

**Lancashire and South Cumbria   
VCFSE Alliance**

**Terms of Reference**

This document sets out the Terms of Reference for the Lancashire and South Cumbria Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise Alliance (LSC VCFSE Alliance, or “the Alliance”).

The Alliance is a part of the wider VCFSE Sector and is made up of representatives from across the VCFSE. It operates alongside the LSC VCFSE Assembly and local VCFSE place-based partnerships, and other networks to ensure the voice of the VCFSE is heard across the health and care system.

Through the development of the Alliance, we are creating a means for the sector to connect, support and influence across LSC’s health and care system. This includes Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Westmorland with Furness as unitary authorities and the district councils across Lancashire.

The Alliance will operate with the following key principles:

* **Subsidiarity** – the right things decided and delivered at the right geography.
* **Grassroots up**, with the VCFSE place partnerships as the cornerstone.
* Ensuring the **inclusion** of the wider, local VCFSE sector in the best ways possible.
* **Building on what’s there –** our assets and VCFSE strengths, and
* Supporting a coherent **distributed leadership** approach.

We recognise that we are in a period of transition. This is both in terms of how we engage with councils, health systems and other potential partners, but also in terms of our own structures and geographies. We also recognise that we need to articulate the case for our sector to develop effective partnerships with evolving agenda and structures, and in terms of making the case for the needs and ambitions of our communities and our sector.

The VCFSE Alliance will seek to create the right mechanisms that align with our principles. We will do this while understanding our own structures and the organic nature of current circumstances.

In recognition of this, these Terms of Reference will be reviewed within six months of initial adoption and on an annual basis thereafter.

1. **Purpose**
   1. The Alliance exists to connect, represent, and support the VCFSE as well as influence across the wider system partnership.
   2. The role of the Alliance is to provide a single point of access, understand needs and agree strategic priorities for the sector.
   3. The Alliance seeks to deliver the following vision.
2. **Vision**
   1. To ensure that the VCFSE sector operating in LSC is supported, connected and influential.
   2. That the role of the sector to improve the lives of people in our communities and to address health inequalities is recognised and empowered.
   3. We will utilise the strength, flexibility, responsiveness, innovation, and knowledge of the sector to be a permanent partner for change.
3. **Objectives**

To meet the above vision, the Alliance’s objectives will focus on three areas of activity:

1. Connecting
2. Influencing
3. Engaging

These translate into the following objectives:

* 1. To establish and develop effective collaborative partnerships across the VCFSE sector.
  2. To create a deeper understanding, across all stakeholders, of the VCFSE sector. This includes how it operates, the services it provides and its impact.
  3. To enable all interested local VCFSE sector organisations to be aware of and contribute to the vision, goals and plans of system partners and create opportunities for their active participation.
  4. To identify and work strategically with local VCFSE organisations, networks, and groups, who work with, or provide a voice for, people who are seldom heard, under or misrepresented.
  5. Enhance and develop opportunities for people and local communities to use and amplify their voice.
  6. To enable the VCFSE sector and people from local communities and neighbourhoods to inform and use current lived experience to co-design transformation and intervention.
  7. To increase the investment into the VCFSE sector to enable the sector to contribute fully and sustainably.
  8. To increase the reputation and value of the VCFSE as a strategic partner.
  9. To work collaboratively to support the implementation of new ways of working at Place.

1. **Membership/Secretariat/Accountable Bodies**
   1. The Alliance comprises an expert group of representatives with experience and skills from across the VCFSE.
   2. The Alliance is accountable only to the LSC VCFSE Assembly.
   3. Membership of the Alliance will be flexible and respond to need as determined by the Alliance. Members will be nominees from:
      1. Existing VCFSE networks and partnerships, can nominate up to four nominees from each ICS Place.
      2. VCFSE equalities network or similar, based in LSC, can nominate up to four.
      3. Pan-Lancashire/pan-Lancashire and South Cumbria VCFSE providers can nominate up to four.
      4. Appointed thematic leads for key workstreams that operate across Lancashire and South Cumbria, will be non-voting leads. The process for appointing will be determined by the Alliance.
   4. Secretariat support will be agreed by the Alliance.
2. **Roles and responsibilities** 
   1. The role of the Alliance is to provide a single point of access, understand needs and agree strategic priorities for the sector.
   2. Alliance members will report back to their nominating constituency. At Alliance meetings all members will be expected to provide updates.
   3. Failure to attend two-thirds of meetings in a twelve-month period will result in notification to the appointing body, assuming no extenuating circumstances.
3. **Meetings**
   1. The Alliance will appoint a chair by consensus and this appointment will last for 12 months. The outgoing Chair can be re-appointed by consensus for a further two terms, up to a maximum of 3 years.
   2. The Alliance will meet monthly, with meetings called by the chair, arranged and supported by the secretariat.
   3. If the chair is unavailable for a quorate meeting, those present will agree a chair for that meeting.
   4. Only members of the Alliance and secretariat support shall have the right to attend meetings. Alliance members, with secretariat support, will agree an agenda, including speakers, for the meeting.
   5. Notice of each meeting confirming the venue, time, and date, together with an agenda of items to be discussed and where possible supporting papers, should be forwarded to each member of the group no later than five working days before the date of the meeting.
   6. Actions and minutes should be circulated to members of the Alliance no longer than five working days following meetings. Meetings may be recorded, and the recordings held by the secretariat to ensure an accurate record of decisions and discussions is maintained – then deleted.
4. **Decision-making**
   1. The quorum for Alliance meetings is one third of the current membership. Decisions will be made by consensus, whenever reasonably practicable.
   2. If a decision requires a vote, then each member of the Alliance present will have one vote; decisions will be passed by a simple majority.
   3. Members agree to the principles of collective decision-making and shared responsibility for the decisions made by the Alliance. Members agree to enact decisions taken by the Alliance in accordance with the Roles and Responsibilities Protocol (annex 1).
5. **Protocols**
   1. Members of the Alliance and other key representatives agree to sign and observe the Roles and Responsibilities Protocol attached to this document (Annex 1).
   2. If a breach of the Protocol is found, as decided by the Alliance, it will be reported to the appointing body for the individual involved.
   3. The Secretariat will keep a log of Alliance member’s declarations of interests.
6. **Representation**
   1. The Alliance will agree a process to nominate representatives for key VCFSE roles at System level. This includes the ICS Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Integrated Care Partnership (ICP).
7. **Dissolution of the Alliance**
   1. The Alliance can dissolve itself if three-quarters of members vote for dissolution. Or, if four appointing bodies support or minute a motion for dissolution.
8. **Review and Revision** 
   1. Members of the Alliance commit to undertaking an annual review of these terms of reference from January 2024.
9. **Current Membership of the VCFSE Alliance** 
   1. The names of individuals who are members of the Alliance, their organisations, their nominees, and start date, will be kept as an Annex (2) to these Terms of Reference.
   2. Members of the Alliance will ensure that the *Declarations of Interest Log* is kept up to date.

**ToR Review Dates**

1. ToR originally signed off: July 2023
2. ToR last reviewed and signed off: Reviewed - January 2024. Signed off – February 2024.

**Annex 1: Roles & Responsibilities Protocol**

The following are the expectations of your role and responsibilities as a member of the Alliance or a VCFSE representative on all LSC ICS boards or committees.

**Your role is to:**

1. Speak on behalf of the VCFSE Assembly and advocate for the views and perspectives of the sector.
2. Act as an advocate for the sector in the interests of the common good.
3. Be accountable to those who have nominated you.
4. Ensure there is an ongoing dialogue between you and your nominating network.
5. Promote sector activity and be positive about the sector.
6. Bring solutions to meetings as well as challenges faced by the sector.
7. Promote joint working across the sector and act as a critical friend for partner’s services.
8. Attend relevant meetings to carry out the above – see responsibilities for more details.
9. Recognise and engage in the learning journey of the Alliance to:
   1. Share relevant experiences of influencing with other members of the Group.
   2. Understand the needs of the VCFSE sector.
   3. Familiarity with key policy information relating to the VCFSE sector.

**Your role is not to:**

1. Represent yourself or the views of your organisation.
2. Feel you must be an expert on everything.
3. Use this position as a forum for giving your opinion, or for forging your own political alliances.

**Your responsibilities are to:**

1. Commit to act on behalf of the VCFSE sector collectively.
2. Be accountable to the VCFSE Assembly – gathering input from colleagues and peers and feeding back to them.
3. Ensure you have the capacity/time to undertake the role and be consistent in attendance of meetings as far as possible.
4. Read papers circulated and prepare for meetings.
5. Attend briefings before meetings as appropriate.
6. Actively participate in meeting discussions.
7. Take suitable notes to feedback to VCFSE sector colleagues.
8. Communicate feedback through the mechanisms agreed by the Alliance.
9. Raise areas of discussion needing wider VCFSE expertise when appropriate.
10. Attend debriefing meetings as appropriate.

**Meeting attendance:**

If you fail to attend three consecutive formal meetings of the Alliance, you will be automatically removed from the group, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

**Membership expectations**

1. All members will aim to ensure positive and effective working relationships within the Alliance, with the wider VCFSE operating in Lancashire and South Cumbria, and with public sector partners.
2. All members of the Alliance will seek to create an environment of mutual respect and trust, adhering to the highest standards of equal opportunity and non-discriminatory practice.
3. All members will provide a high level of constructive support, challenge, and debate, and recognise the value of honesty within discussions.
4. Members of the Alliance will observe the confidentiality of discussion within meetings, and the sensitivity of some issues.
5. It is recognised and accepted that there will be occasions when members of the Alliance may potentially be competing for funding or resources. The Alliance encourages collaborative approaches. Where there is potential for conflict, this will be managed through declaring interests.
6. If a member is unable to attend the meeting, they will contribute views by email in advance of the meeting which will be considered by the other members during discussion and/or send an appropriate and briefed representative in their place.
7. Members are expected to work within, and ‘speak with one voice’, on policy issues that the Alliance has debated and agreed.
8. Members representing the Alliance at external partnership meetings are expected to formally feedback to the network and ensure that their messages and views are in line with the policy direction / approach agreed. They are representatives of the VCFSE Alliance and should operate in this way.
9. It is recognised that members have different levels of resources available to them to be able to contribute to the work of the Alliance. Whilst the Alliance will seek to secure external resources to support its work, members might be expected to consider how they contribute resources: this may be financial, or donating time, meeting venues, providing administration etc.
10. In terms of representing the sector to partner agencies, members will ensure and expect a unified, coherent front in engaging with partner agencies.

**Annex 2: Current Membership of the L&SC VCFSE Alliance**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Organisation(s) and Role(s)** | **Appointed by and accountable to:** | **Type of rep** | **Appt. date.** |
| Angela Allen | Spring North – CEO | Blackburn with Darwen | Place | 20th July 23 |
| Christine Blythe | Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale CVS – CO | East Lancashire | Place | 20th July 23 |
| Colin Ranshaw | Westmorland with Furness H&WBB – VCFSE Representative and co-vice chair. | Cumbria Third Sector Network | Theme | 20th July 23 |
| David Allen | Cumbria CVS – CEO | Cumbria CVS | Place | 20th July 23 |
| Garth Hodgkinson | Community CVS – CEO | Blackburn with Darwen | Place | 20th July 23 |
| Joe Hannett | Community Futures - Partnership Manager | Facilitation | Alliance lead | 20th July 23 |
| Peter Lumsden | Lancashire Forum of Faiths | Lancashire Forum of Faiths | Theme | TBA |
| Phil Whiteley | Age UK South Lakeland – Partnerships Development Manager | Gateway Group (South Lakeland) | Place | 20th July 23 |
| Tracy Hopkins | Citizens Advice Blackpool – CEO | Fylde Coast | Place | 20th July 23 |
| Val Stangoe | St Marys Hospice – CEO | Barrow – In – Furness | Place | 20th July 23 |
| Vic Citarella | West Lancashire CVS - Trustee | West Lancashire | Place | 20th July 23 |
| Vicky Shepherd | Age UK Blackburn with Darwen – CEO | Blackburn with Darwen | Place | 20th July 23 |
| Yak Patel | Lancaster District CVS – CEO | North Lancashire | Place | 20th July 23 |
| Yvette Holden | Selnet Ltd – Flying Start Account Manager | Social Enterprise sector | Theme | 20th July 23 |
| TBC | *Equalities Network* |  | Equalities |  |
| TBC | *Provider Network* |  | Providers |  |

The names of individuals who are members or attendees, their organisations, their nominating constituency, and their start date.