



Compact Innovation Award

VCSE Stockton-on-Tees Health Initiatives

Overview

VCSE Health Initiatives: Since 2014, Catalyst, the infrastructure organisation for Stockton-on-Tees, has led a VCSE Programme to meet health outcomes using social prescribing and the strength of relationships the sector has. This followed on from a successful pilot delivered by Synergy VCS Consortium in 2013-14. In total over £1m of funds from the local authority and CCG have been used to commission innovative projects that have been externally evaluated by Teesside University. This has led to access to mainstream commissioning opportunities for successful projects.

In 2013 the newly formed Hartlepool & Stockton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) committed £300,000 and a series of challenges to the voluntary, community & social enterprise sector (VCSE) to use social prescribing based on the strength of the relationships they have to achieve clear health outcomes. The funds and commissioning process were managed by the VCSE under the auspices of the Health & Wellbeing Board. This resulted in 13 projects being commissioned to run for around 6 months each as experiments or pilots to demonstrate the value of the VCSE in meeting health outcomes.

In 2014 the programme was extended; £333,000 of funds from the CCG was augmented by £300,000 from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Public Health (SPH). Following the first year's programme it was identified that a formal evaluation of each project and the programme as a whole should take place – Teesside University were commissioned to do this. 17 VCSE projects were commissioned including one that had showed exceptional success in 2013-14 and needed to be developed further, especially as it was compliant with the emerging Better Care Fund outcomes.

In 2015, the CCG has committed a further £400,000 with support from SPH for some specific pieces of work. 10 projects have been commissioned and four from previous years have achieved mainstream status. The whole programme continues to be evaluated by Teesside University and is managed by the VCSE by Catalyst.

Impact

Relationships: the impact of this approach between the VCSE, CCG and Public Health has led to an open and honest appraisal of where each sector's strength lies and how best to exploit them. The VCSE has learned that services must be

forensically designed to meet the priority health outcomes of public sector funders. The CCG and Public Health that the VCSE can reach people and communities in different ways that also meets their outcomes. These relationships have led to other projects including planning for Better Care Fund and becoming one of nine demonstrator sites for NHS England's Integrated Personal Commissioning Programme.

Return on Investment: the evaluation by Teesside University shows social return on investment across the programme is of great value with some projects showing a value of over £7 for every £1 spent – the average being around £2.50. The evaluation demonstrated a contribution to the health economy by savings to mainstream NHS services.

Improvement to health: it is a fairly obvious thing to state but the achievements above mean that a large number of individuals, often in deprived and isolated communities, are now living healthier lives thanks to the interventions made by the VCSE. This is especially true for those at risk of hospital admission or being isolated on discharge from hospital.

Strategic leadership: Catalyst is also now trusted to lead on other developments wider than the health agenda demonstrating that all main partners in Stockton-on-Tees celebrate our relationships in the true spirit of Compact.

