

COMMUNITY ACTION: MK



Welcome to Community Action: MK's Networking Workshop

- Today's workshop will be interactive as we want your valuable input, and to understand your experiences and needs
- Lots to fit in to the hour so we will need to stick to timings
- There will be a mixture of presentations and participatory activities
- We're here to explore collaboration, and everyone's input is welcomed and valued - so **please be respectful** and considerate so everyone is able to contribute
- Slides will be shared electronically after the event. You have **an activity sheet** for you to complete as we go along and we will collect these at the end. There is also a **diagram of networks** - to refer to.

Aims of the Workshop

- To explore the benefits of collaboration
- To learn more about VCSE networks in Milton Keynes
- To understand how your group can join networks
- To learn how your group can connect with VCSE reps and statutory partners
- To explore how your group could be supported to communicate the lived experiences and needs of your beneficiaries more effectively to decision makers

**We believe in strong, resilient,
sustainable communities and
VCSE groups**

with volunteering

**At their
hearts**



We do this by:

Strengthening Communities

We bring people together and support them to take effective, collective action in their communities.

Examples include peer led support group for people experiencing chronic pain in Beanhill, substance misuse community support in Netherfield, walking groups across MK and social groups aimed at reducing isolation in new communities.

We also work in **New Communities** (new estates and developments in the City)

Strengthening Groups

We support charities and community groups with **information, advice and good practice about governance, funding and development.** We encourage the sector to participate in strategic issues.

Over a thousand groups VCSE groups operate in MK, covering a range of vital support, from older persons lunch clubs, peer mental health support groups to fitness sessions to name but a few

Strengthening The Sector

We work with communities and groups to embed their voices and experiences into shaping decision and policy making.

We are building and supporting **networks of VCSE groups**, arranged around important themes and areas of work, with a Voluntary Sector Alliance acting as an overarching representative group

We gather lived experiences from a range of communities via grassroots groups to inform priorities, identify emerging issues and develop solutions



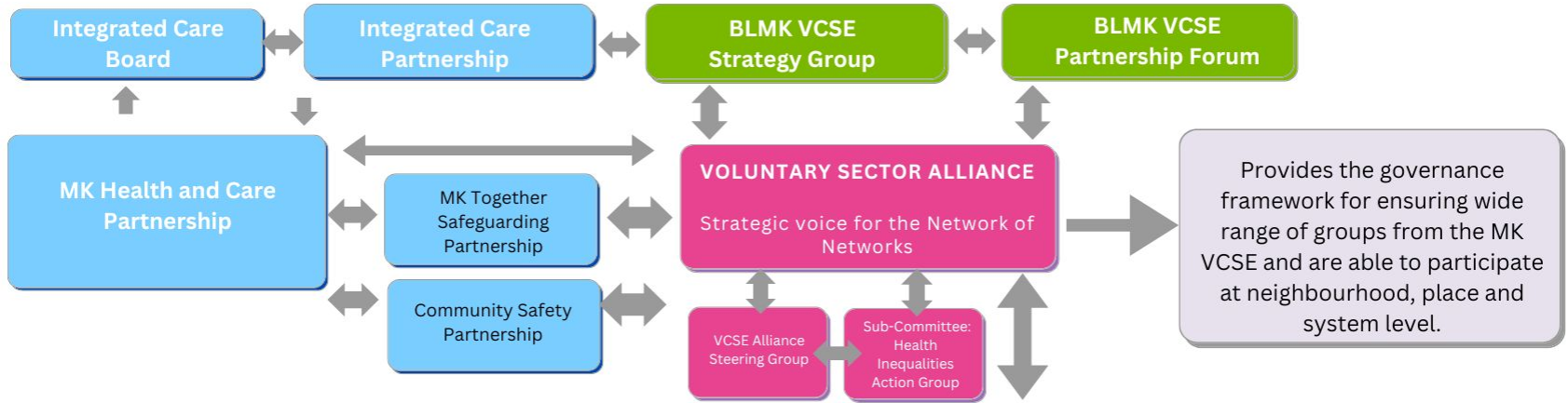
Volunteering

A big part of our work in **strengthening the VCSE Sector** and supporting it to shape decision making is our work relating to:

Networks

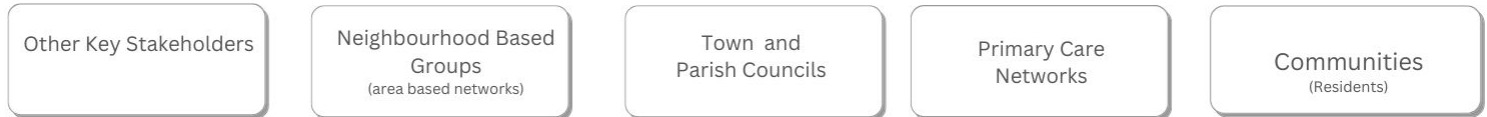
- Community Action: MK supports a wide range of VCSE groups across Milton Keynes, involved with a huge variety of vital work. Over a thousand VCSE groups operate in MK currently.
- We support a range of networks within the VCSE sector, which allow organisations with common focuses to come together to share knowledge, collaborate on projects and provide a stronger, more comprehensive voice for the people they support.
- Supporting the VCSE sector to organise themselves in this way also supports other sectors to more easily connect with and navigate the sector in order to foster joint working.
- The following diagram highlights the range of work the VCSE sector and networks cover.

Networks in Milton Keynes



Green = Existing City-wide Networks
 Pink = Potential or Developing City-wide Networks

Grey = Neighbourhood Based Groups / Networks and other key stakeholders



**Spotlight on
the Milton Keynes
Mental Health Alliance**

Mental Health Alliance

For VCSE organisations in Milton Keynes



Facilitated by

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- The purpose of the Milton Keynes Mental Health Alliance is to integrate the local VCSE sector into **strategic planning and operational delivery of mental health support in Milton Keynes**. Community Action: MK and the Alliance works as a multidisciplinary cross sector team with our Public Sector Partners; Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust and Primary Care Networks as well as the local authority, service users and carers, to create a **new, flexible and proactive model of community-based mental health care and support** for people of all ages recovering from severe mental illness in Milton Keynes.
- A crucial part of the Mental Health Alliance's role is to **enable funding to come to the VCSE from the NHS, Local Authority (and potentially other funders)** with Community Action: MK acting as the accountable body. The Alliance will enable and promote **collaboration between VCSE Sector groups, so that community based mental health services are more effective, holistic and joined up**.
- The transfer of funds from Public Sector partners will give greater decision making power to the VCSE and communities in line with the aspirations of the Community Mental Health Transformation Plan for Milton Keynes. This includes **basing briefs and proposed projects on lived experience and co-production with service users. Groups and those with lived experience identify the issues and solutions**
- Short **film** about the Alliance can be found on: bit.ly/CAMKMHAllianceFilm2022
- More Information on our website: communityactionmk.org

Key Benefits of Joining a Network:

- Connecting with other groups and organisations
- Identifying collaboration opportunities
- Identifying joint funding opportunities
- Training and networking events
- Sharing knowledge and resources
- Having a stronger, collective voice to influence decisions and plans
- A better understanding of needs in Milton Keynes
- Getting the lived experience of communities heard
- Greater awareness of services related to your area of work and the people you support

The Background and Where We Are Now

- When Covid-19 hit MK, many people and communities were particularly vulnerable and suffering disproportionate negative impacts of the pandemic
- Community Action: MK were hearing issues identified by a range of groups, and it was clear that no single organisation or sector had a clear picture of all the needs across communities in the City. It was at this time that the **Children And Your People's Mental Health Network** was created (now part of the Mental Health alliance)
- This led us to set up **Collaborative Action Groups (CAGs)**, which were:
 - Based around geographical areas in MK
 - Made up of organisations, from large charities and the public sector to small volunteer led neighbourhood groups, working to support people in communities across the City to cope with the impact of the pandemic
 - Focused on sharing knowledge relating to emerging needs and priorities
 - Committed to supporting collaboration to pool resources and avoid duplication



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- When enforced isolation and shielding started to ease, the activity of CAG's decreased, with the need for more thematic networks emerging around specific themes
- Community Action: MK has recently been awarded **funding from the National Lottery Community Fund** to support existing networks, and to develop some new ones. These include:
 - A refugee support network
 - Food and essential items network
 - Climate action network



Activity One:

- With attendees next to you, discuss what networks your organisations are already part of, or could benefit from joining
- Use the section in your **Activity Sheet** to note down your interests so Community Action: MK can contact you with more information and how to join any relevant networks
- You have 5 minutes! :)

Working with Statutory Partners

- In order to give the VCSE groups and networks in Milton Keynes as much strategic voice as possible, we have developed the **Milton Keynes Voluntary Sector Alliance**, and we will be developing this using some of the funding from the National Lottery Community Fund

The Alliance is made up of representatives from the many VCSE networks in MK, bringing the voices, lived experiences and needs of the varied communities they support to the group

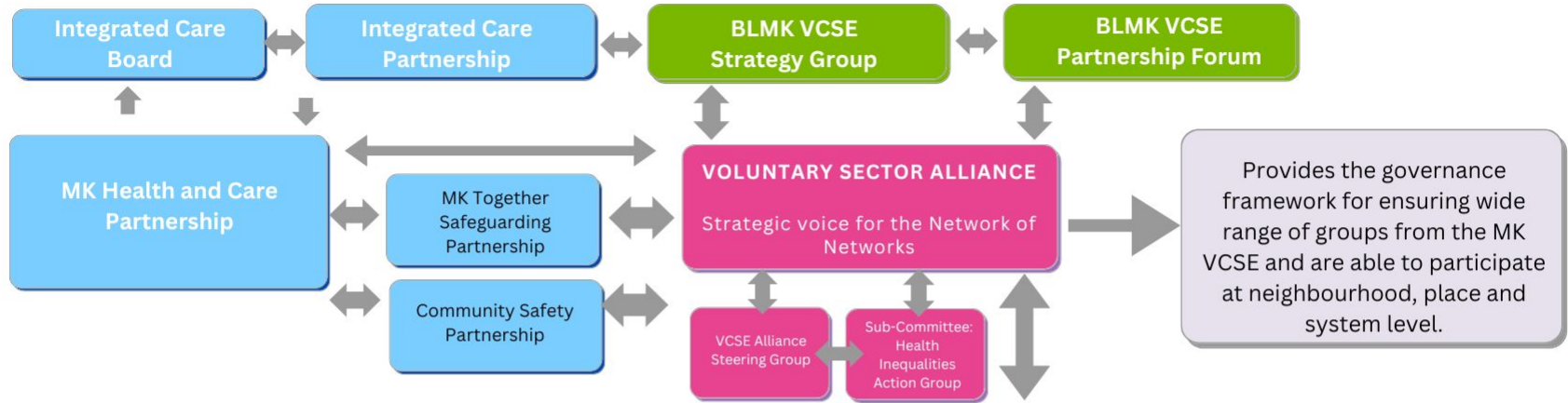
- The Voluntary Sector Alliance provides the VCSE with a clear and purposeful route into the Public Sector. Through the Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care System (ICS) and the local partnership arrangements through MK Together.
- Visit the Voluntary Sector Alliance website:
www.mkvoluntarysectoralliance.com



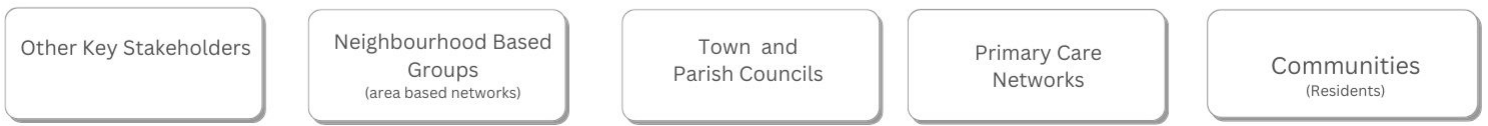
MISSION STATEMENT

The Milton Keynes Voluntary Sector Alliance (VSA) is seeking to be the strategic voice for the VCSE in Milton Keynes. Composed of members from the 'network of networks', the Voluntary Sector Alliance will bring together cross-sector individuals and organisations in Milton Keynes.

Networks in Milton Keynes



Green = Existing City-wide Networks
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- The MK Voluntary Sector Alliance is committed to a **co-production model** that places the voices and experiences of communities at the heart of decision making, therefore elevating the value of this insight so it forms part of the decision making data, and where necessary providing the advocacy to facilitate this approach.
- Community Action: MK and the Voluntary Sector Alliance are looking to **develop new ways to ensure VCSE groups can feed the needs and ideas from the people they support** to the Alliance, and the relevant VCSE reps.

Activity Two:

- Does your organisation already have routes through which to communicate the needs of the people your organisation supports to statutory bodies / Public sector so that it has influence?
- If so, which parts of the Public Sector and what works well?
- Are there any issues or gaps in communicating with Public Sector, and what would help your organisation to be enabled to do this more effectively?
- Please leave notes on your **Activity Sheet** so Community Action: MK can capture your experiences and follow up with you
- You have 10 minutes! :)

VCSE Representatives

- The VCSE sector in Milton Keynes has **several representatives** within partnerships across MK, Bedfordshire and Luton.
- Community Action: MK supports these representatives to connect with local groups through various communication channels, networks, partnerships, and networking events and 'Meet the Reps Sessions'. The newly created Milton Keynes Voluntary Sector Alliance website also provides an opportunity to share community insight with representatives. Please see the list below to view examples of the current partnerships/boards VCSE representatives currently sit on:
 - Health and Wellbeing: The Milton Keynes Health and Care Partnership
 - Community Safety: Community Safety Partnership
 - MK Deal:
 - Children and Young People Mental Health
 - Bletchley Pathfinder
- Other parts of our work to Strengthen the Sector include sharing **key local consultations** that arise for communities and residents of MK to share their voices via a link on the Alliance's website and we also share those in our weekly newsletter: bit.ly/CAMKNewsletter
- Other key websites that relate to plans and strategies for Milton Keynes as a city include those for **The New City Plan** - [commonplace](#) (which will replace the existing Plan:MK) and **MK Futures 2050**.
- Share your feedback and insights with the VCSE Reps through the Voluntary Sector Alliance website

Activity Three:

- Please answer the final question on your **Activity Sheet** sheet:
 - What support might your organisation need to take part in networks?
- You have 5 minutes :)

Thank you for your participation today

If you have any further questions or comments please feel free to contact us on networks@communityactionmk.org

Before you go, please leave your completed activity sheets with us and fill out our short evaluation (2 questions!) at the end
- thank you

We hope you have a great rest of your day!

COMMUNITY ACTION: MK

Supporting the Voluntary and
Community Sector in
Milton Keynes

Contact us
01908 662623
support@communityactionmk.org

Find us online
communityactionmk.org
@ComActMK

Save these dates:

23rd April (morning) - Initial meeting of the Food & Essential Items Network

2nd May (afternoon) - Networking Event & Funding Fair at The Old Bath House, Wolverton.

9th May (morning) - Meeting of the Refugee Support Network

14th May - Networking event as part of the Voluntary Sector Alliance