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## Hampshire State of the Sector Report



Every two years, Action Hampshire publishes a report on behalf of the Hampshire CVS Network, documenting how voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations are doing. This year's report highlights the impact of Covid-19 on the sector, drawing on contributions from over 1,300 organisations.

The report highlights a wide range of ways Covid has affected Hampshire's VCSE organisations. Organisations reported that the needs of people and communities they support were becoming more complex. There is a particular increase in the number of people needing support with mental health, and service users are presenting as less confident, less independent and less financially stable. Younger and older people are also facing increased challenges, largely relating to loneliness and social isolation. Restrictions and lockdowns implemented to contain Covid-19 meant that 75% of Hampshire's VCSE organisations were either partially or completely closed during at least part of the last 18 months, with 80% having to stop services to some degree during the pandemic – including at least 4.24% who expect these services will never resume. Organisations adapted in different ways,

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Featured articles represent the views of the contributing CVS



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particularly in moving services online.

Across the sector, approximately 181,784 volunteers contribute a collective £226 million to Hampshire each year. Despite the large numbers of volunteers who got involved in supporting Covid-19-specific relief efforts, overall most organisations have seen their regular volunteer numbers fall. Over 40% of organisations have experienced a decrease in volunteer numbers and are now struggling to recruit more volunteers. Organisations are finding it particularly difficult to recruit virtually, and to find volunteers who have the time to commit and feel confident getting back into volunteering. Across the county, 57.81% organisations also report that the pandemic has had a negative impact on their staff, with increased stress levels, higher levels of turnover, and lasting impacts on mental health. 71.43% felt it was more difficult to recruit staff than before the pandemic, which is contributing to the reduced levels of capacity noted above.

Many organisations have experienced a significant financial blow as a result of the pandemic, with 45.96% reporting decreased turnover and 44.68% having lower reserves. Many organisations were able to access the wide range of grant opportunities offered earlier in the pandemic, and these were a real lifeline. However, this funding was largely short-term and project-based, and has somewhat shifted the problem to a later point rather than solving it. Organisations felt that the 2021 grant funding environment was even more competitive than pre-pandemic and were continuing to lose income with regular fundraising events, individual donations and trading income all still down.

Overall, the impact of Covid-19 has been far-reaching and varied. For those who understand the value of a thriving and diverse VCSE sector, this research recommends additional support is provided to access funding, recruit volunteers, generate more publicity and continue digital transformations. Flexible funding and reporting requirements, greater collaboration and partnership working, which were introduced during the pandemic, should be strengthened. It is very clear that the full impact of Covid-19 on Hampshire's VCSE sector will not be fully realised for several years and, therefore, continued support from Council, infrastructure and funders is of vital importance. Considering the significant economic and social value provided by Hampshire's VCSE sector, this support is not a charitable good but an investment.

The report, a recording of our launch webinar, and a set of data visualisations can be found at <https://actionhampshire.org/news-blog-events/state-of-the-sector-2021/>.

## Unity Supporting Birthday Celebrations with The Geek Emporium



Unity working in partnership with Love Andover, was invited to take part in promoting a new Social Prescribing youth project at The Geek Emporium in Andover on the Geek/Halloween Birthday Celebrations at the end of October. During the day it was lovely to spend a day with Stuart and his team. During the day Unity was able to engage with young people about the varied opportunities that are available to them in the Andover area. It allowed Unity to ask them the questions directly of what they enjoyed about living in Andover, and what they felt was missing.

There were open discussions during the day to talk about the youth assembly, and application forms were given out to those who showed an interest.

Stuart suggested Unity leaflets were left to promote the Youth Social prescribing project, as the shop has a reasonable footfall of the relevant age groups over the opening hours, and also facilitates a wide-ranging Games Evening every Tuesday 7-11pm.

Unity felt that this would be a wonderful way of engaging with the target age groups, and possibly identifying those harder to reach individuals through the normal referral paths such as Family Support Services, and the schools.

## **Rushmoor Voluntary Services (RVS) Celebrates 50th Anniversary**



On 11th November Rushmoor Voluntary Services (RVS) celebrated 50 years of serving the Rushmoor community at the wonderful Princes Hall theatre. Entertainment was provided by young people from the Diamond Dancentre in Farnborough, gospel singers from the New Testament Church of God in Aldershot and a cultural dancer from Greater Rushmoor Nepali Community. With almost 200 volunteers, past and present trustees and staff, the theatre was brimming over with excitement. The event also included the annual volunteer recognition awards, with a special category for Covid Champions.

His worshipful, the Mayor of Rushmoor showed his appreciation for the phenomenal contribution RVS has made to the voluntary sector and recognised individual and collective volunteers. Previous Mayor, Charles Choudhury, praised the community response to Covid, stating that the people in the neighbourhoods have made the borough stronger. The Leader of the Council, David Clifford, thanked RVS and stated that he was clear about the value the community receives from RVS and was grateful that the Borough has a significant ally in community development, and an effective voice for the voluntary sector. It was an outstanding evening that reflected the strong relationship RVS has developed with the Borough.

An ebook of memories and the history of Rushmoor Voluntary Services has been created for the 50th anniversary, which can be found on their website: <https://www.rvs.org.uk/wp-content/>

## Supermarket Sweep



Over the last month or so, the BVA team has been out and about, taking trips to local supermarkets where they have had an opportunity to catch up with the local community and chat with residents about how they can support them.

They had a blast on their first trip, which was to Asda in Brighton Hill, talking to the local residents about what they do and how BVA can help them get involved in the community. The majority of the residents at ASDA took interest in joining free and friendly well-being walks, lending a hand, and how to start volunteering, as well as joining BVA's Community Lottery. Most took to the idea of the chance to win cash prizes, and they had a great time.

The team is passionate about getting more residents involved in the community, so the following week they took a trip to the Waitrose at Basing View. Not only was this a great chance for BVA to meet up with some more residents, but they also took the opportunity to catch up with other charities operating in the local area, talking about what services they offer and how they're making a difference in the community.

Both trips were a great success and the wheel of opportunity - a game raising awareness of the variety of volunteering roles - was popular among the residents again.



## One Community Receives Covid Heroes Award from Fareham Borough Council



One Community received a Covid Heroes award from Fareham Borough Council on Thursday 18 November in the Mayor's Parlour, alongside others who served the borough during the pandemic, who were afterwards treated to afternoon tea. The beautiful awards – engraved glass for organisations and engraved medals for individuals, as well as framed certificates

for all, were presented by the Mayor of Fareham, Cllr Pamela Bryant, accompanied by the Mayoress, Cllr Louise Clubley. Also present were Cllr Sue Walker, Executive Member for Leisure & Community, and Cllr Sean Woodward, Executive Leader and Executive Member for Policy & Resources who had chosen the recipients from the nominations received.

One Community received an organisation award and two One Community volunteers, Bev Shelsher and Helen Osborn, received individual awards.

Pictured with the Mayor and Mayoress, are One Community volunteers Dan Clements, holding One Community's award, and Bev and Helen with their individual awards.

This follows the Eastleigh Borough Council Covid Heroes award One Community received from Eastleigh Borough Council in August.