

TITLE OF REPORT: The Joint Review of partnerships and investment in voluntary and community and social enterprise organisations in the health and social care sector

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek the views of the Health and Wellbeing Board on this national report and consider the implications for Gateshead.

Background

2. In November 2014, the Department of Health, Public Health England, and NHS England initiated a review of the Voluntary and Community (VCS) sector in improving health, wellbeing and care outcomes.
3. This was a major undertaking which aimed to describe the role of the sector in contributing to improving the outcomes; identifying and recognizing challenges and opportunities; and consulting on options for policy and practice changes.
4. There was an initial consultation in early 2015, an interim report in March 2015, a longer consultation process and the production of the final report in in May 2016.
5. The final report is available on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-partnerships-and-investment-in-the-voluntary-sector> (the summary document is attached for ease of reference as an appendix).
6. The report makes recommendations for government, health and care system partners, funders, regulatory bodies and the voluntary and community sector. It emphasizes putting wellbeing at the centre of health and care services, and making voluntary organisations an integral part of a collaborative system.
7. The role of the voluntary and community sector in improving health, wellbeing and care has developed enormously in the last twenty-five years. It has multiple roles, often dependent on the size and nature of the organisation; these can include:
 - As a service provider
 - As a mechanism for bringing patients, users, and carers together e.g. support groups
 - As an advocate for individuals, groups and communities who are often excluded
 - Through the use of volunteers to enhance services and experiences
 - Engagement in the governance process
 - As a consultee
 - As a partner in decision-making

- As an advisor on processes
 - Being involved in the production of the JSNA, and other strategies as a source of information, knowledge and expertise on particular communities
8. Despite many different Government policies and strategies, it is clear that there continues to be a lack of understanding of how the voluntary and community sector can enhance health and well-being and tackle inequalities.
 9. The report describes the unique nature of the sector, the value of volunteers, and the importance of organisations “remaining rooted into their communities”; however sometimes commissioning and other activities make this hard for voluntary organisations e.g. very large scale commissioning, or disproportionate requirements in contracting.
 10. There is also reference that more use could be made of the Social Value Act, which would benefit everyone. It also sites best practice to make the sector more sustainable e.g. long term funding as standard.
 11. Although many of the report’s recommendations focus on national initiatives; there are clearly items of local good practice that could be developed further.

Proposal

12. It is proposed that the Board considers these recommendations and how it wishes to maximise and enhance the role of the voluntary and community sector in Gateshead.

Recommendations

13. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to consider the report and how it wishes to take forward its recommendations

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