting the co-ordination of support for businesses and employees facing redundancy.
- Development of a website identifying support for communities and businesses:  
<http://www.supportnw.co.uk/>
- Considered the impact of the downturn on communities and will take action to ensure that there is good access in the region to debt advice.
- Working closely with local authority partners, we were able to help ensure, last April, that funding for debt advice services was cut in only one district authority area in the North West.

### **The Money and Debt Advice Steering Group**

In order to identify key issues affecting communities, VSNW established a cross-sector Money and Debt Advice Steering Group, which fed into the JEC, to look at debt and money advice.

The Money and Debt Advice Steering Group involved a broad cross-section of public and third sector regional and local agencies: regional Citizens Advice, Shelter, Law Centres Federation, Advice UK, Age Concern Blackburn and North West, Macclesfield CAB, Bolton MBC, Legal Services Commission, 4NW, NWDA, FSA, Manchester City Council, Job Centre Plus, and Government Office North West.

Many of the recommendations of this group have been translated into policy actions. Outstanding issues were submitted to the regional select committee.

# VSNW work to support VCS Health and Social Care groups

**Skills for Care Engagement Project:** VSNW delivered a successful project in partnership with Skills for Care to develop a strategy to increase their engagement with the voluntary and community sector (VCS). Skills for Care's project evaluation has demonstrated an increase in VCS engagement in their activities right across the region that includes:

- increased VCS turn out at Skills for Care events;
- increased take up of news bulletins
- direct engagement of over 90 key VCS networks in the North West
- appointed a VCS representative to the Skills for Care NW regional committee
- increased VCS take-up of Skills for Care's workforce development services.

This project culminated in the development of an online directory to enable easier engagement with the key VCS networks in the North West.

<http://www.vsnw.org.uk/activities/skills>



**Working with NHS NW:** VSNW worked extremely closely with NHS NW and this led to the involvement of VCS organisations in a 24 hour Scenario Planning Exercise with senior NHS NW and PCT staff, which using scenarios to explore opportunities for strategic collaboration, led to four key areas of joint working that have gone on to shape the VCS / NHS NW relationship:

- a) Commissioning - what they commission, how they commission, how they 'shape the market'
- b) Leadership (possibility for funded leadership post and programme in VCS health related orgs for example)
- c) Tackling long term inequalities through raising aspirations
- d) Development of an Innovation fund

Which, last year, led to:

- funding for VCS frontline organisations
- the development of an ongoing work programme between NHS NW and the VCS
- An emphasis on tackling health inequalities in the context of the development of the Regional Strategy
- VCS involvement in key NHS NW structures such as:
  - Joint Improvement Partnership
  - Joint Improvement Programme Workforce and Leadership Programme Board
  - Personalisation Board (Louise Barry, Merseyside Disability Federation)
  - Regional Employment Team (looking at worklessness and mental health)
  - Investment For Health Steering Group
  - Social Value Research Working Group: a project to develop NHS NW's social value commissioning pilot and research project

The outcome of this work, this year, has led to a number of key events such as the *Conversations with Commissioners* events and the *Delivering Social Value: strengthening our communities* event.

**Department of Health:** VSNW, through Regional Voices (a partnership of the nine regional voluntary sector networks in England that includes VSNW), has become a strategic partner of the Department of Health. Delivery of the Better Partnerships project began in August 2009.

### **Target: Wellbeing NW**

*Target: Wellbeing* is an £8.9m Big Lottery funded cross-sector partnership led by Groundwork Northwest and supported by



Voluntary Sector North West (VSNW). The project aims to create healthier people in healthier communities. To do this the partnership pump-primes local and regional wellbeing activity in the North West focussed on the following three themes:

- Increasing physical activity.
- Encouraging healthy eating
- Improving mental wellbeing

*Target: Wellbeing* is made up of over 90 projects tackling health inequalities, involving 67 local delivery organisations, and benefiting over 55,000 people. Margaret McLeod, now VSNW's Policy & Networks Officer (Health & Social Care), is a member of the project's governance and evaluation groups.

### **VSNW Health communications**

Key Network: VSNW-facilitated Health and Social Care Network

Key VSNW staff: Richard Caulfield, Chief Executive, Margaret McLeod and Lesley Connor

Key communication: VSNW Health Bulletin and

Key briefings:

- Community and mental health contracts: Department of Health consultation
- Better future in mind: Mental health services in the North West

## **Trustees 2008/09**

Chair: Debbie Dalby (Chair from September 2008)

Vice Chair: Charles Shaw (Vice-Chair from September 2008)

Treasurer: Michael Warner

John Devine, Churches Officer for the North West

Juan Shimmin, Action for Blind People

Alex Whinnom, GMCVO (from September 2008)

Jeff Scales, DTA (from September 2008)

Karen Bowen, Cumbria CVS (from September 2008)

Matt Harby, Lesbian & Gay Foundation (from September 2008)

Kung Lee (co-opted)

Sarah Chilton, ADS (from September 2008)

Caroline Downey, Mersey Basin Trust (until September 2008)

Paul Johnston, Age Concern in the North West (until September 2008)

Vice Chair /Interim Chair: Lesley McCarthy, Toucan Europe (until September 2008)

## **Staff 2008/09**

Richard Caulfield, Chief Executive (from 12 May 2008)

Anna Sevink, Finance & Administration

Margaret McLeod, Sector Development Officer

Warren Escadale, Policy and Communications Officer (from May 2008)

Karen Rigg, Workforce and Skills Co-ordinator (from October 2008)

Mary Nicholson, Director (until May 2008).

Lesley Connor, Sector Skills Co-ordinator (until December 2008)

Mark Dawson, European Policy Officer (until August 2008)

## **We also welcome three new members of staff in 2009:**

Amy Murphy, Administrative Officer

Hannah Horton, Information Officer

Laura Stone, Representation Co-ordinator

# Thank you to our members

## Full members:

ACRE Ltd  
Age Concern in the North West  
Alzheimer's Society  
Barnardo's  
Blackburn with Darwen CVS  
Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre Soc for the Blind  
Blackpool, Wyre & Fylde CVS  
Bolton CVS  
BTCV  
Bully Free Zone  
Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale CVS  
Bury CVS  
Carers UK  
Carlisle CVS  
Carlisle Diocesan Board for Social Responsibility  
Cartwheel Arts Ltd  
Cheshire Community Action  
Cheshire Community Voice  
Chester Voluntary Action  
Children England  
Children's Society  
Chorley & South Ribble CVS  
Church Action on Poverty  
Citizens Advice - North West  
Community Network for Manchester  
Community Foundation for Greater Manchester  
Community Futures  
Community Matters  
Community North West  
Consortium of LGBT VCOs  
Contact A Family  
CONTACT Cheshire Support Group  
CPRE NW  
Creative Support  
Crewe & Nantwich VA  
Crewe YMCA  
Crossroads Association  
CRUSE Bereavement Care NW  
Cumbria CVS  
CVS Rochdale  
CVS West Lancashire  
Deafway  
Development Trusts Association  
Diocese of Liverpool, Church & Society  
East Lancashire County Scout Council  
East Liverpool ECT  
East Manchester Community Forum  
Eldonian Group Ltd  
Ellesmere Port & Neston VC  
Emerge  
ENCAMS NW  
Equality NW  
Friends of the Earth NW

George House Trust  
GMCVO  
Greater Manchester Pay and Employment Rights Advice Service  
Greater Manchester Play Resource Unit  
Groundwork Blackburn  
Groundwork East Lancs  
Groundwork West Cumbria  
Halton VA  
HBHG Development Trust Ltd  
Henshaw's Society for Blind People  
Home Start NW  
Hoylake & District CVS  
Hyndburn & Ribble Valley CVS  
Impact Housing Association Ltd  
Kings Cross Project  
Lancashire CVYS  
Lancashire Disability Information Federation (Access Lancashire)  
Lancaster District CVS  
Lesbian & Gay Foundation  
Liverpool CVS  
Local Solutions  
Manchester Diocesan Board for Ministry and Society  
Merci  
Merseyside Environmental Trust  
National Childminding Association  
Action for Children NW  
NEARIS  
North West Network  
North West Waste Forum  
NW Regional CVYS  
NW Rural Community Councils  
NW TAR  
NW Tenants & Residents Assembly  
Old Trafford Community Development Project  
Pendle Pakistan Welfare Association  
Preston & Western Lancs REC  
Preston Community Network  
Preston YMCA  
Prince's Trust NW  
Progress Trust  
Relate Lancashire  
RNIB  
RSPB NW  
Rural Stress Information Network  
Sahara in Preston  
Salford CVS  
Sefton CVS  
Smart Charitable Trust  
St Helens District CVS  
St. Ann's Hospice  
Student Volunteering England  
Tameside Third Sector Coalition  
The Guide Association

The Together Trust  
The Wildlife Trust (Lancashire, Manchester & N Merseyside)  
Third Sector Enterprises  
Trafford CVS  
Trinity Community Partnership  
Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council  
VA Cumbria  
VA Manchester  
VA Oldham  
Volunteering England  
Wai Yin Chinese Women Society  
Warrington CVS  
West Pennine Housing Association  
Weston Spirit  
Wigan & Leigh CVS  
Wigan CVYS

## Associate members:

Age Concern Lancashire  
BASSAC  
Bolton Social Centre for the Blind  
Charity Bank (NW)  
Community Development Foundation  
Community Health Involvement and Empowerment Forum  
Community Pride Initiative  
Congleton DVA  
CPRE Lancashire  
Cumbria Rural Citizens Advice Bureau  
Darwen Old Peoples Welfare Association  
Federation of Irish Societies  
First Asian Support Trust  
Gingerbread (NW)  
Halton YMCA Ltd  
Insight  
Lancashire Global Education Centre  
Lancaster CAB  
Mersey Basin Campaign  
NCVO  
New Era Enterprises (E Lancs) Ltd  
People's Voice Media  
Preston DISC  
Refugee Action  
RNID  
Shelter  
Speke Training & Education Centre  
Swanswell Charitable Trust  
The Coalfields Regeneration Trust (NW)  
The Groundwork Trust Ltd  
Toucan Europe  
Train 2000 Ltd  
Tree Fog Enterprises  
Volunteer Reading Help  
WRVS

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