



Appendix A
West Devon Community and Voluntary Services
(West Devon CVS)

Supporting local voluntary and community action
in West Devon
2011-12

Service Level Agreement
Monitoring Report

For
West Devon Borough Council

Preface

This report relates to the Service Level Agreement with West Devon Borough Council & Devon County Council and compliments the Annual Review of our activity for 2011/12 which outlines the support we delivered and impact we made to our local organisations and the communities they support in further detail. Please contact us for copies of our Annual Review.

We are in touch with over 430 voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) either based in or providing services to West Devon and the thousands of local residents who rely on the services and support they provide.

Local voluntary and community organisations face many challenges — keeping up to date with information and legislation, finding funding, meeting the needs of their communities, getting their voice heard, rural isolation and more. Many West Devon VCOs have no paid staff, and rely on the time and enthusiasm of their volunteers. Changes in local and national policy can be confusing, and keeping up to date and involved is a challenge for many in the sector. Some voluntary and community organisations struggle to make their voices heard in local debates about the way services should be run in the future. Funding for voluntary and community organisations is more and more scarce, and competition for the remaining resources is fierce. West Devon CVS helps by:

- Developing the skills and knowledge of volunteers, staff and management committees
- Providing information on key issues affecting local voluntary and community organisations
- Helping voluntary and community organisations to influence local policy and service development
- Supporting voluntary sector involvement in public service delivery
- Offering one-to-one support and advice for voluntary and community organisations
- Supporting individuals and voluntary and community organisations and promoting volunteering through the Volunteer Centre.

The following pages give a report of core West Devon CVS activities, based on the agreed desired outcomes and indicators, from 1 April 2011 - 31 March 2012.

A Development

Outcomes: The local strategic partnership (LSP) partners are informed about voluntary and community sector (VCS) needs and services, and are influenced by that knowledge. New services are developed within the voluntary and community sector to meet identified needs.

A1. Examples of issues being raised with the funders or the LSP which influence policy, strategic plans and / or service delivery.

Examples include:

- West Devon CVS have successful working relationships with a wide range of strategic partners enabling an enhanced dialogue and understanding of the sector. Partners have been able to approach us for specialised local knowledge of the sector to shape their services
- West Devon CVS is a key player in the outcomes of the Sustainable Community Strategy providing the linking bridge with partners and the voluntary and community sector, as well as taking an active role in working groups and activities (e.g. Homes & Community Life)
- West Devon CVS has enabled partners to distribute consultations through our information services, newsletters, members e-bulletins and through Voluntary Sector forums so that they can be informed about voluntary and community sector needs and services, and are influenced by that knowledge
- West Devon CVS was an active partner in the Connect outreach service attending planning meetings, community events and outreach sessions across the district
- Provision of voluntary sector representation and support to representatives on the DCC/NHS Devon Complex Care Teams across the district is being successfully achieved, through West Devon CVS. Unmet social needs are being identified by the representatives and voluntary & community sector organisations supported to help meet these needs and work in partnership with other agencies

A2. Value of external investment in the area of benefit which have been secured directly by the CVS or as a result of advice and support provided to other voluntary and community sector organisations.

West Devon CVS helps voluntary and community organisations identify potential funders, write funding applications, draw up fundraising strategies and provides references. The following West Devon CVS activities support this:

- Access to Funding databases

- Quarterly 'Funding extra' sent to over 400 organisations
- Monthly e-mail funding bulletin sent to over 100 member organizations
- Information sheets on funding issues
- Targeted information packs of funding sources
- One to one advice on funding issues from our groups development officer
- Workshops & training sessions
- Resource library with fundraising resources

During 2011/2012:

- West Devon CVS helped West Devon 18 organisations receive over £75,000 pounds in grant funding

A3. Number of signatories to the Compact for Devon in the area of benefit.

- West Devon CVS has worked with LSP partners to continue awareness of the Compact.
- Information on the Compact is included within our new members pack and at present West Devon CVS have signed up for 85 members.

B Support

Outcome: The local voluntary and community sector is better informed about best practice and is well supported by the CVS through its core range of services

West Devon CVS information services and resources offer dedicated support to voluntary groups through newsletters, fact-sheets, e-mail bulletins, website and library. Our ability to inform and enable voluntary activity with the right information to help groups in their work has continued to grow and develop. Our experienced team of staff is always on hand to provide information and support. This year we extended our availability to provide this support to cover Monday to Friday 9.30am – 3.00pm by offering increased telephone and email access.

We also reviewed our communication strategy to increase our information points in rural villages through links with village and community halls and village shops.

B1. Number and circulation of newsletters and / or e-bulletins produced

- Four issues of our newsletter were published during the year. They were distributed to over 600 recipients, including local and voluntary groups, parish councils and libraries and included sectors covering local news, sector news, training, resources and legal issues.
- Monthly issues of our e-bulletin provided more frequent Funding and Training information.

- A series of information sheets are available from our website in downloadable form. The series is designed as a complete guide to the basics for small and new groups.
- The West Devon CVS website has continued to be updated

B2. Number of organisations attending voluntary and community sector forums or liaison events and number of such meetings held

West Devon CVS hold voluntary sector forums throughout the Borough. The meetings bring together representatives from all types of groups and organisations across West Devon and are open to any VCOs based or working in the area. The forums offer a chance for groups to share ideas, discuss issues and gather information. They also offers the opportunity to exert influence on decisions taken by local strategic partnerships and their component members and to demonstrate the value of the voluntary sector.

- Jointly held the first 'West Devon Voluntary Voice' forum together with the Borough council to discuss how the council could best engage with the voluntary and community sector.
- Held two meetings of the West Devon Volunteer Organisers Forum.

The organisations attending range from small, local groups working with a few volunteers to representatives from much larger organisations.

- 3 Meetings of the Voluntary Sector Forum were held around the West Devon during the year
- 57 local voluntary and community organisations have been represented at the West Devon voluntary sector forums.
 - The forum provides a useful constituency for voluntary and community sector consultation and speakers used the opportunity to consult members. These have included NHS Prevention Strategy as well as the engagement with Borough Council mentioned above.

Exchanging information and networking, during the open forum session and over coffee is one of the most valuable parts of the forums.

B3. Annual survey of service users

Our annual service evaluation was conducted in February 2012.

- The response rate was 10%
- The majority of contact was via email (44%)

- All services were rated good or very good
- 78% had received volunteers through the West Devon Volunteer Centre
- 55% had attended and found useful our learning workshops
- 91% found our newsletter useful and relevant.
- 65% had attended our Forums and other events.
- 60% were aware of the CVS representative role on strategic partnerships on behalf of the sector in West Devon

B4. Record of plaudits and complaints

Some examples of comments we have received this year:

“Glad to have you to turn to when needed” *Okehampton organisation*

“You are all great! why doesn’t central government centrally core fund groups like CVS the multiplier effect would be enormous across the country.” *Okehampton rural organisation*

“Thank you form not wasting our time & delivering exactly what you said you would! An excellent day with so very much learnt.....” *Tavistock rural organisation*

“Useful service, helpful staff” *Tavistock organisation*

We received one complaint this year regarding our decision to close our permanent office base in Tavistock (due to a decrease in overall funding) and deliver our services in Tavistock from Kingdon House. The complaint related to the lack of disabled access in this location.

We responded by revisiting our options and in February 2012 agreed with the library in Tavistock that the service would be provided from their premises from April 2012.

B5. Examples of effective support given to local organisations to enhance capacity and sustainability.

- 63 groups were helped to develop in areas including bid writing, collaboration, governance and policy issues
- 5 new groups were established in the West Devon with our help
- WDCVS helped 18 local organisations receive more than £75,000 of grant funding

- 65 Groups attended CVS learning workshops and forums over the year, resulting in increased skills and knowledge for the people running them
- More Individuals in Tavistock now receive befriending support thanks to the CVS working in partnership with a local organisation as a result of a gap in service identified through our work with Complex Care Teams.
- West Devon CVS's information and advice service answered queries and kept over 400 groups up dated with relevant news, good practice, events & training opportunities
- We provided Updates and information about the changes in Health provision and the Personalisation agenda and the localism agenda were sent regularly to relevant organisations.

Office Services:

- 54 groups continued to make good use of our range of equipment to use and hire (including the digital projector and screen, lap top, display boards and photocopying/printing services).

C Representation and Liaison

Outcome: LSP partners routinely consult with the voluntary and community sector and involves the sector in service development

C1. Examples of consultation activity facilitated

Consultation has been enabled through:

- West Devon Voluntary Sector Forums helping the Borough council to engage with organisations within the voluntary sector.
- Direct communication and discussion with relevant local organisations on specific national issues such as the changes within Health (personalization, commissioning of services) and local government (localism)

C2 . Examples of consultation\involvement activity with hard to reach groups

- We aim to reach all areas of our sector especially enabling the involvement of traditionally hard to reach groups by ensuring that our mechanisms for engagement are relevant.
- West Devon CVS provides the resource for 'Southern Devon' (South Hams, Teignbridge and West Devon) for a key Devon wide project

'Voluntary Voice' aiming to involve the local voice to be heard and involved up to a county level.

- We continue to work in partnership with other county infrastructure organisations to enable consultations to take place.
- Snippets e bulletins informed members of consultations and consultation events
- Through our membership with NAVCA, NCVO and Volunteering England we worked to influence regional and national policy.
- West Devon CVS Chief officer lobbied for the local Voluntary and Community Sector to Government Minister Nick Hurd on his visit to Okehampton in February.

C3. Evidence of the CVS advocacy with statutory partners on behalf of the voluntary and community sector generally or of individual organizations

- When issues arise over potential changes in services or provision, West Devon CVS has taken the concerns from local organisations and communities and liaised with partners
- West Devon CVS influenced policy and advocated for the voluntary sector through membership of cross-agency strategic boards, including the Local Strategic Partnership, the South Devon and Dartmoor Health & Well Being Partnership.
- Through our e-bulletins and other means we connected a number of agencies with voluntary and community groups across the West Devon
- Member organisations and others were signposted to other organisations in order to work collaboratively with them or share good practice, information and services
- Information on potential partners, useful services and agencies was given to member organisations and others
- Information was provided to MPs and Councillors
- Community Contacts were supported to act as the links between parishes and West Devon CVS
- Opportunities for becoming trustees for a number of West Devon charities were advertised across the West Devon area.
- West Devon CVS helped in running the Staying Warm & Well in Devon Scheme

- CVS input into the Complex Care Teams (CCT) this year has been good, with 2 voluntary sector representatives sitting in core meetings in Okehampton and Tavistock. The representatives are well respected by the professionals and 78 referrals were made to the voluntary sector in the course of the year. The West Devon CVS CCT co-ordinator has continued to provide support for the CCT teams and health organisations through:
 - Informing VSRs and key organisations working in health of the changes through meetings and email updates
 - Supporting the development of new initiatives to help fill identified gaps in services eg Befriending services
 - Supporting partnership working between local voluntary organisations and the statutory services
 - Informing member organisations of the changes in health and social care and supporting them to make use of new opportunities

D Strategic Partnership work

Outcome: Both the CVS and local voluntary and community sector organisations are routinely involved in partnership working and LSP activity

West Devon CVS works with a number of local strategic bodies to promote partnership working between the statutory and voluntary sector, and to ensure the interests of service-users are taken into account in commissioning and procurement. West Devon CVS is also active in many county and regional partnership working activities to enable the sector to develop further, such as the Devon Association of CVS (DACVS), & Devon Consortium. Devon Consortium's Total Support projects have supported West Devon CVS activities in a number of ways this year eg enabling capacity building for both the CVS team & local organisations and supporting the sector in working with commissioners

D1. Examples of voluntary and community sector involvement in strategic and partnership activity

- West Devon CVS represented the interests of the local voluntary sector with attendance and input at the following meetings and forums:
 - Devon Association of CVS (DACVS)
 - Volunteers Centres Devon (VCD)
 - Devon Consortium
 - Link Devon
 - South Devon & Dartmoor Crime Reduction Partnership
 - South Devon & Dartmoor Health and Well Being Partnership

- West Devon Children's Trust
 - West Devon Connect
 - West Devon Strategic Partnership
 - West Devon Voluntary Sector Forums
- As well as representing the Devon CVS on the following partnerships:-
 - Devon Health and Wellbeing Partnership
 - Joint Strategic needs Assessment Task and Finish Group
 - Social Value Task and Finish Group

D2. Evidence of CVS influence on community planning priorities and activity.

West Devon CVS helps to give the voluntary sector and local communities a voice in local planning and evaluation. Examples of where we have helped provide influence include Complex Care Teams, Devon LINKs district wide activities and local town initiatives, county activity and health consultations. We enable voluntary and community organisations to take part in community planning and delivery of services, through

- Linking partners to appropriate communities of interest for their consultation needs.
- Using our comprehensive database of local organisations to target specific groups or localities so that they can have a voice at the right time with community planning
- Our well established communication networks enable us to pass on relevant information, resulting in meaningful consultation and communications taking place on a wide range of issues and developments.
- Information sharing and facilitation and brokering of relationships between key people in the statutory sector and local organisations
- Organising and supporting the West Devon Voluntary Sector Forum helps ensure that the voluntary sector plays an active part in local planning and policy development. (see B2)
- Projects we are involved in with Devon wide partnerships, such as Devon Association of CVSs and Devon Consortium. For instance
 - Total Support
 - Volunteer Activity Management Programme
 - Rural Volunteering – Community Contacts
 - Stronger Communities Programmes (see below)

- Local organisations continued to benefit from the Devon County Council 'Stronger Communities Programme' West Devon CVS was particularly involved in the following programmes:
 - Developing the Third Sector
 - Voluntary & Community Sector Representation
 - Volunteering Support Services

E Volunteer Centre Activity

Outcome: The role and function of the VC is well known locally; organisational practice in using volunteers is improved

Volunteer Centre West Devon continues to be highly successful and provides an essential service for local organisations and local individuals encouraging residents of the West Devon to take part in community activity. Despite closing our shop front in Tavistock in October 2011, we met our targets and maintained volunteer numbers. West Devon CVS, including the Volunteer Centre is capitalizing on opportunities provided by West Devon Connect to extend its reach across the West Devon

Throughout the year, opportunities were taken to promote good practice in volunteer care and support among organisations large and small in West Devon. Ranging from verbal tips to specialist referral within the CVS, the aim is effective deployment and retention of volunteers. Outcomes are found in community health and vitality.

This year we have hosted successful events in Okehampton and Tavistock to support national volunteering campaigns in Volunteers Week and Make a Difference Day(see E4)

Volunteer guidance was disseminated through our newsletters and at our Volunteer Organisers forums.

E1. The Volunteer Centre is accredited by Volunteering England

The service is accredited by Volunteering England and continues to deliver on all six core functions:

- brokerage,
- marketing,
- good practice,
- developing opportunities,
- policy response,
- strategic development.

E2. Number of potential volunteers interviewed or advised (phone or face to face or email)

- 307 additional volunteers were registered and actively looking for voluntary activity
- potential volunteers were interviewed or advised, at least 30% were known to have resulted in volunteers being placed in an opportunity
- There has been a good steady stream of new volunteers registering with us, and a noticeable increase in the number of volunteers considering volunteering as a way forward from unemployment. In these difficult economic times, volunteering is increasingly being considered a great way to build up the skills, experience and confidence needed to find new employment. We have worked in partnership with the Okehampton Works initiative and Tavistock Work Club to support jobseekers in finding the right volunteering opportunity.

E3. Number of local organisations who are 'clients' of the volunteer centre

- 210 local organisations were 'clients' of the volunteer centre
- 65 new volunteering opportunities were promoted

E4. Evidence of promotion of volunteering e.g. through newsletters, talks, participation in public events.

- Newsworthy developments throughout the year were released to print and radio media.
- In June 2011, during Volunteers Week we worked with voluntary and community organisations in Okehampton and Tavistock to promote volunteering and encourage more West Devon residents to get involved in their community.
- West Devon Connect – we joined events across the borough
- In parallel with all the Devon centers, we gave high priority to building opportunities to meet the surge of new volunteers, some very skilled. More people wanted to use a qualification or gain experience through volunteering. We worked with Job Centre plus and West Devon work clubs to promote volunteering.
- West Devon Volunteer Centre has been working closely this year with our partner volunteer centres across Devon to work on the launch of our brand new Devon-wide website www.volunteer-devon.net. The website complements the national online volunteering database www.do-it.org.uk by

- offering a more journalistic style, and an opportunity for organisations to increase the profile of and showcase their work to potential volunteers.
- Organisations which we worked with to promote our services included: Job Centre Plus, West Devon Connect.
 - All editions of our newsletter contained a section called 'Volunteering Matters'
 - We produced an opportunities booklet localized to both Okehampton and Tavistock.
 - We provided talks to groups on four occasions.