

The Great North VCFSE Exchange

VCFSE-CA best practice checklist



Representation & governance

- The VCFSE sector has a formal seat on the Combined Authority Board
- Clear, democratic processes exist for selecting sector representatives
- A recognised VCFSE leadership group acting as the primary contact point for the CA
- VCFSE representatives participate in scrutiny arrangements
- VCFSE representatives are embedded in CA workstreams and major policy areas

Sector organisation & link roles

- Strong leadership partnerships exist to coordinate the VCFSE voice and sector priorities
- A unified point of contact streamlining communication with the CA
- Dedicated link or liaison roles support strategic alignment and ongoing relationship building
- Established sector-led coordination/partnership structures recognised by the CA

Inclusion, equalities & influence

- VCFSE representation is consistent across funding discussions and policy development
- Equalities panels or networks embed lived experience into decision-making
Joint VCFSE-CA research and intelligence arrangements supporting shared evidence and influence
- Participation is properly resourced to avoid “tick-box” engagement

Strategic alignment & shared priorities

- VCFSE manifestos and “state of the sector” reports shaping shared ambitions and endorsed by CA and Mayoral leaders
- Joint statements or policy letters demonstrating unified leadership
CA strategies explicitly reference and embed the role of the VCFSE sector
- Agreed metrics exist to measure the success of VCFSE-CA partnerships

Formal agreements & funding

- Written agreements (e.g., accords, compacts, covenants, funding protocols) setting out principles for collaboration
- Clear commissioning principles prioritise equity, transparency and local delivery
- Multi-year funding commitments underpinning sector capacity alongside grant programmes
- Investment supporting VCFSE leadership, participation and infrastructure

Partnership behaviours & culture

- Relationships are grounded in openness, trust and proactive communication
Decision-making processes are transparent, reducing fragmentation and uncertainty
- Both the CA and VCFSE partners understand and align with devolution principles and place-based delivery (double devolution)
- Shared priorities guide collaboration and support consistent, long-term partnership working