

Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance

SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter outlines how the Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance aims to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and their families, and reduce the numbers of referrals and re referrals into Children’s Services by further developing the links between Children’s Services and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

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1. Introduction

County Durham benefits from a strong Voluntary and Community Sector who are often able to provide ongoing long term support at a local level that enables families to remain supported without the need of statutory services.

The Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance team provide direct support to frontline practitioners and Voluntary and Community Sector partners to work together to empower families and communities to achieve positive outcomes using the minimum necessary intervention.

The team consists of a countywide Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance Coordinator and four Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance Locality Workers (each aligned to the One Point/Families First locality areas).

2.To get support from the Team

Practitioners identify a need for a family to engage with VCS organisation – this can be done during a case discussion with a manager and should be recorded on the D&D form, at a TAF meeting, on discussion with the family etc and may include support around poverty/financial exclusion, sport activities, befriending, young people activities, support and will be recorded on the family plan.



Practitioners will contact the VCS Alliance Locality worker (via email, telephone, face to face) and provide overview of the family (including family name) and what support they require.



VCS Alliance Locality worker will source information relevant to family needs and will forward to practitioner. This will be done, where possible, within 10 working days.



Practitioners will share the information with the family and agree this as a way forward and where appropriate, submit the referral to the VCS organisation/service on behalf of the family.



Practitioners will support the family to access services in the voluntary and community sector and practitioner will record engagement with service and the impact this has had on the family e.g. in TAF records, case notes, closure summary.



The VCS Alliance Locality Worker will contact practitioners 4-6 weeks after initial query, to capture feedback regarding the referrals made to .



For more complex cases VCS Advice Clinics are available. Days and times for clinics will be circulated as part of the weekly update and practitioners can book appointments with the VCS Alliance Locality worker to discuss cases in more detail at their office base.

3.Additional Support Available

Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance Locality workers will attend Team meetings at least 3 times a year to update on the development of the Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance and share information for upcoming events and activities in a locality.

Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance Locality Workers can work with managers and practitioners to arrange guest speakers at team meetings from the Voluntary and Community Sector.

Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance Locality workers will share regular locality updates via e-mail to all staff once a week.

Practitioners can request general information from the Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance Locality workers, for example where are local toddler groups delivered, where are young people's activities delivered from, where are the local foodbanks etc.

The Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance team and frontline practitioners will work together to identify gaps in provision and possible solutions to better support children, young people and families.