

# COMMUNITY ACTION: MK



**We believe in strong, resilient,  
sustainable communities and VCSE  
groups**

**with volunteering**

**At their  
hearts**



## We do this by:

### Strengthening Communities

We bring people together and support them to take effective, collective action in their communities.

Examples include peer led support group for people experiencing chronic pain in Beanhill, substance misuse community support in Netherfield, walking groups across MK and social groups aimed at reducing isolation in new communities.

We also work in **New Communities** (new estates and developments in the City)

### Strengthening Groups

We support charities and community groups with **information, advice and good practice about governance, funding and development**. We encourage the sector to participate in strategic issues.

Over a thousand groups VCSE groups operate in MK, covering a range of vital support, from older persons lunch clubs, peer mental health support groups to fitness sessions to name but a few

### Strengthening The Sector

We work with communities and groups to embed their voices and experiences into shaping decision and policy making.

We are building and supporting **networks of VCSE groups**, arranged around important themes and areas of work, with a Voluntary Sector Alliance acting as an overarching representative group

We gather lived experiences from a range of communities via grassroots groups to inform priorities, identify emerging issues and develop solutions



## Volunteering



# Networks - the context

- When Covid-19 hit MK, many people and communities were particularly vulnerable and suffering disproportionate negative impacts of the pandemic
- We were hearing issues identified by a range of groups, and it was clear that no single organisation or sector had a clear picture of all the needs across communities in the City. It was at this time that the **Children And Your People's Mental Health Network** was created (now part of the Mental Health alliance)
- This led us to set up **Collaborative Action Groups (CAGs)**, which were:
  - Based around geographical areas in MK
  - Made up of organisations, from large charities and the public sector to small volunteer led neighbourhood groups, working to support people in communities across the City to cope with the impact of the pandemic
  - Focused on sharing knowledge relating to emerging needs and priorities
  - Committed to supporting collaboration to pool resources and avoid duplication

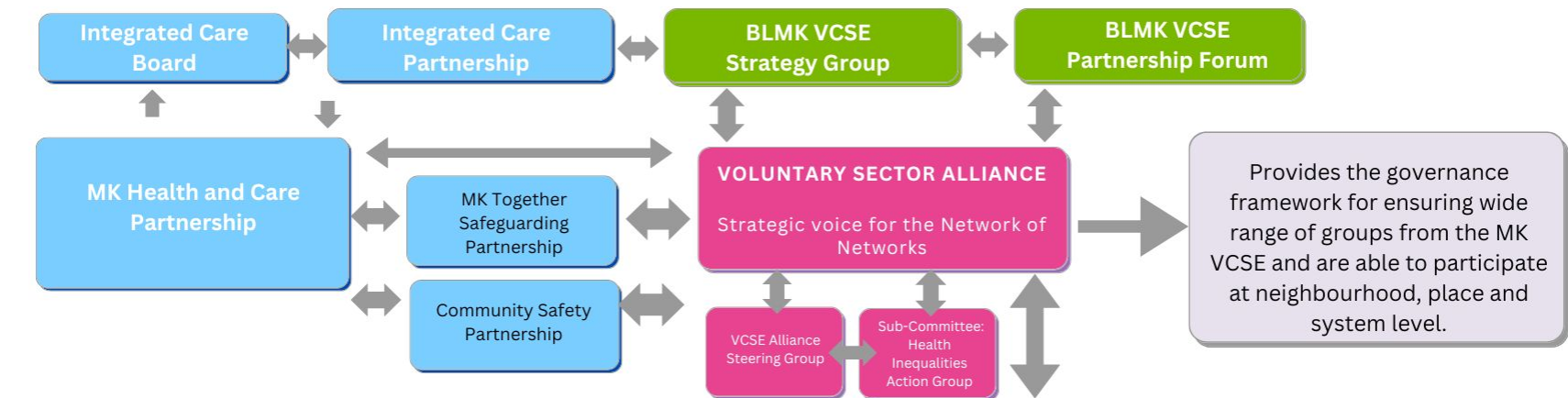


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# Networks: where we are now

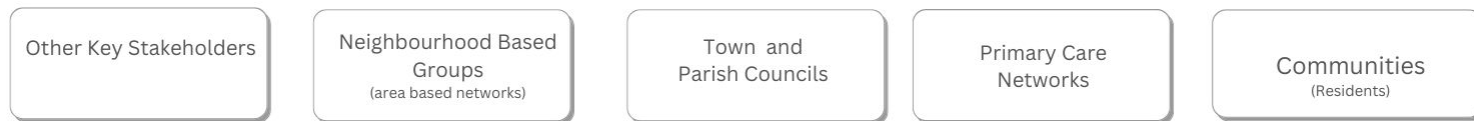
- Community Action: MK supports a wide range of VCSE groups across Milton Keynes, involved with a huge variety of vital work. **Over 1500** groups operate in MK currently.
- Supporting a range of networks within the VCSE sector, which allow organisations with common focuses to come together to share knowledge, collaborate on projects and provide a stronger, more comprehensive voice for the people they support.
- Supporting the VCSE sector to organise themselves in this way also supports other sectors to more easily connect with and navigate the sector in order to foster joint working.
- The following diagram highlights the range of work the MK VCSE sector and networks cover.

# Networks in Milton Keynes



Green = Existing City-wide Networks  
 Pink = Potential or Developing City-wide Networks

Grey = Neighbourhood Based Groups / Networks and other key stakeholders





# Promoting the benefits of joining networks to...

- Connecting with other groups and organisations
- Identifying collaboration opportunities
- Identifying joint funding opportunities
- Training and networking events
- Sharing knowledge and resources
- Having a stronger, collective voice to influence decisions and plans
- A better understanding of needs in Milton Keynes
- Getting the lived experience of communities heard
- Greater awareness of services related to your area of work and the people you support

## Spotlight on



MK VOLUNTARY  
SECTOR ALLIANCE

In order to give the VCSE groups and networks in Milton Keynes as much strategic voice as possible, we have developed **the Milton Keynes Voluntary Sector Alliance**, and we will be developing this using some of the funding from the National Lottery Community Fund.

The Alliance is made up of representatives from the many VCSE networks in MK, bringing the voices, lived experiences and needs of the varied communities they support to the group

- The Voluntary Sector Alliance provides the VCSE with a clear and purposeful route into the Public Sector and working with statutory partners. Through the Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care System (ICS) and the local partnership arrangements through MK Together.
- Voluntary Sector Alliance website:  
[www.mkvoluntarysectoralliance.com](http://www.mkvoluntarysectoralliance.com)



# Spotlight on



The transfer of funds from Public Sector partners will give greater decision making power to the VCSE and communities in line with the aspirations of the Community Mental Health Transformation Plan for Milton Keynes. This includes **basing briefs and proposed projects on lived experience and co-production with service users. Groups and those with lived experience identify the issues and solutions**

The purpose of the Milton Keynes Mental Health Alliance is to integrate the local VCSE sector into **strategic planning and operational delivery of mental health support in Milton Keynes.**

Community Action: MK and the Alliance works as a multidisciplinary cross sector team with our Public Sector Partners; Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) and Primary Care Networks (PCNS) as well as the local authority, service users and carers, to create a **new, flexible and proactive model of community-based mental health care and support** for people of all ages recovering from severe mental illness in Milton Keynes.

It's crucial role is to **enable funding to come to the VCSE from the NHS, Local Authority (and potentially other funders)** with Community Action: MK acting as the accountable body. The Alliance will enable and promote **collaboration between VCSE Sector groups, so that community based mental health services are more effective, holistic and joined up.**

Short film: [bit.ly/CAMKMHAllianceFilm2022](https://bit.ly/CAMKMHAllianceFilm2022)

# Spotlight on

# MK CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK

We are Milton Keynes Climate Action Network (MKCAN). Our mission is to raise awareness, influence decision makers and support all those concerned about climate change.



**MKCAN's objectives are:**



## Discussion - question 1

How to bring together different voices in a united way (e.g. those driven to take urgent action vs those keen to work towards longer term systemic change).

Has anyone had experience of this and examples of issues/ how they've been resolved from an infrastructure charity point of view? (supporting groups rather than individuals)

## **Discussion - question 2**

How to best develop a governance structure for this network?

Has anyone had experience of developing this?

**Thank you!**

**COMMUNITY  
ACTION: MK**

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