



# **Southampton Voluntary Services**



## ANNUAL **REVIEW** 2013/14

**This is a summary of our activities  
from April 2013 - March 2014.**

If you would like more detail about our work a full Annual Report is available from our website. We would be very pleased to talk to you about our work, or how we could work together.

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# ANNUAL REVIEW

SVS' role is the umbrella organisation for almost 500 member organisations providing independent information and advice on all issues affecting local voluntary organisations, as well as a voice for the sector. Our main purpose remains supporting and representing our membership and local voluntary sector. As always, the services we deliver directly to the public have been developed in partnership to tackle local unmet need and not in competition with our members.

**2013 TO 2014** has seen continued and substantial change in the structure of our main statutory partners, driven by financial reforms to local government and the implementation of the Health & Social Care Act, with the subsequent restructure of NHS systems. These developments have had a direct influence on the landscape in which SVS and our members operate.

Whilst responding to these developments, to ensure we are best placed to contribute and provide a connection to the local voluntary sector, we have striven to offer leadership to a local sector that is increasingly stretched and financially uncertain. As the impact of welfare reforms bite, the day to day pressures on the beneficiaries of many of our membership organisations and our own services are becoming increasingly obvious, with those who are most vulnerable often being the most exposed.

Amongst the numerous challenges, there have also been opportunities for SVS to develop. Whilst funding cuts have sadly led to some redundancies and service closures we have also been successful in securing new work. Throughout the course of the year much effort has been invested in updating our IT infrastructure, enabling flexibility in our workforce and harnessing the advantages that technology can offer. The Voluntary Action Centre reached its 10th anniversary this year and we have undertaken a well needed refurbishment of the ground floor, and reconfigured the space with a view to generating income. We have also invested in sustainability through the addition of solar panels.

Alongside these improvements we are pleased

to report that we made the step to become a Living Wage employer, and as part of the local Fairness Commission we are proud to be leading by example in this respect. In light of recent legislation we have also undertaken a full policy audit and update, to ensure best practice and legal compliance for both ourselves and membership organisations that come to us for policy advice.

“I knew the voluntary sector was important, I just did not realise how important. SVS is not only the glue that supports health and social care, at its core it is the very foundation that a caring and nurturing society is built on to empower people to fulfil their potential”

Dr Graham Watkinson FFPH, Consultant in Public Health



Supporting groups at an SVS outreach session

## Key Themes Of The Year

With public sector reform being driven forward at a rapid pace, themes are similar to the previous year:

- ♦ **Leadership** – Offering leadership at a time of uncertainty for many of our member organisations, enabling our membership to have a voice in the changes that are being driven forward.
- ♦ **Communication** – Ensuring effective communication, so members are kept in the loop about developments and opportunities. Utilising technology and communicating with our members in the ways they want.
- ♦ **Building relationships** – Ensuring we are making links and collaborating with key people driving forward change within our main statutory partners.
- ♦ **Technology** – Harnessing technology to enhance our working practices and improve efficiency.
- ♦ **Flexibility** – Structuring our work to enable us to respond quickly to the pace of change and the needs of our members, including those experiencing difficulties.

### Supporting the sector:

- ♦ Providing training tailored to group's needs. This has included sessions on fundraising, volunteer support and management, trustee roles, responsibility and governance, safeguarding and DBS checking.
- ♦ Working with groups who are in crisis or working through change. Particular themes have included issues around TUPE, redundancy and downsizing operations in light of funding cuts. We have also offered support to numerous groups who have experienced difficulties with trustee relationships and governance – given the sensitivity of the issues these interventions often take some time to reach a resolution and move forward positively.
- ♦ SVS was chosen as the “Trusted Organisation” for SO18 Big Local to help local people design and implement a small grants programme and to manage the grant agreements with the funded groups.



Cubs receive a grant through SO18 Big Local

“I would recommend SVS. They have been brilliantly helpful when we have been recruiting, interviewing, writing job descriptions, grievance procedures, the lot!! And it's free!!”

Isobel Howard, The Wayne Howard Trust

- ♦ Following consultation with our members we redesigned our newsletter into fortnightly e-bulletins to communicate bite sized chunks of information and drive traffic to our main website. We have also made extensive use of social media tools to enable our digitally fluent members to interact with us as easily as possible; whilst ensuring other means of communication are open to those who require them.
- ♦ Introducing new policy and operational developments through accessible learning events. This has included a Public Services Contracting and Commissioning Master Class, delivered by National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) through the Government Office of Civil Society (OCS), events exploring Community Asset Transfer, and an event about the Arts Council and NCVO Cultural Commissioning Programme. We have also worked closely with Job Centre Plus to ensure groups have a clearer understanding of the welfare reforms and the implications for their clients and volunteers.
- ♦ Delivering outreach sessions in different community locations across the city to ensure the Voluntary Sector Support Team are accessible and that we are gaining intelligence around issues affecting particular areas of the city.

## Representing the sector

- SVS continues to facilitate a number of voluntary sector forums and briefings including the Older People and Disability Forum, Mental Health & Wellbeing Forum, Drug and Alcohol Reference Group and Children's Alliance. This enables us to gather our membership around specific issues and take forward their ideas to decision makers. With the abovementioned change of systems within the local authority we are currently exploring, with our membership, how to best ensure that our forums match the new developing strategic structures within the city and remain relevant. Increasingly we have organised topic specific briefings for the sector such as that with the Big Lottery and with SCC Director of People.
- Issues raised by our membership around procurement and commissioning have led to SVS' strategic development work with Southampton City Council and meeting with their partner's CAPITA. Of particular note is the development of a website to ensure local voluntary organisations can make their offer known to Prime Contractors during the tender process.
- SVS brings the voluntary sector perspective to numerous local strategic networks, including Southampton Connect, which SVS CEO Jo Ash chairs, Southampton Safe City Partnership and a number of meetings developing the agenda of Better Care Fund and Think Local, Act Personal. SVS also inputs to the city's Safeguarding Board, for both children and adults, and through Healthwatch to the Health & Wellbeing Board. The national connection is made through NAVCA and NCVO, of which Jo Ash is vice-chair.

## Partnerships

- SVS' approach is one of engagement, collaboration and partnership working with the voluntary sector and beneficiaries.
- SVS is included as a key voluntary sector partner in the transformation of health and social care services through the Better Care Fund and the move to a more person centred approach through Think Local, Act Personal. The scale and pace of change currently afoot through these programmes means the high level of engagement needed is a challenge for our small, already stretched team. However, the importance of bringing the voluntary sector perspective to these initiatives, and ensuring the sector and its beneficiaries are part of the solution, makes this a challenge worth rising to.



Partnership working at SO18



Young Carers trip with Ex-Saints player Matt Le Tissier

- SVS is a key partner in new children's safeguarding arrangements for the city. SVS provides a voluntary sector navigator for the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), thus playing a role in good communication, information sharing and joined up working, in a bid to keep Southampton's vulnerable children and young people as safe as possible.
- Southampton Advice Services Alliance (SASA) aims to foster collaboration between local voluntary sector advice agencies, to enable a more coordinated advice offer to the city. SVS' role is twofold; we provide advice to the sector and act as a volunteer centre encouraging volunteering in advice services.
- Developments to the service over the last year have included a considerable increase to the provision of face-to-face support, the transformation of volunteer brokerage associated with the national volunteering website and moving to the reception at the Voluntary Action Centre. These developments have substantially enhanced the public face of the Volunteer Centre, by increasing both visibility and accessibility.
- SVS has also built strong partnerships with the business sector. In particular we have worked closely with Ideal Collection, who have supported SVS' Community Roots project, an allotment based project helping vulnerable people on their recovery journeys. The aims of Community Roots clearly resonates with Ideal Collection as a hospitality business; an important factor in the success of voluntary sector and business partnerships.

## Volunteering



- We are seeing the volunteering roles on offer change, with an increase in those aimed at increasing capacity within services, compared to those aimed at increasing quality within services. We are also seeing an increase in short term focused activities.
- Supporting partnerships on volunteer recruitment and best practice, including SASA and Chances4Change.
- Of those who access volunteering via the Voluntary Action Centre the proportion of whom are not employed has risen from 27% to 35%.
- The ratio of women to men seeking volunteering opportunities has risen to a ratio of 2.4 to 1.

“ The Volunteer Centre has been an invaluable resource to us. Not only do they provide us with new volunteers but a chance to network with others working in the city, promoting what we do and opening up opportunities for collaborative working. They have given us advice and guidance in volunteering practices and provided excellent and affordable training. ”

Hazel Dyson, Volunteering Consultant at Guide Dogs for the Blind

- 37% of volunteering enquiries were from people aged between 19-25 year olds.
- Team activity levels have remained high with 106 Volunteering Information Sessions delivered to the public, at both the Voluntary Action Centre and to community locations throughout the city.
- Noting an increase in the number of prospective volunteers approaching us through one-to-one appointments with additional support needs, we have developed the role of Volunteer Support Advisors. This has enabled us to increase the number of one-to-one appointments we deliver and ensure that people are appropriately placed.
- We successfully ran two Volunteer Certificate Scheme presentations alongside celebrating Volunteers' Week and International Volunteers Day, recognising and commending 63 volunteers, from a wide variety of local groups.
- We have been represented at 14 outreach events during the year, including career events and events linked to campaigns such as Student Volunteers Week.



Volunteers receive their certificate from the Mayor

- We have delivered a project to investigate the type of volunteering opportunities that interest Southampton residents. This research is helping local organisations to develop their volunteer roles, whilst also raising awareness about volunteering with the public. The project itself has been volunteer led.

“ I began working for Friends of St James' Park as the Community Volunteer Co-ordinator in November 2013 and have had to consult SVS on a number of occasions for a variety of issues. I find the staff friendly, approachable and efficient. The information on their website is practical, up to date and easy to use. I have worked in the voluntary sector for over 20 years and have used SVS on many occasions and will hopefully continue to do so for many years to come. SVS are particularly important in my current role as it is a very small organisation with little day to day support but I know who I can call on if I need to. ”

Marina Murphy, Community Volunteer Co-ordinator at Friends of St James' Park



Young Carers, staff and volunteers

# SVS Services To The Public

SVS Services have continued to offer support to some of the city's most vulnerable people, at a time when the impact of public service and welfare reforms are making day to day life increasingly challenging. This work is being delivered against a backdrop of increased uncertainty for SVS Services, with funding streams being withdrawn at short notice, resulting in service closure, and competitive tendering pulling scarce resources away from front line delivery.

We have picked up some concerns that SVS may increasingly compete with member organisations for public service provision contracts, as part of our business plan. We would like to categorically state that this is not the case and the rationale set out by our Executive Committee (elected from our membership) clearly articulates that we will engage in service provision as a neutral honest broker, in partnership with others, where it is development work to tackle unmet need or where there are no sufficiently robust local organisations able to do so. We hope this sends out a strong message that SVS is foremost for and of its membership.

Amidst the challenges there has been cause for celebration. Through a competitive tender we have been successful in securing the future of SVS' Young Carers Project, albeit with a radically different model of offering support. We have also been successful in winning the contract to deliver Healthwatch Southampton, which builds on our knowledge and experience learnt through delivering Southampton LiNK, which came to an end in March 2013 following the passage of the Health & Social Care Act.

The Community Roots project has been established, with support from private sector partners Ideal Collection, building on SVS work to enable vulnerable groups to access supported volunteering opportunities. This project demonstrates the power and value of voluntary and private sector partnership.

## Community Roots



This new project is an allotment-based programme to support people who have experienced issues such as homelessness, drug addiction, alcohol dependency, mental health problems and learning disabilities to get involved in volunteering. The project aims to help and support volunteers to build their confidence and skills, and to promote practical ways to help them achieve lasting change. The project currently has 14 volunteers, including three peer mentors, who have contributed over 165 hours of time. We are currently looking to develop further training in horticulture and hospitality to sustain the recovery and personal growth of the supported volunteers, linked to potential opportunities for work experience with our sponsors the Ideal Collection hospitality group.



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## Family Projects



Having supported thousands of vulnerable families in Southampton since 1986, it was with great sadness that we received the Southampton City Council decision that Family Projects would no longer be funded after March 2014. Given the late timing of this decision, and despite last minute campaigning activity to have the decision revisited, it was not possible to secure funding from alternative sources and the project has been regrettably closed. This is at the loss, through redundancy, of eight long serving, highly skilled and valued colleagues and to the detriment of the 120+ families the project worked with each year.



## Healthwatch Southampton



Due to slippage in the commissioning timeline the Healthwatch Southampton (HWS) contract was not awarded until July 1st 2013. In the interim period between Local Involvement Networks (LiNK) being disbanded SVS agreed to host an interim Healthwatch, with LiNK steering group members, to lead on patient and public involvement until the full contract was awarded. Following consultation with our membership SVS worked hard to submit a tender and subsequently secure the contract. Now nine months into this contract over 75 local groups have been consulted and the HWS Strategic Group is established and overseeing prioritised work streams that are being taken forward to help improve local health and social care services.



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## MORPH



Southampton's substance misuse pathway is currently out to tender and has moved away from multiple contracts with numerous providers to fewer large contracts. MORPH are therefore currently trying to ensure their offer is understood by primary contractors to enable a sub-contract arrangement once the tender has been awarded. In the interim this leaves the project in a state of considerable uncertainty. Despite this the project has had a productive year delivering 145 hours of advocacy, hosting 49 drop-in sessions, facilitating 503 hours of peer support and 100 DIY recovery sessions, with 144 hours of time contributed by volunteers. The project has contributed on a national level to both the Royal College of General Practice professional training standards and Public Health England, as well as offering training locally to student doctors and other disciplines.



## Safe In Sound



The project has continued to operate in the night time economy over the last year providing resources and interventions to party-goers to help avoid risks associated with alcohol, substance use, sexual health and personal safety. The project has 10 volunteers who contributed 438 hours this year, with three being helped into full time employment and two having received the City's Volunteering Certificate for contributing over 100 hours. Through 30 outreach sessions to city centre venues the project has delivered an average of 25 in-depth interventions per session. 94% of clients reported

increased awareness of healthier lifestyles and 93% reported receiving practical advice that would enable them to make changes. Securing funding is now a priority as the project is operating on reserves and will otherwise close.



## Shopmobility



The project loans mobility scooters and wheelchairs to enable customers to regain or maintain their independence in accessing Southampton's City Centre. The project has seen a restructure of its staff team over the last year and now operates with SVS admin team input and seven volunteers. Total equipment loans for the period number 3780, which disappointingly reflects a downward trend, partly attributed to lower City Centre retail usage due to customer spending restraints. Customer satisfaction with the service is high with 97.6% reporting the choice of vehicles as good or very good and 88% reporting the service as good or very good.



Nobody rated the service as either poor or average. The project is currently sustained through the revenue raised through customer contributions, business and partner donations and city council funding.

## Young Carers



The Southampton Young Carers Project provides specialist support, respite and activities to children and young people who are caring for a family member in the home, with the aim of ensuring they do not miss out on the opportunities other young people enjoy. Despite a 20% reduction in funding, resulting in the loss of a part time worker and service changes, the project has engaged with 232 young carers in the last year, with a record 165 engaged in the service at the year start. Additional funding from Children in Need has enabled the recruitment of an activities coordinator and further capacity is supported by 29 dedicated volunteers. A donation of over £12000 was made by our active supporter and local teacher Polly Sinnett-Jones, who undertook 13 gruelling sponsored challenges over the year, for which massive thanks are due. Following retender of the service the project has been successful in securing the contract and is excited to take the project forward, albeit with a significant change in service configuration and large future fundraising targets to be met.



# SVS Staff and Trustees



## SVS Lead Contacts

Jo Ash	Chief Executive / Company Secretary
Philip Lee	Deputy Chief Executive
Jude Perrot	Finance and Business Controller
Shelley Nicholls	Senior Administrator (maternity cover)

## SVS Voluntary Sector Support Team

Auran Sood (pt)	Funding and Fundraising Development Worker
Louise Evans (pt)	Big Local Development Worker
Robert Kurn	Support and Development Team Leader
Josie Francis	Volunteer Development Worker
Abdiwali Elmi (pt)	Voluntary Sector Navigator – MASH

## SVS Services – Lead Contacts

Community Roots	Duncan Reade (pt)
City Shopmobility	Philip Lee
Family Projects	Di Barnes / enquiries Jo Ash
Healthwatch Southampton	Robert Kurn
M.O.R.P.H.	Simon Parry and Sue Tutton
Safe in Sound	Robert Kurn
Young Carers	Julie Marron (pt)

## SVS Executive Committee

Elected Representatives	
Mr K Liles	Chair
Mr M Treasure Jones	Vice Chair
Mr C Warburg	Honorary Treasurer

Ms M Carnegie  
Mr P Keeley  
Mr S Mantle  
Mr L Slack  
Mr D Wrighton  
Ms P Damani  
Mr M Bovey  
Mr D Hargadon

## Southampton City Council nominated representatives

Cllr J Inglis  
Cllr J Noon

## Ex-Officio Members

Dr. M Kelsey  
NHS Southampton City Clinical Commissioning Group

## Contact Details

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SVS is committed to helping our environment and this Annual Review is printed on 100% recycled paper using a carbon neutral renewable organic resource made of biological materials that exclude fossil fuels and do not release CO2 when recycled.

Front cover photos (clockwise): Family projects crèche, Young Carers donation from Polly Sinnott-Jones, Safe in Sound, Family Projects, VSST Outreach, Shopmobility, Healthwatch Southampton, Young Carers with Matt Le Tissier

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