



**HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD: 15<sup>th</sup> June 2026**  
**REPORT OF VOLUNTARY ACTION LEICESTERSHIRE (VAL)**  
**THE VAL OFFER**

**Purpose of report**

1. This report provides the Health and Wellbeing Board with an overview of the work undertaken by Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL) in supporting NHS colleagues, commissioners, local authorities and wider public sector partners across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
2. The report demonstrates the contribution of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector towards:
  - Prevention and early intervention;
  - Reducing health inequalities;
  - Community resilience and wellbeing;
  - Neighbourhood models of care;
  - Partnership working across the health and care system.
3. The report also highlights the strategic role of VAL in strengthening VCSE infrastructure, supporting collaboration and enabling community organisations to contribute effectively to local health and wellbeing priorities.

**Recommendation**

4. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:
  - (a) Recognise the strategic contribution of VAL and the VCSE sector in supporting prevention, health inequalities reduction and community resilience;
  - (b) Support continued partnership working between statutory organisations and the VCSE sector via VAL;
  - (c) Encourage stronger VCSE involvement within neighbourhood health planning, commissioning and integrated care arrangements;
  - (d) Support ongoing collaboration between NHS partners, local authorities, Public Health and community organisations.

**Policy Framework and Previous Decision**

5. VAL's work aligns with a range of national and local priorities including:

- Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies;
  - Integrated Care System (ICS) and Integrated Care Board (ICB) priorities;
  - Public Health prevention and wellbeing strategies;
  - Neighbourhood health and place-based working programmes;
  - Mental health and wellbeing priorities;
  - Safeguarding and community resilience frameworks;
  - Local Government Reorganisation discussions and neighbourhood governance development.
6. During 2025–26, VAL supported VCSE engagement within 18 strategies and plans developed by public sector partners and strategic agencies across Leicestershire ensuring that community perspectives were incorporated into policy development and system planning.

### **Background**

7. Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL) is the local infrastructure organisation supporting the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. VAL works to strengthen communities by supporting voluntary organisations, developing volunteering opportunities, promoting collaboration and ensuring that community voices influence local decision-making.
8. VAL employs 6 staff and 7 volunteers to directly deliver the infrastructure support:
- a) 1 0.6 FTE Team Manager
  - b) 1 0.4 Team Lead
  - c) 1 FTE Development Officer
  - d) 1 0.85 FTE Development Officer
  - e) 1 FTE Support Officer
  - f) 1 FTE Information, Advice and Data Officer
  - g) 1092 volunteer hours per year
9. VAL provides a wide range of infrastructure and development support services to VCSE organisations of all sizes, from small grassroots community groups through to larger charities and social enterprises. Support includes organisational development, governance advice, funding support, volunteer development, safeguarding guidance, training, partnership facilitation and strategic representation.
10. VAL also delivers and supports a number of strategic programmes and partnerships linked to health, wellbeing, employability, volunteering and community resilience. This includes close partnership working with NHS organisations, Integrated Care Boards, local authorities, Public Health teams, safeguarding partnerships and Healthwatch.

11. Through its infrastructure role, VAL acts as a bridge between communities and statutory organisations, helping to ensure that community voice, lived experience, grassroots insight and local need actively shape health and care planning, commissioning and service design.
12. The neighbourhood approach to health is an integrated way of working where the NHS, local government, social care, and VCSE organisations come together to create healthier communities, helping people of all ages live healthy, active and independent lives for as long as possible. VAL plays a significant role in supporting prevention, reducing health inequalities and strengthening neighbourhood approaches by enabling VCSE organisations to:
  - Develop sustainable services;
  - Access funding and resources;
  - Build governance and workforce capacity;
  - Strengthen volunteering and community participation;
  - Improve partnership working and referral pathways;
  - Deliver community-led health and wellbeing support.
12. VAL also supports strategic engagement and consultation activity, helping VCSE organisations and communities contribute to local strategies, commissioning discussions and system transformation programmes.
13. The organisation has developed strong relationships across the health and care system and is recognised as a key strategic partner supporting collaboration between statutory organisations and the VCSE sector.
14. Throughout 2025–26 VAL continued to provide extensive infrastructure support, partnership development and strategic engagement across Leicestershire.
15. VAL has supported VCSE organisations through:
  - Funding advice and grant development;
  - Governance and constitutional support;
  - Volunteer development and training;
  - Safeguarding and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) guidance;
  - Partnership facilitation and networking;
  - Impact measurement and organisational development;
  - Strategic representation and consultation activity.
16. During 2025/26, VAL supported across Leicestershire 791 VCSE organisations with advice and support, including 272 intensive one-to-one support referrals involving 190 unique organisations. Across the year there has been increasing demand for support relating to governance, funding sustainability, volunteer management and partnership development.
17. VAL has also contributed to strategic meetings and partnership structures involving NHS organisations, local authorities, Public Health, safeguarding boards, neighbourhood health groups and wider system partners.

18. The organisation has worked closely with partners to support neighbourhood approaches, prevention priorities and reducing health inequalities through community-led delivery.
19. During the reporting period VAL supported 129 VCSE organisations to develop and deliver health and wellbeing services.
20. Support provided to health and wellbeing organisations included:
  - Funding support and sustainability planning;
  - Developing referral pathways and partnerships;
  - Volunteer recruitment and workforce development;
  - Safeguarding and governance support;
  - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy development;
  - Impact measurement and outcomes planning;
  - Organisational development and constitution reviews.
21. Areas of support included:
  - Mental health and wellbeing;
  - Dementia support;
  - Community safety and women's wellbeing;
  - Refugee and migrant health support;
  - Tackling loneliness and social isolation;
  - Volunteer training and workforce development;
  - Community food and wellbeing projects.
22. Case study examples included:
  - Support to Leicester Musical Memory Box to strengthen volunteer training and dementia support provision helping increase access to alternative therapeutic support for people experiencing trauma.
  - Partnership support to Amber Mental Health following governance concerns linked to delivery of a Community Mental Health Café.
  - Support to Sense of the Herd to develop mental health and trauma-informed equine therapy programmes.
  - Support to women's wellbeing and violence prevention initiatives through The BWB Collective, strengthening community-led prevention and wellbeing approaches.

### **Proposals/Options**

23. Building on this work, there are opportunities to further strengthen the contribution of the VCSE sector in supporting Health & Wellbeing Board priorities, including:
- Expanding VCSE involvement within neighbourhood models of care;
  - Strengthening collaborative commissioning arrangements;
  - Developing co-production opportunities with communities;
  - Supporting preventative and early intervention approaches;
  - Improving referral pathways between statutory and VCSE services;
  - Increasing access to governance, safeguarding and impact training;
  - Strengthening community resilience and volunteer capacity.
24. VAL will continue to work closely with partners to ensure that local VCSE organisations are equipped to respond to emerging health and wellbeing needs.

### **Consultation/Patient and Public Involvement**

25. VAL engages regularly with:
- VCSE organisations;
  - Community leaders and residents;
  - Volunteers;
  - NHS and Public Health partners;
  - Local authorities;
  - Strategic networks and partnership forums.
26. Engagement activity includes:
- Consultation events and workshops;
  - CEO and VCSE network meetings;
  - Community engagement activity;
  - Partnership forums and strategic boards;
  - Funding and training events;
  - Public sector consultations and responses.
27. Feedback gathered through these processes has informed ongoing discussions regarding:
- Local Government Reorganisation;
  - Neighbourhood health planning;
  - VCSE commissioning and partnership arrangements;
  - Prevention and community wellbeing priorities.

### **Resource Implications**

28. VAL has supported the generation of significant social and economic value across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
29. Between April 2023 and March 2026:
  - £1.96 million funding secured by VCSE organisations with support from VAL
  - £9.19 million estimated social value generated through volunteering activity
  - £218,562 estimated value created through Healthwatch-related service improvements and reduced unnecessary GP and A&E attendance
  - 2,054 VCSE organisations supported
  - 2,731 individuals supported into volunteering opportunities
  - 262,772 volunteer hours generated
30. Between April 2024 and September 2025 VAL also created an estimated £2.48 million of social and economic value through employability and skills support programmes.
31. Employability outcomes achieved included:
  - 49 individuals supported into employment;
  - 84 individuals progressing into education or training;
  - 20 individuals gaining qualifications;
  - 205 individuals improving employability skills.
32. Healthwatch activity also contributed to wider system efficiencies through:
  - Improved patient access to advice and guidance;
  - Reduced unnecessary GP and urgent care presentations;
  - Service improvements informed by patient feedback and lived experience;
  - Strengthened engagement between communities and health services.
33. These outcomes demonstrate the wider value of investing in VCSE infrastructure, prevention and community-led support services.

### **Timetable for Decisions**

34. This report is intended to inform ongoing partnership discussions and future collaborative working arrangements between NHS organisations, local authorities and the VCSE sector.

## **Conclusion**

35. VAL continues to play a significant strategic and operational role in supporting health colleagues, commissioners, local authorities and wider public sector partners.
36. Through infrastructure support, partnership development and community engagement, VAL enables VCSE organisations to contribute effectively towards prevention, neighbourhood working and reducing health inequalities, while ensuring community voice is actively heard and reflected in system planning and delivery. The evidence presented within this report demonstrates that VCSE infrastructure support creates measurable impact across communities and health systems, including:
  - Increased organisational resilience and sustainability;
  - Greater volunteer capacity and workforce development;
  - Improved partnership working between statutory and VCSE organisations;
  - Increased community voice and engagement in strategic discussions;
  - Reduced pressure on statutory health and care services through prevention and early intervention.
38. VAL's work continues to strengthen the connection between communities and statutory services, ensuring local organisations are better equipped to respond to emerging health and wellbeing needs.
39. Continued investment in VCSE infrastructure and collaborative working via VAL will support:
  - Stronger neighbourhood models;
  - Improved community resilience;
  - Better health and wellbeing outcomes;
  - More effective prevention and early intervention;
  - Enhanced partnership working across the system;
  - Greater community participation and volunteering.
40. As health and care systems continue to evolve, the role of trusted VCSE infrastructure organisations such as VAL will remain essential in embedding community voice, supporting integrated working and delivering equitable prevention focused health and wellbeing outcomes.

## **Background papers**

- VAL Performance Reports 2025–26
- VAL Impact Report
- Local Health and Wellbeing Strategies
- Integrated Care System priorities and partnership plans

### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

41. This report relates to Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and is relevant to all local authority and NHS partner areas.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – VCSE Case Studies
- Appendix 2 – Social Value and Impact Data
- Appendix 3 – Partnership and Engagement Activity

### **Officer to contact**

Kevin Allen-Khimani, CEO, VAL

Telephone: 0116 257 5050

Email: kevin.ak@valonline.org.uk

### **Relevant Impact Assessments**

#### **Equality Implications**

There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

42. VAL's work actively supports inclusion, community cohesion and reducing health inequalities across diverse communities.

43. Many supported projects focus on:

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Refugee and migrant communities
- Women's wellbeing and community safety
- Dementia support
- Tackling loneliness and social isolation
- Volunteer inclusion and accessibility

44. There are positive equality implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

#### **Human Rights Implications**

45. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

### Crime and Disorder Implications and Environmental Implications

46. Some supported initiatives contribute positively towards community safety, social cohesion and environmental wellbeing.

### Partnership Working and associated issues

47. VAL works closely with:

- NHS organisations
- Integrated Care Boards
- Public Health teams
- Local authorities
- Safeguarding partnerships
- Healthwatch
- Educational institutions
- VCSE organisations and community groups

48. Partnership working remains central to neighbourhood health, prevention and wellbeing priorities.

### Risk Assessment

49. Risks include:

- Increasing demand on VCSE organisations
- Funding pressures and sustainability challenges
- Workforce and volunteer capacity pressures
- Challenges associated with system transformation and Local Government Reorganisation

50. VAL continues to mitigate these risks through:

- Governance and organisational support
- Partnership facilitation
- Training and development opportunities
- Strategic engagement and advocacy
- Funding and sustainability support

This page is intentionally left blank