

GM VCSE Accord Agreement

This is a three-way collaboration agreement between the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership and the GM Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector* represented by the GM VCSE Leadership Group, based in a relationship of mutual trust, working together, and sharing responsibility. The purpose of this Accord is to further develop how we work together to improve outcomes for Greater Manchester's communities and citizens.

**When we talk about the VCSE sector in Greater Manchester, we mean voluntary organisations, community groups, the community work of faith groups, and those social enterprises where profits will be reinvested in their social purpose.*

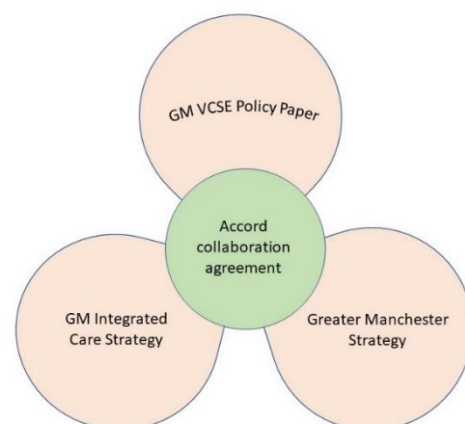
1.1 Introduction

VCSE organisations play a hugely valuable role in the economy and society of Greater Manchester. In 2021, their offer is more vital and relevant than ever, as shown through the ability to mobilise at scale during the recent pandemic. The reports of the Independent Inequalities Commission 'Good Lives for All' and the Marmot Build Back Fairer review make frequent reference to the VCSE sector's knowledge and its tested practical solutions to tackling entrenched inequalities, addressing environmental problems, and improving wellbeing. Local authorities, NHS and health systems have welcomed the role of the VCSE sector as a strategic partner in the emergency response and recovery efforts, and this Accord seeks to make the successful integration of VCSE groups, organisations and leaders the way we do business in Greater Manchester.

The attached *Annex* document contains further details of the context, governance and implementation of this Accord agreement.

1.2 Purpose and scope

The Accord will act as a framework for collaboration involving VCSE leaders and organisations in the delivery of the Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) and in the thematic strategies and delivery plans that will exist to deliver the GMS vision, including the development of the strategic plan of the new GM Integrated Care System. VCSE representatives will be involved in the development, governance and delivery of these strategies, including co-design of relevant activities, and thereby take a key role in work to build a resilient local economy, tackle inequalities and inequities, and improve the health and wellbeing of the people who live, work and study in Greater Manchester. The Accord will also deliver the ambitions set out in the [VCSE Policy Paper](#), which was published by the GM VCSE Leadership Group in 2020 and sets out a developmental ambition for the VCSE Sector, as shown in Figure 1 (right).



This agreement is intended to work in a number of ways:

- Through a shared understanding of the contribution that VCSE organisations make towards tackling inequality in society, creating a more inclusive economy and addressing the climate crisis.
- Through the building of effective partnerships and relationships between the statutory sector with VCSE organisations across different geographies (for example GM-wide, district-wide, or in neighbourhoods and communities)
- Through a shared vision, ways of working principles and set of commitments which underpin these partnerships and relationships
- Through a 5-year iterative programme of enabling and developmental activities driven at a GM-wide footprint, which aims to maximise the ability of VCSE organisations to deliver beneficial outcomes.

1.3 Contribution of VCSE organisations

The 2021 [State of the VCSE Sector](#) report shows that Greater Manchester is home to around 17,000 voluntary, community and social enterprise groups and organisations, and nearly 500,000 volunteers giving a total of 1.4 million hours each week. These groups, organisations and volunteers are well-networked with strong, distributed leadership, established communications channels and have evidenced their ability to convene and act together in the interests of Greater Manchester's communities. 71% of the VCSE sector are micro-organisations with an annual income under £10,000, and 57% of organisations work across specific neighbourhoods and communities across Greater Manchester.

VCSE organisations work across every aspect of tackling inequality and inequity in Greater Manchester including skills, employment and enterprise; health and social care; housing and transport; environmental issues and carbon reduction; poverty reduction; inclusive economic growth and inclusive governance. They also work at a variety of footprints – from community and neighbourhood to GM-wide and national, as well as having their origins in business (such as charitable foundations) and the statutory sector (such as NHS charities) as well as in communities.

1.4 Tri-partite Agreement - Shared Vision and principles

From this point on, where the words 'we' or 'our' or 'us' are used, this includes the three parties to this agreement acting with a single voice.

Our shared vision is for a thriving VCSE sector in Greater Manchester that works collaboratively and productively with the GM Integrated Care System¹, the GM Combined Authority, its constituent local authority members and statutory partners².

This vision is based in our shared values, will be supported by a sustainable infrastructure and have strong leadership. We will operate on the basis of mutual trust, respect and transparency.

We will acknowledge the value to communities of place, identity and experience and understand the role of local people in leading, shaping and connecting VCSE organisations to create the 'ecosystem' described in the VCSE Policy Paper. We will work using the subsidiarity principle, meaning that decisions and issues are taken and addressed as close to communities as possible, coming together at a Greater Manchester level where there is a demonstrable benefit of doing so.

¹ The final governance of the Integrated Care System is to be finalised, but will include Integrated Care Board, Integrated Care Partnership, GM NHS Trusts, other non-NHS Providers and delivery partners

² Including Transport for Greater Manchester

1.4 Building from a strong track record of innovation and partnership

The Agreement does not start from scratch and is built on the strong foundations created over the last 5 years, since the previous GM VCSE Accord and Memorandum of Understanding with the Health and Social Care Partnership were put in place.

It is clear from recent evaluation exercises that VCSE sector representatives are “at the table” in the places where important decisions are made across the NHS, Health and Social Care and GMCA partnerships. Increased VCSE involvement means that people and communities are more likely to be discussed, and prevention and community engagement more likely to be considered across service planning and commissioning.

Substantial progress has been made on the strategic front, with the publication of a Policy Position Paper by the GM VCSE Leadership Group and specific responsibilities identified for the sector in the 2020 GM ‘Living with Covid’ Plan.

Furthermore, work led by VCSE-led groups such as the GM Social Enterprise Advisory Group, GM Equality Network (GMEq=al) and the GM Social Value Network, for example, have driven forward key policy improvements.

Products of the collaboration over the last 5 years include the GM VCSE Commissioning Framework, a powerful tool for public sector organisations to work effectively with VCSE organisations. There has been strong VCSE involvement and leadership in a number of joint programmes which explore the role of co-production in service reform and commissioning, and further information is contained in the *Annex*.

However, whilst the presence of VCSE organisations on decision making bodies represents progress, there is some way to go yet before the level of collaboration and co-production that we envisage is achieved. Furthermore, it is clear that the level of VCSE engagement and involvement differs between localities. The journey towards becoming equal partners needs a further shift in power, in resources and a greater amount of truly collaborative activity. This new Accord sets out 8 commitments, which aim to continue the transition towards greater parity in the relationship between the VCSE and statutory sectors. We recognise that the shift in the balance of power and how we will work together will also require each of us to take different responsibilities – for example in our investment, delivery, or engagement – but we will share the delivery and the accountability for our actions.

In order to maximise the VCSE contribution, the GM statutory sector will recognise, incorporate, and invest. VCSE leaders and organisations will focus on developing their workforce capacity and capability, on diversifying the income base and creating new partnerships and collaborations within their ‘ecosystem’. The Accord will build from and work with existing structures across each locality, and recognise the different needs and requirements of each place and its populations in order to be successful in its aims.

1.5 Shared commitments for 2021 – 2026

The success of this Accord and the following shared commitments will rely on their recognition, adoption and action at a locality and neighbourhood level. As stated above, the actions invested in at a GM footprint aim to enable and facilitate what is happening in localities, neighbourhoods and communities. All commitments will be achieved in partnership and equitable involvement from all 10 districts of Greater Manchester.

Commitment 1: *We will work together to achieve a permanent reduction in inequalities and inequity within Greater Manchester, addressing the social, environmental and economic determinants of health and wellbeing.*

Our aim is to ensure active VCSE participation and parity in strategic work to enhance equality, equity and wellbeing.

Examples of routes through which this commitment will be supported at a GM footprint include:

- Effective representation of the VCSE sector on relevant groups including: the GM Integrated Care Partnership, the GM Health and Care Board, GM Commissioning Hub, Joint Commissioning Board, Population Health Board, Reform Board, Tackling Inequality Board, Vulnerable and Marginalised Women's Board, Justice and Rehab group, Employment and Skills Advisory Board, Gender Based Violence Board, GM Accessible Transport Group and 5-year Environment Plan Forum, for example.
- Programmes set up to address key inequalities issues, such as food poverty, fuel poverty, homelessness, accessible transport, active travel, digital and environmental exclusion and abuse/hate crime, which bring together the GM VCSE sector with public and private sector partners to drive action through collaboration.
- Involvement of the VCSE sector in the development and delivery of the revised GM Strategy and GM ICS Strategic Plan.
- Further development of the capacity of the GM Equality Alliance as a coalition to connect communities to policy makers, and vice versa, and to assist with strategic equality and diversity work within the city-region

Commitment 2: *We will embed the VCSE sector as a key delivery partner of services for communities in Greater Manchester*

Our aim is to ensure that VCSE organisations are seen as integral to the delivery of services in communities, alongside statutory-run services and commissioned contracts.

Examples of routes through which this commitment will be supported at a GM footprint include:

- Embedding of learning and recommendations from the review of GM emergency structures and ensuring the VCSE sector plays a key role in local and GM wide recovery programmes, including VCSE involvement in responses that relate to specific communities or places
- Development of the Alternative Provider Federation as a place-based partnership of social enterprise and charitable organisations operating at scale across the ICS footprint.
- Building from the VCSE leadership around mental health to embed VCSEs in governance of Local Care Organisations (through the Mental Health Leaders Group).
- Increasing understanding of each other; building knowledge and understanding of the diverse VCSE sector across the public sector, promoting understanding of GM structures in VCSE organisations and furthering the potential to drive forward strategies and action plans on a GM footprint.

Commitment 3: *We will build a financially resilient VCSE sector that is resourced to address our biggest challenges of ending poverty and inequality in Greater Manchester.*

Our aim is to work together to maximise new funding sources, ways of contracting and grant-giving arrangements.

Examples of routes through which this commitment will be supported at a GM footprint include:

- Develop and put into place an investment approach based on long-term, core funding to support strategic VCSE capacity and infrastructure in delivering the visions of the GMS and GM Integrated Care System. This should explore principles and guidelines, as well as models for investment brokerage, asset transfer and spatial planning for the VCSE sector
- Fully implement the principles of the GM Commissioning Framework in all parts of the GM system
- We will grow VCSE infrastructure capacity in each of the 10 districts of Greater Manchester and at a Greater Manchester level. This will enable VCSE organisations to act as funding anchors, playing a strategic role of grant-giving to VCSE organisations channelling public money and raising investment for communities
- Put in place 'core funding' pilot projects to understand how this will enable improved outcomes, more effective VCSE services and enhanced sustainability for the sector

Commitment 4: *We will grow the role of the VCSE sector as an integral part of a resilient and inclusive economy where social enterprises, co-operatives, community businesses, charities and microsocial business thrive.*

Our aim is to increase the market share of social economy organisations in Greater Manchester.

Examples of routes through which this commitment will be supported at a GM footprint include:

- Create a Community Wealth Hub to support and grow co-operatives, mutuals, social and community enterprises, staffed by people from the co-operative and community sector who understand the market.
- Put in place support for the further development of the Alternative Provider Federation as an alliance of non-extractive organisations (of all sectors) to address new market opportunities beyond health and care and into other neighbourhood services.
- Set up a Community Investment Platform to tap into local savings, unlock community investment and build-up assets to share wealth with everyone in Greater Manchester.

Commitment 5: *We will build on our existing strengths to build the best VCSE ecosystem in England*

Our aim is to enable VCSE organisations to become 'anchors' for their place or their community, creating resources, support and connections for them to thrive.

Examples of routes through which this commitment will be supported at a GM footprint include:

- Formally adopting the principles of the GM VCSE Policy Paper and embed its recommendations within the refreshed GM Strategy and GM ICS Strategic Plan
- Agreement of and investment in the development of a clear arrangement of Greater Manchester, locality and neighbourhood 'infrastructure' of community anchor organisations, including 'fair' representation from all ten boroughs in any decision-making processes.
- Agreement of minimum standards of involvement for leaders from VCSE organisations in partnerships and delivery governance across each of the 10 local authority areas

- Further develop the role of the VCSE Leadership Group at the heart of a collaborative representative 'social architecture' for the VCSE sector at a GM level, recognising the complexity and diverse nature of the sector

Commitment 6: *We will put into place meaningful mechanisms to make co-design of local services the norm, including expanding channels for service design to be informed by 'lived experience'.*

Our aim is to create arrangements to enable local people, groups and organisations to be involved in the design of the services which are provided for them.

Examples of routes through which this commitment will be supported at a GM footprint include:

- We will work together to further implement the principles of GM Model Reform White Paper, including neighbourhood pilots in 10 pathfinder deprived communities.
- Support VCSE infrastructure organisations in localities to engage with LCOs, PCNs and local NHS/health governance within the ICS structure
- Helping to create the Greater Manchester 'Live Well – Beyond Social Prescribing Plan' in partnership with existing social prescribing providers and communities.
- Continue and build on leadership from and lived experience facilitated by the VCSE sector around specific programmes of work (including mental health, homelessness, food poverty, carers and digital inclusion for example) to act as catalysts and connectors for communities in GM

Commitment 7: *We will fulfil the potential for building productive relationships between the VCSE, public and private sectors to address inequity and build back fairer*

Our aim is to work closely with local businesses as well as the public sector to increase their focus on social value and addressing inequalities

Examples of routes through which this commitment will be supported at a GM footprint include:

- Work together with all Greater Manchester Local Authorities and public sector organisations to put in place Employer Supported Volunteering, secondments, work shadowing and other arrangements in conjunction with their local VCSE infrastructure, to enable the sharing of expertise and knowledge between sectors
- Developing collective responsibilities for achieving outcomes against equality objectives, which include an increased role for neighbourhood level political leadership alongside local communities, VCSE organisations, local businesses and public bodies
- Facilitate increased collaboration between population health and inclusive economy colleagues to highlight the intersectionality of population health and economy, and how the VCSE can contribute, lead and innovate
- Fully utilise the GM ICS structures to facilitate collaboration between partners in a place across health, care services, public health, and voluntary sector to overcome competing objectives and improve outcomes

Commitment 8: *We will put in place a comprehensive workforce programme to support organisational and workforce development for VCSE employers based on and facilitating a more integrated public facing workforce*

Our aim is to improve capacity, capability and employment standards across the paid and voluntary VCSE workforce in Greater Manchester

Examples of routes through which this commitment will be supported at a GM footprint include:

- Develop and deliver GM VCSE Race Equality Action Plan
- Develop the skills of VCSE Leaders. increase opportunities for peer support and learning for system leaders in the VCSE sector and create more opportunities for multi-agency connection and increasing awareness of good practice in VCSE leadership
- Achieve our ambition for 100% of VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester to pay the real Living Wage
- Increase VCSE organisations' involvement as Supporters, Members and Advocates for the sector in the GM Good Employment Charter
- Enhanced leadership support for those at the forefront of networks of VCSE organisations who represent particular communities of identity and marginalised groups
- Link the VCSE workforce programme with GM workforce development programme, ensuring that the VCSE workforce is able to benefit from access to Higher Educational Establishments funding and placements.

The content of this Agreement has been developed following a series of structured conversations with key stakeholders in the Accord through the spring and summer of 2021, including VCSE organisations from across the whole of Greater Manchester, as well as representatives from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the GM Health and Social Care System, NHS and local authorities.

The final version of the Accord has been shared for sign off by the GM VCSE Leadership Group, the Combined Authority and Health and Social Care Partnership governance structures. It will be supported by a five-year implementation plan for work driven at a GM footprint and funding agreement for implementation of that plan, as well as a review of the operation and membership on the GM VCSE Leadership Group.