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31 May 2024

Place Accountable Officers

(Sent via email)

Dear colleague,

We are committed, as part of the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership, to work in close partnership with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. Over the last eighteen months we have made significant commitments setting out how we will work together to improve population health outcomes and reduce health inequalities.

Given the financial pressures that we face, we thought it would be helpful to re-iterate the agreed ways of working in West Yorkshire and to update you on a number of pieces of work underway to support the VCSE sector.

The NHS West Yorkshire ICB Board in March 2023 committed to a number of actions to maximise the role of the VCSE sector in delivering our West Yorkshire Integrated Care Strategy. Since then, there have been very encouraging conversations at Place to translate this intent into tangible action.

At the West Yorkshire ICS Transformation & Programmes System Leadership Team in November 2023, we discussed the escalating risk to the sustainability of the VCSE sector in the light of growing and significant financial pressures across the system, both in the NHS and local authorities.

To support a better understanding, agreements between the ICB and VCSE organisations were reviewed and it was found that of the c.250 agreements in place, 76% were due to end by 31 March 2024. It was agreed that a place-based approach would be taken to the ongoing assurance regarding identification, management and mitigation of risk.

Furthermore, it was agreed that we would:

- develop a Place level picture of health & care VCSE sector investment;
- develop and agree principles for a risk-based approach that moves away from short-term contracts to longer term sustainable investment to enable innovation and transformation and prioritises social value;
- develop an action plan to mitigate against the risk to diverse grass roots VCSE organisations which may be disproportionately affected by financial pressures but are carrying out essential health inequalities and health creation work including reviewing local mechanisms to ensure funding is reaching these areas;
- develop and agree principles for strategy to shift investment closer to communities including to communities themselves to support early help and prevention;
- provide greater flexibility in use of funding already allocated to VCSE organisations and consider grant/contract renegotiation in the light of a lack of uplifts;
- minimise re-tendering processes where possible – saving staff time to focus on delivery; and
- plan and communicate regarding re-commissioning services and explore contract extension.

Whilst there are good examples of positive progress that we would be happy to share, feedback suggests that there is more to be done.

At a system level, the ICB Procurement Policy has now been approved and contains specific reference to our commitment to working with the VCSE sector. The ICB Contracting and Procurement team are also undertaking further analysis to understand expected expenditure with the sector in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24; this will allow colleagues to be fully sighted on the aggregated position and to be able to assess the cumulative impact of contract/grant decisions. We have also signed up to be the first “Keep it Local” ICS which is an important continuation of our commitment to work together.

There are also a number of actions which we would recommend for all Places to consider and implement:

- review the seven agreed actions detailed above, specifically those to be taken forward by each Place which could mitigate against immediate risk to VCSE delivery;
- in line with the [Memorandum of Understanding held between the ICB and VCSE](#), work collaboratively with VCSE infrastructure organisations, VCSE leads and

- local providers to ensure an open and collaborative dialogue to mitigate the risk to people and communities particularly in the event of disinvestment plans; and
- consider the aggregated disinvestment decisions at a Place level to fully establish the impact on communities, the VCSE and delivery partners/providers.

We hope that the summary of actions agreed, current position and proposed next steps is a helpful summation. It would be beneficial to take stock collectively of progress against these issues at the 7 August 2024 meeting of the West Yorkshire System Oversight & Assurance Group. This could then inform a briefing to the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board on 24 September 2024. **To support, can each Place please provide a briefing that can be considered by system partners at the SOAG meeting that addresses the three proposed actions set out above by 31 July 2024.**

If it would be helpful to discuss further, please don't hesitate to get in touch with either/both of us. Additionally, if there is further support, advice or discussion that would be useful, the Power of Communities Team via Kim would be very happy to engage with you and/or your teams.

Yours sincerely



Jonathan Webb
Director of Finance/Deputy Chief Executive
West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board



Kim Shutler – West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board Sector Lead for the VCSE and SRO for Power of Communities

- c.c. Rob Webster, Chief Executive, NHS WY Integrated Care Board
Ian Holmes, Director of Strategy and Partnerships/Deputy Chief Executive, NHS WY Integrated Care Board
Anthony Kealy, Locality Director, NHS WY Integrated Care Board