

Shaping the future

vas

Impact Report
2022



through sustainability
and social justice

See for
yourself

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Introduction from our Chair and Chief Executive

We want to take this opportunity to thank all of our staff, volunteers, and trustees for all their hard work and commitment to our mission and priorities over the past year.

It has been another challenging year, with operational uncertainty around Covid restrictions to navigate and the growing realisation of the economic crisis we are now facing.

Within this crisis, we have recognised the different roles we can play and have prioritised partnerships. We have reached out to underserved groups, with particular emphasis on building trust and engagement with leaders and organisations from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, enabling them to engage with VAS and major institutions in the city.

This report, together with our Annual Report and Accounts, provides a detailed picture of the broad range of direct delivery to individuals, groups, and organisations in the city.

Our approach has been to work with the assets of people, money, places and the power of collaboration.

Our impact would not have been possible without the financial support of our funders and the excellent close working partnership we deliver with Sheffield City Council, the Sheffield Health and Care Partnership, local NHS leadership, universities, and the business community.



Andy Buck
Chair of the Board of Trustees



Helen Sims
Chief Executive Officer

Our mission and values

Our vision is that people work together to make a vital and growing contribution to the quality of life in all of Sheffield's communities.

Our purpose is to support the development of voluntary and community action in a professional way so that it is sustainable and brings about positive social change.

Our focus is on tackling inequality, increasing democratic engagement, and influencing change to city systems and structures to meet people's needs better. We are ambitious and optimistic – we love Sheffield and want it to be a great city for all of its people and communities.

Our values are the promotion of social justice, fairness, and respect. We value diversity and seek to empower and enable others. We strive to demonstrate integrity, openness, resilience, and innovation. We actively seek collaboration and cooperation, working in partnership with others in the voluntary and community sector and beyond.



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"We recognise the value and role of VAS alongside the VCS and I am keen to establish longer-term arrangements for investment in the voluntary sector in Sheffield."

Emma Latimer, Executive Place Director for Sheffield, NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care System, speaking at VAS AGM 2022

SUPPORTED 150+
Front Line
workers

230 groups supported
with signposting,
information and
advice

20,000

Families connected to Sheffield Healthy
Holidays through the website, telephone
and social media engagement

3 **EXHIBITIONS**
We hosted 3 city wide
exhibitions at The Circle titled,
Caribbean Perspectives,
Sheffield South East Learning
Partnership Schools and Depaul

150 **PEOPLE**
engaged at
our Race and
Governance
event

233

**CHRISTMAS
GIFTS**

to refugee and
asylum seeker
children

100 **VCS PROJECTS**
through
Sheffield
Business
Together

5776
PEOPLE HELPED

to get the
right
information
and advice
about their
care with
Healthwatch
Sheffield

1,300
REFUGEES
supported
by SPRING

265
VOLUNTEERS

24 refugees mentored by
academics from
SHU through
New Beginnings

67 organisations hosted
during March 2021 to
March 2022 at The
Circle

12,750 **PAYSLIPS**

were provided to the VCS for the year

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Supporting organisations to navigate change

COVID continued to have a huge impact on the sector, particularly as organisations responded to the uncertainty and change in COVID regulations and the wider economic impact of market disruption.

Providing specialist services

Managing an efficient and effective organisation requires sound systems and access to professional support.

VAS offers affordable, accessible services for processing payroll, undertaking independent examinations, preparing accounts, and advising on HR issues.

“

“This has been incredible-it’s really so good to be able to talk honestly about this and check if I am on the right track.”

VAS Client



In the last year, we delivered:

- Professional services (Payroll, Community Accountancy, and HR services) to support **222** clients during the year;
- Support for clients with their legal and statutory requirements;
- Provision of best practice advice over a wide range of financial and personnel issues.

This year we have:

- Supported new VCS organisations emerging from the pandemic to establish solid foundations;
- Helped VCS organisations be in a strong position to look for funding to support their work;
- Provided existing VCS organisations with the tools and guidance to review and adapt their governance and structures so that they stay fit for purpose;
- We continued to work in partnership with South Yorkshire Community Foundation, supporting the South Yorkshire Funders forum to shape inclusive funding application processes and working with South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau to support joint working and local advice surgeries across Sheffield.

VCS response to Covid 19

The weekly Covid Hubs network set up in 2020 has developed from crisis response to planning recovery. The Covid hubs have recently been renamed the VAS Network and continue to meet weekly to share public health information, including flu and Covid vaccine updates. They are now also focused on tackling the impact of the cost of living crisis together.

Health and Wellbeing

We support the sector to play a vital role in supporting the health and well-being of Sheffield people, ensuring their voices are heard in decisions about health and care services.

Supporting the VCS to be recognised, valued and sustainable within statutory partnerships

Our work with partners across the **health, care, and well-being sectors** has developed significantly this year.

We have prioritised collaboration that tackles health inequalities in the city.

We recognised that our recovery as a city from the social and economic impact of the pandemic requires us to build on the participation and diversity of partnerships that successfully responded to the crisis.

Key outcomes from this focussed work include:

- Leveraging project investment to create a national exemplar project in the Sport England funded Move More Empowering Communities programme.

- Developing a network of **150+** frontline workers to strengthen the role of organisations working in community frontline roles.
- Connecting VCS diabetes wellbeing work and community insights with primary care health management to develop a better understanding of type 2 diabetes.
- Ensuring that autistic people shape autism strategy development and influencing the way commissioners invest in the autism sphere.



Supporting Lunch Club Leaders

When lunch is the most important meal of the day, lunch clubs provide a meal for so many people each week.

This year we have:

- Supported **20** lunch club leaders as they worked towards reopening over the last six months.
- Provided guidance on risk assessments to help lunch clubs open services safely.
- Developed an online peer support network enabling lunch club leaders to share issues, successes, and learning.

Sheffield Youth Neighbourhoods and Communities

We have secured nearly **£500,000** from the National Lottery and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for the Sheffield Youth, Neighbourhoods and Communities partnership project.

Commencing in January 2022, this three-year programme of community development and empowerment will work in key local communities to:

- Embed community-based infrastructure that positively empowers young people and tackles crime and exploitation
- Develop local partnerships and test and learn activities delivered through an empowerment fund
- Employ youth development workers and provide a comprehensive, accredited training package of support
- Develop the wider youth and community workforce with a package of mentoring, peer support, and training.
- Support grassroots community-led development to support young people's activity and family support



Sheffield Business Together

Sheffield Business Together (SBT) unites like-minded businesses to collaborate, connect and share resources with charities to support the people and communities of our great city. VAS was a founding member of the steering group and partnership and has co-delivered this year with our partners Sheffield Chamber of Commerce and Business in the Community.

The partnership works across 4 key areas:

- 1 Voluntary Sector Sustainability
- 2 Employment and Education
- 3 Environment
- 4 Social Action

In 2021-22, SBT supported **100** VCS projects supported and the following scale of volunteering and value:

- Total Hours of pro bono and business volunteer time: **1,517**
- Total number of volunteers: **265**
- The total leverage value from the partnership overall for the year was **£294,092**.



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Partnerships and Volunteering

Working together effectively in partnership, forming new collaborations between citizens and systems, and working with volunteers are crucial to building resilient communities.

VAS leads the SPRING partnership, coordinating refugee move on support in Sheffield

Established in January 2019 to work with newly granted refugees, the Partnership comprises; Citizens Advice Sheffield, City of Sanctuary, SAVTE, Sheffield City Council, SOLACE, and Voluntary Action Sheffield.

We want Sheffield to be a City of Sanctuary where there is equitable access to services and equity in life outcomes for all refugees in Sheffield.

SPRING delivers:

- **Proactive early intervention and specialist support**, averting destitution of refugees in Sheffield.
- **Progression into independence** – investing in people so they understand what opportunities exist and how to access them.
- **A single point of contact** for clients, referral agencies, and providers.
- **A place of safety and support** for those unable to navigate UK systems for themselves.
- Additionally, New Beginnings, SAVTE & SOLACE work with refugees after the 30-day period to **support longer-term positive outcomes that often require sustained, personal, outcome-based solutions.**

This year, the partnership has been actively supporting refugees from the war in Ukraine, and our focus has been to work with funders to develop the future model.



New Beginnings

The New Beginnings project welcomes refugees and asylum seekers to Sheffield, supports them to integrate, and empowers them to access opportunities that will improve their well-being and build successful lives in the city.

We have:

- Supported **397** refugees and asylum seekers, adapting our services to meet needs during COVID;
- Provided volunteering training sessions to prepare new arrivals for volunteer opportunities;
- Successfully adopted a new volunteer development model which empowers our clients who take on opportunities to volunteer with the project and train other volunteers within the project to develop the same skills;
- Ran two Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) mentoring training sessions attended by **23** University staff members and signposted **24** refugees and asylum seekers for support to access higher education;
- We provided Christmas hampers to **106** families and collaborated with Hallam FM Cash for Kids to provide Christmas gifts to **233** refugee and asylum seeker children who would have otherwise had no Christmas presents.
- **22** clients attended the New Beginnings Women's Empowerment workshop.

SIGNPOSTED
24
REFUGEES & ASYLUM SEEKERS

FAMILIES
106
RECEIVED CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

22
CLIENTS ATTENDED
WORKSHOP



Mobilising people

This year our focus has been on enabling volunteering opportunities in communities by supporting organisations to manage change and for us to cascade changes in guidance, share best practices on how people are adjusting services with COVID guidance, and particularly opening up risk assessments and bringing volunteers back to face-to-face activity.

Some of the activities we have provided include:

- **Virtual Volunteer Brokerage Service**

This service provides role suggestions and volunteering advice by phone or email. **35%** of service users were people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, the majority were under the age of **35**, and high numbers of unemployed people sought volunteering advice this way.

- **Face-to-Face Drop In**

In February, we re-opened our face-to-face service at The Circle with support from our team of volunteer advisors and with Covid safety measures in place.

- **Virtual Volunteer Fairs and Outreach Activity**

We have attended a mix of virtual and in-person events, such as our Virtual Volunteering Fair in October and Careers Fair at Sheffield College. We also gave talks at Humankind, Sheffield Young Carers (Families Project), and Migration Yorkshire. This outreach work reached a total of **253** people.

- **Facilitating Peer-to-Peer Support: Volunteer Co-ordinators Forums**

This year, the volunteer coordinators' forums have been virtual and monthly and have been a key source of support to volunteer coordinators. Across the year, **42** organisations have attended, and there is clear feedback that peer support and connecting with other staff managing volunteers is crucial.

Our outreach work reached a total of **253** people



The **majority** of Virtual Volunteer Brokerage Service users were under **35**



42 organisations attended peer-to-peer support



3

Racial Equity and Anti-Racism

In the last eighteen months, we have been on a journey to understand the part VAS is playing in the prevalence of structural racism in Sheffield and are supporting more proactive engagement with leaders from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

This year we have:

- Reached out to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff, volunteers, leaders, and community activists and listened to the frustration felt by people;
- Developed an internal VAS anti-racism action plan and statement of intent;
- Employed an equality and engagement lead;
- Set up a working group of VAS staff and trustees to identify priorities of action;
- Created a safe space group for VAS Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff;
- Identified specific areas where we needed to proactively transform how we work and embed action that would support inclusion, transfer power, and create opportunities for all communities across Sheffield.

The key themes we have focused on in our anti-racism work are:

Leadership

Values and
behaviour

Engagement

Funding

Education
and training

Analysis
of data



Diversity and Volunteering

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) Diversity and Volunteering report 2020 has informed how we amplify the significant barriers to volunteering for people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, particularly those on lower incomes and those who want to volunteer with charities outside of their ethnic and faith community.

In partnership with the British Red Cross, we delivered our introduction to volunteering course to **59** refugees and asylum seekers to help reduce barriers and prepare and empower them to start volunteering.

Healthwatch Sheffield

Healthwatch Sheffield is an independent citizen involvement statutory service set up by the Social Care Act 2012 to ensure NHS leaders and other decision-makers hear citizen voices and use feedback to improve care. This year Healthwatch reached **2547** people, published **14** focused reports, and **5776** people accessed advice and information through digital media, email, and phone.

Healthwatch published its new 3-year strategy, which focuses on health equity and commits to directing more resources to support the voices of individuals and groups experiencing poorer health outcomes.

Bringing voice and influence to Sheffield health and care system, including:

- Commissioning a report on the African Caribbean experience of homecare by SACMHA has helped get commitment to particular actions;
- Supported **13** groups with the SpeakUp grants scheme and delivered funded projects to capture the voice and experience of the people they work with.

Health and Wellbeing

This year we have evolved our ways of working to diversify connections with communities and increase opportunities for the organisations that support them. We have embedded this approach in collective strategic responses around the health commissioning arrangements and the escalation of Sheffield VCS responses to NHS system governance changes in our city and sub-region.

This year we have:

- Supported Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic led organisations to build their health creation offer and build greater recognition for its importance in the health and care system.
- Embedded the role and value of the VCS in the Changing Futures programme to secure more effective and connected support for people facing a range of complex barriers that include homelessness, addictions, mental health, and domestic violence. The Changing Futures programme is now a tenant at The Circle.
- Supported a diverse range of people experiencing the highest levels of disadvantage to overcome barriers and access physical health opportunities.

13

GROUPS

supported with
SpeakUp grants
plan

15

ORGANISATIONS

connected people
that face high
levels of
disadvantage,
many within Black
Asian and Minority
Ethnic
communities to
create
opportunities

Supported Black,
Asian and
Minority Ethnic
led organisations
to build their
health creation
offer

77

diverse members
in Sheffield
Autism
Partnership
Network (SAPN)



Sheffield Autism Partnership Network (SAPN)

- We have developed stronger links to better connect the needs of autistic people from racially marginalised communities. The work is led and shaped by autistic people. We have influenced the way commissioners invest in the autism sphere by creating a partnership, which currently has **77** diverse Sheffield Autism Partnership Network (SAPN) members interested in reciprocal working to support the autism communities of Sheffield.
- We have developed links between organisations to strengthen support for autistic people in Sheffield by educating and supporting people who manage services, directing small grants, and other support for organisations that provide innovative support and advocacy. This has created a deeper understanding of needs shaped by people with direct experience and knowledge, supporting the effective implementation of a Sheffield Autism Strategy.

Move More Empowering Communities

We piloted a different approach in the Move More Empowering Communities programme and, as a result, have extended the reach to another **15** organisations that connect opportunities to people that face high levels of disadvantage, many within Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

This approach will enable more embedded and focused work with a number of communities, including the Yemeni, Somali, Roma and African Women's groups.

“

"VAS have made real improvements in the last year – the team have done really well to address some of the issues we were raising and I'm confident that they will do more to take this work forward, because there is still more to do."

Abdul Shaif, CEO, ACT, April 2022



4

Passing Power

We have redesigned how we engage community organisations and developed stronger links between the VCS and statutory partners to better develop our work with leaders from racially marginalised communities. This includes providing one-to-one mentoring to volunteers and staff from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

Our action has been driven by a change in approach across three behaviours:

- 1 Analysing and being intentional about who we work with.
- 2 Addressing how we work with groups to learn and implement anti-racist practices.
- 3 Using our influence to open doors to decision makers for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups we work with.

“

"Within VAS, real efforts have been made to have actions on anti-racism embedded in our day to day work. It is at the forefront of our daily thinking. As a person of colour, within VAS, I feel heard."

Pam Daniel, Engagement and Equality Lead



Sheffield VCS Leaders' Forum

We supported the launch of the Sheffield VCS leaders' forum, and over the past year, the forum has grown from **24** to **32** members and includes leaders from a representative range of ethnic minority communities.

Key activities from the forum include:

- A collective response to Local Area Committee infrastructure feeding back to Council colleagues on the implementation and engagement of the VCS at a local level.
- A deep dive into understanding poverty in the city, including a presentation of data and insight from the CEO of Citizens Advice Sheffield, informing agreed priority actions at the Sheffield City Partnership board and the subsequent city Poverty summit.
- A dedicated session on racial equality with Professor Kevin Hylton (Chair of the Race Equality Commission) to support understanding of the Commission's interim findings.



Diversifying Membership

By diversifying our VAS membership and networks, we have seen more connections between VCS organisations that include specific Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic leaders, shifting the narrative about the value and role of the VCS and developing a more nuanced understanding of need.

Focus on improving racial diversity in trustees

We held a Race and Governance event in partnership with South Yorkshire Housing Association, Opus and SADACCA, drawing together organisations working to address racial diversity in their boards with practical guidance on how they were doing this and sharing their learning. **150** people attended, and **95%** wanted external support to help them diversify their boards.

Leading collaboration

We facilitated partnership and collaboration within the VCS sector and other sectors and have worked to improve diversity in shaping and delivering Sheffield Healthy Holidays funded by the Department of Education, Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF).

We have:

- Worked alongside Council colleagues to ensure representation at the HAF programme partnership board reflected a wider diversity of communities;
- Invited key community representatives onto the board and transferred power to capable, expert, community and youth leaders to influence the summer delivery;
- Supported delivery and capacity in the programme to reach **11,000** children and young people;
- Supported **70** refugee and asylum seeker families who were not connected to local groups to access the project;
- Listened to youth organisations in underserved communities and are driving activity to develop leadership opportunities for young people in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic organisations in extension to the HAF programme.





City Leaders

VAS has worked to shape city governance and investment priorities and elevated the role of the VCS as key partners in addressing city-wide challenges.

We have established VCS membership on a wide range of boards and led a number of actions to address key strategic priorities in the city, as well as to shape governance transformation and embed the recognition of the importance of connections to communities and community voices.

This year we have:

- Secured a role for the VCS through VAS in the policy strand of the South Yorkshire Sustainability Centre, a **£5m** investment from Research England.
- Represented on the Sheffield City Partnership board to shape city strategy and instigated city action to address poverty.
- Embedded VCS into mental health decision-making through the Mental Health, Learning Disability, Dementia and Autism Board, supporting the Rethink Alliance to establish in Sheffield and working with Primary Care Transformation commissioners.
- Led the discussion about transforming the VCS role in health and care through the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Sheffield Health and Care partnership.
- Provided leadership and connections to embed healthy democratic approaches in city decision-making.
- Supported a range of strategic delivery boards to strengthen the way support is provided to people in the city, in Adult Social Care, for people who are autistic.
- Strengthened our collective strategic approach to physical health opportunities through the National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine Board.
- Worked with wider South Yorkshire VCS partners to develop the South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Integrated Care Board and its partnership arrangements with the VCS and Healthwatch, enabling specific activity to establish a South Yorkshire system role in social and green prescribing and providing insights about effective engagement approaches.



THANK YOU FOR READING AND STANDING WITH US

With special thanks
to our funders

Sheffield City Council	Asylum and Migration Integration
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation	Fund Department for Education –
Sheffield Health & Care	Healthy Activities and Food
Partnership	Programme
NHS Leadership Academy	HMRC – Job Retention Scheme
Move More	VCS Emergency Partnership
Big Lottery	Programme
Sport England	Access to Work
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	Sheffield City Trust
SME Restart	Kickstart
Majorie Cootes Old Peoples	South Yorkshire Community
Fund	Foundation
Church Burgesses Fund	NHS South Yorkshire
James Neill Fund	



Together we are shaping the
future of Sheffield and it's
communities.