

Addressing the economic crisis

How the VCSE sector in GM can support communities and key challenges for the sector



Slides put together by Local Infrastructure Organisations Network (including [10GM](#)), by Liz Windsor-Welsh, CEO of [Action Together](#) CIO and Director of 10GM and; John Hannen, Chief Executive at [GMCVO](#).



- 17,494 voluntary orgs, community groups and social enterprises
- 71% micro (under £10,000 turnover)
- Top 4 areas of work – wellbeing, health and social care, community development/sport and economic wellbeing
- £1.2 billion income (75% have at least one source of non-public sector funds)
- 496,609 volunteer -1.4million hours per week
- 74% of orgs who employ pay Real Living Wage
- 85% of VCSE organisations work with other VCSE organisations – collaborative networks are significant and critical to mobilising communities



VCSE in GM



Distributing Household Support Fund

Partnerships between LAs and the local CVS

Distributed 30+ grants per LA area to groups/organisations to enable cash is available to those at crisis point.

Particularly effective at reach to ensure equity of access for those that often face marginalisation.

Significant success on outcomes and delivery.

Most areas on second round and established mechanisms if there is more government support.



VCSE managed hardship funds for items available

Migrant Destitution Fund GM – people with no recourse to public funds - Grants are for up to £80 once a month and are typically spent on food, winter clothing, phone credit, travel costs (e.g. to appointments), dental treatment <https://manchestercommunitycentral.org/migrant-destitution-fund-gm>

Real Change -Real Change pays for practical items (deposits for homes, employment-related training courses, clothes for job interviews, furnishings for new accommodation, household items, travel costs) for those who are homeless or slept rough - Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Wigan and Leigh

- <https://manchestercommunitycentral.org/real-change-mcr>
- <https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/oldham-real-change-network>
- <https://realchangerochdale.co.uk/>
- <https://realchangewiganandleigh.co.uk/>



Case studies

- Macc Spirit of Manchester Story week on cost of living a collection of 11 case studies here:
<https://manchestercommunitycentral.org/whats-happening-manchester/spirit-manchester-spirit-stories>

- Food banks/food pantry - increasing culturally appropriate food offers – Food Solutions Networks, coordinated activity across food provision. Winter warmth packs.
- Community warehouse/logistical support/ bulk purchasing/home delivery services
- Prepare warm spaces/ public living rooms (Camarados).
- Increasing access to welfare advice and funds – Citizens Advice, and partnerships to extend reach. Multi-lingual welfare advice
- Digital tech and data libraries/banks
- Energy efficiency schemes and support – Groundwork
- Winter volunteering campaigns active now recruiting additional support

Information and signposting

Most CVS's have Cost of Living signposting resources on their website about local help

Working with GM Poverty Action in many areas to develop, spread and update the signposting referral tool

Poverty Truth Commissions, Lived experience commissioners' voices in system change – Oldham, Tameside, Manchester, Trafford, Salford.

Established and growing social action networks in every area on poverty – root causes and symptoms.

Challenges

Scale of demand too great for current VCSE provision, workforce capacity stretched and access to £ to meet the demand on food etc.

Inflation costs affecting what groups can buy/provide for money they have.

Significant amount of VCSE provision is delivered on short term funding, COVID funding

Priorities

- Need both small grants and sustainable funding to critical organisations

- Ensure contracts keep pace with inflation or invest in approaches to improve VCSE productivity and deliver with less in future

- Longer-term contracts

Challenges

Pay reviews for workforce squeezing budgets

Labour supply low, VCSE sector hard hit due to wage gap between it and rest of economy

Running costs increased (e.g. Energy bill increases of 300% are becoming common place – some groups and organisations are closing)

Priorities

- Contract uplifts to reflect pay reviews, NHS pay awards to be passed on to non NHS providers.

- Support and retain paid and voluntary VCSE workforce
 - Campaign for payment of the Real Living Wage to staff
 - Investment in training and support for volunteers

- Recognition of running costs as legitimate element of grant and contract pricing: 5-10% is not enough to also build resilience or invest in improving productivity.