

What we do

Voluntary Action Wakefield District (VAWD) provides services and support to strengthen the work of voluntary and community organisations in the community.

We help them to:

- develop and gain new skills
- involve volunteers
- get their voices heard
- improve their computer systems
- work in partnership with others
- communicate and publicise their work.

“ Voluntary and community sector partners have a vital role in improving health and wellbeing in Wakefield District. At their best they deliver sustainable change with added social value at low cost. I am sure we will be looking to commission more from this sector, which is where support from VAWD is really important. ”

DR ANDREW FURBER

Director of Public Health, Wakefield District Primary Care Trust

Finance and company information 2009-10

Total income £1,018,609

Total expenditure £921,959

Full audited accounts and directors' annual report available on request.

Voluntary Action Wakefield District is a company limited by guarantee

no 01878287 and a registered charity no 516150

Registered office: 11 Upper York Street, Wakefield, WF1 3LQ

President: Baroness Masham of Ilton

Vice President: Lord Lofthouse of Pontefract

Thank you to our funders



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VOLUNTARY ACTION WAKEFIELD DISTRICT

Celebrating 50 years of support to groups

IMPACT REPORT 2010

REPORT FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE GILL THORNTON AND CHAIR NESAR RAFIQ

OUR PROUD HISTORY

Wakefield has had a CVS supporting groups for around 50 years. In that time the District has changed radically and so have we. We have helped thousands of groups to reach their aims and deliver services to their members and users. Many of the groups active in the District started their work with help from VAWD.

Developments in 2009-10

In the last year we expanded into new areas of work, for example work with migrant communities and volunteering across generations. We supported groups' activities through the Healthier Communities Fund and helped to establish the Wellbeing Consortium. The Single Portal - www.wakefieldvcs.org - was launched, offering an online

gateway for information, networking and support to VCS groups in the District.

Governance

We elected a new Chair to our Board in September 2009 when Nesar Rafiq took over from Lister Baynes. Chief Executive, Julie Wilkes left in December and Gill Thornton joined as new Chief Executive in February 2010.



Gill Thornton says: "When I arrived in February as the new Chief Executive, I joined a confident and thriving organisation with strong leadership and a clear sense of purpose. It is these qualities which will keep us on track in the challenging times ahead."

THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE TO OUR COMMUNITY

VAWD supports groups and delivers work in the following key areas:



Volunteering

The voluntary and community sector (VCS) is built on the efforts of thousands of people who give their time and effort freely. Our busy Volunteer Centre matches volunteers with opportunities and supports groups in managing them. This crucial work enables people to volunteer in a safe and supported environment, and to be valued for their contribution.



"VAWD has been instrumental in fostering wider partnerships with other organisations, promoting information and good practice sharing."

Supporting groups

The core of our work is the support we offer to groups through our development work, our ICT support and training co-ordination. We have worked with 127 groups to get them started, to help them to plan and deliver their activities, to help them comply with the law and to access training and funding support. We identify where the gaps in available support are and work with local groups to address unmet needs.



Communications

The VCS is about empowering people. We achieve this by sharing skills, experiences and knowledge. This area of VAWD's work took a major step this year when we launched www.wakefieldvcs.org - the website which encompasses the whole of the district's VCS. Through the website and the planned Wakefield Assembly, we enable local groups to share resources, work together better, network and bid for public service contacts.

"The listening ear and advice from VAWD has helped our charity through a difficult time."



Voice

The relationship between the VCS and the public and private sectors relies on mutual understanding and shared aims. VAWD strengthens and develops the VCS voice by providing opportunities for discussion and representation. We work with statutory sector partners to improve awareness of the sector and develop joint working and commissioning opportunities. We also act as a conduit, representing VCS views to the statutory agencies.



"VAWD's understanding of norms and tensions in the life of a small third sector organisation has enabled us to work effectively and efficiently."

MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN

Looking to the future

This is an uncertain time for everyone, whether in the voluntary and community sector, the public sector and the private sector. VAWD lost 62% of this year's funding from Wakefield Together. This was followed by early termination of Migrant Impact Funding and the Department of Work and Pensions Volunteer Programme.

Thanks to good planning and management the Board of Directors drew up a plan which avoided any immediate cuts in staffing or services. We are planning to

reduce costs, generate more income and plan a structure for next year focusing on group development and volunteering.

Alongside internal planning we are preparing funding bids to secure existing and new areas of activity. We are engaged in talks with partners to explore sharing services, facilities and premises.

The bright spot on the horizon is the launch of the Wakefield Assembly bringing together voluntary, community and social enterprise groups in the District to enable a stronger, cohesive and accountable voice to be heard. The

Assembly will allow groups to be properly represented and to make their case directly to funders and commissioners. The first meeting will be by the end of 2010 and local groups will determine the shape and function of the Assembly. VAWD plans to stay around in Wakefield for another 50 years, providing support, strengthening the sector and facilitating the voice of the VCS.