Protocol for VCFSE Participation

The voluntary community faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector have a key role to play as a strategic and delivery partner. This is reflected in the increasing number of boards/steering groups in the city region which have a VCFSE sector participant sitting on them.

Unlike statutory agencies, individuals participating on behalf of the VCFSE sector are accountable to a diverse range of individual organisations but with no formal powers or decision-making authority.

To ensure accountability as far as possible, it is important that requests for participation are made through VSNW as the VCFSE sector's network in Greater Manchester (GM).

The role of VSNW on behalf of the GM VCFSE Leadership Group:

- Set up and manage a process for appointing an appropriate participant onto a multi-agency board/group by:
    - being the first point of contact for statutory partners in order to set up VCFSE sector participation to a board/group;
    - liaising with VCFSE and statutory partners to develop a role description for the opportunity and circulate it within the sector;
    - gathering expressions of interest from people who are interested in taking on the role; and
    - setting up a process for the GM VCFSE Leadership Group to agree on the most appropriate person to take on the role (this will depend on the level of the role and the number of people who are interested in taking it on).
- Provide a mechanism for information flow:
    - from the participant to the VCFSE sector; and
    - from the VCFSE sector to the participant.
- Support the participant to be accountable and transparent in their role.
- Provide support for the participant in terms of admin, identifying and meeting training needs, circulating information etc.
- Bring together VCFSE sector participants on different boards/groups to share experiences, identify common threads of work and highlight any issues.
- Provide a mechanism for mediation if working relationships deteriorate for any reason.
- Provide check in on the role on a yearly basis.
- Monitor and promote compliance with any relevant frames to the relationship such as a Memorandum of Understanding or Compact Agreements.

The role and responsibilities of the VCFSE sector participant:

Your role is to:

- Speak on behalf of the VCFSE sector and advocate the views and perspectives of the sector.
- Act as an advocate for the sector in the interests of the common good as opposed to narrow self-interest.

- Be accountable through open communication and feeding back to the VCFSE sector.
    - Feedback is required to the GM VCFSE Leadership Group, this can be either through notes from the board meeting shared via GM VCFSE Leadership Group secretariat
        contacts Kassandra.banks@vsnw.org.uk and anna.cooper@vsnw.org.uk OR through the GM VCFSE Leadership Group WhatsApp group.
- Report back on the project within their relevant own organisation/ part of the system.
- Provide regular updates to identified groups of interest:
    - ensure there is an ongoing dialogue between you and sector colleagues
    - promote sector activity and be positive about the sector.
    - bring solutions to meetings as well as challenges faced by the sector.
    - promote joint working across the sector and act as a critical friend for partner's services.
    - attend relevant meetings to carry out the above – *see responsibilities for more details*.
    - recognise and engage in the learning journey of membership including:
        - sharing experiences with other members;
        - understanding the needs of the VCFSE sector;
        - familiarity with key policy information relating to the VCFSE sector.

Your role is <u>not</u> to:

- Represent yourself or your organisation in isolation.
- Feel you must be an expert on everything
- Use this position as a forum for giving your personal opinion, or for forging your own political alliances.

Your responsibilities are to:

- Commit to act on behalf of the VCFSE sector collectively, leading beyond your own organisation.
- Be consistent in your attendance of meetings as far as possible (If you fail to attend three consecutive formal meetings, you may be removed from the role, assuming no extenuating circumstances)
- Be accountable to the VCFSE sector – gathering input from colleagues and peers and feeding back to them.
- Ensure you have the capacity/time to undertake the role and be consistent in attendance of meetings as far as possible.
- Read papers circulated and prepare for meetings.
- Attend briefings before meetings as appropriate.
- Actively participate in meeting discussions.
- Take suitable notes to feedback to VCFSE sector colleagues.
- Raise areas of discussion needing wider VCFSE expertise with colleagues.
- Attend debriefing meetings as appropriate.

To assist the participant in this role:

- An invite is extended to sign up to the GM VCFSE Leadership Group e-bulletin email. These bulletins are monthly and include key messages from the VCFSE sector, relevant news, resources and opportunities for the GM VCFSE sector.

  Sign-up to the GM VCFSE Leadership Group monthly e-bulletin - please click here.

  You can opt-out at any time via the 'Unsubscribe' button that appears in the footer of each email.

- As informal feedback to the GM VCFSE Leadership Group is a requirement of this post (via email or WhatsApp, as you prefer**), if you want to join the GM VCFSE Leadership Group and reps WhatsApp group, please provide your number below.** You can also use the WhatsApp group to ask for any quick feedback and as another way to stay up to date from other key VCFSE leaders and representatives.

  Your Phone Number: _____

  Once joined, you can exit the group at any time.

- Please visit www.vcfseleadershipgm.org.uk/our-work to see how you might link into existing work, and if there are any of the GM VCFSE Leadership Group working groups that are relevant to your work and would like to request to join. You can note the name of the work or group you would like to request to join here:

  _____

For assistance or queries on any of the above, please contact GM VCFSE Leadership Group secretariats Kassandra.banks@vsnw.org.uk and anna.cooper@vsnw.org.uk

Dispute resolution

If there are concerns about anyone participating on behalf of the VCFSE sector, or if the participant has concerns about their role in the Board/Group, the situation will be dealt with informally in the first instance through discussions with the GM VCFSE Leadership Group and the group/board's chair.

Signature:

To confirm you are happy with the information and role above, please sign and date below.

Name of participant: _____

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Data collected on this form will be stored by VSNW in accordance with our Privacy Policy.