

Our Vision . . .

to be a lead consortium in Suffolk for the strategic development of effective learning and skills development in the VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector).

Aims

- To promote the interests of the Suffolk VCS to key strategic and other bodies in the field of learning and skills development
- To support the development of voluntary and community organisations as users and providers of learning and skills development
- To promote collaboration and act as a co-ordinator of partnership bids to attract LSC and other relevant learning and skills funding
- To work towards developing the Consortium with sustainable funding and a clear long-term business plan
- To ensure that the VCS workforce is fully skilled and equipped to deal with the demands of the VCS by the provision of high quality learning and skills opportunities.

Our Mission . . .

to provide a mutually beneficial consortium structure for VCS learning providers in Suffolk, in order to support and enable all member organisations to access funding, develop their capacity and achieve high standards of quality and performance in meeting the needs of learners and in tackling disadvantage and advancing equity and social inclusion.

Objectives

- To provide a forum for sharing information and resources relating to the learning and skills development needs of the VCS, with a view to maximising outcomes and improving progression to other learning if appropriate
- To promote and foster relationships with a range of strategic partners in developing provision aimed at voluntary and community organisations
- To act as a voice for the VCS to a range of strategic partners on learning and development issues where a county wide perspective is needed
- To provide VCS organisations with information about, and how to go about accessing, funding opportunities in relation to learning and development
- To support VCS organisations in building their capacity, particularly quality and management systems, to enable them to access funding
- To promote a collaborative approach to county wide / regional funding in relation to learning and development
- To encourage the growth of a wide membership, reflecting the full diversity of the voluntary and community sectors in the county, with particular commitment to supporting small groups and organisations
- To identify, and seek solutions to, skills gaps in the voluntary sector in Suffolk
- To take on specific project work where this is appropriate to meet the aims and objectives of the Learning Consortium.

Membership Structure

Steering Group

The Consortium is overseen by a Managed Network of organisations involved in the delivery or use of learning in VCS organisations is Suffolk (listed below), with agreement that SAVO act as lead organisation, providing the Chair and Secretariat.

- Age Concern Suffolk
- Anglia Care Trust
- CSV Media
- Ipswich Council for Voluntary Services
- Lowestoft College
- Meridian East
- Optua
- Suffolk ACRE
- Suffolk Association of Voluntary Organisations (SAVO)
- Suffolk Connect
- Suffolk Local Infrastructure Partnerships (LIP)
- Suffolk Training Advice Point
- Suffolk Volunteering Federation
- University Campus Suffolk
- Workers' Education Association
- Young Suffolk

Other members can be co-opted onto the Steering Group and / or invited to Steering Group meetings as deemed appropriate and as agreed by the core members. Other members could include representatives from Adult Education, the Learning and Skills Council, learning and training partnerships and other organisations.

All core members will inform the Consortium of all planned skills and training events.

Scrutiny Committee

The Scrutiny Committee (listed below) will comprise of the following members (who will be reviewed annually):

- SAVO
- Suffolk TAP
- Suffolk LIP representative
- + at least one other VCS organisation

The Scrutiny Committee will:

- maintain an overview of the Consortium and its activities to ensure that all operational matters and finances are fair and equitable
- ensure that the Steering Group remains on track to deliver the Aims and Objectives of the Consortium
- ensure that project work undertaken by the Consortium remains on track to deliver on any targets set by funders.

by:

- scrutinising reports before they are sent to the Steering Group and funders
- receiving quarterly finance reports on income and expenditure appertaining to the Consortium as well as projections for future funding
- reviewing the membership of the Consortium to look at the number, range, diversity and geographical spread of member organisations.

Working Groups

The Steering Group, or Secretariat, may form Working Groups to work on specific projects or tasks. Working Groups will be chaired by a Steering Group member and will report to, and be fully accountable to the Steering Group.

Members

The Consortium is open to all organisations serving Suffolk concerned with using or delivering learning and skills development for VCS staff, volunteers, service users, trustees or the community.

- We aim to develop representation from special interest groups and to ensure that the VCS learning and skills development community is appropriately represented.
- Membership will be constantly reviewed in order to ensure that the group remains relevant / effective and responsive to developments in the field.
- Members of the Consortium, except those funded by this project, may resign by advising the secretariat (SAVO) in writing.

Meetings

The frequency of Consortium meetings shall be flexible to meet the demand for such meetings and on dates agreed by the members. SAVO will provide the Chair and Secretariat for all meetings.

Steering Group

The Steering Group will meet as required, with a minimum of three meetings per year.

Scrutiny Committee

The Scrutiny Committee will meet at least once per year, but will be regularly consulted (by 'virtual meetings', at least four times a year) to ensure that they are satisfied with the Consortiums performance.

Working Groups

Working Groups will meet as required, under guidance from the Steering Group.

Consortium

The Consortium will hold, or participate in at least two meetings / events per year:

- provide means of consulting members about relevant policy / programme issues and agreeing responses
- appoint representatives to attend appropriate meetings / networks and report back / agree proposals for activities to be submitted through the Consortium
- provide a forum for inviting speakers and arranging workshops on relevant topics / issues.

SAVO shall provide the secretariat for each meeting.

Budget

The Consortium does not currently hold any significant budget and is reliant on good will from members and partners to support its continuation.

The accountable body for any funding received will be SAVO, who will produce a quarterly report on expenditure and progress for initial assessment by the Scrutiny Committee, approval by the Steering Group, and submission to funders.

All members of the Consortium who access the funding must give funders recognition of funding on all materials, in the approved format, prior to undertaking any promotional activities.

Code of Conduct

General

All members will agree to ensure that their actions to the support the work of the monitoring body will at all times put the needs of learners first.

At times members may have access to confidential and sensitive information and are expected to act with diplomacy and discretion at all times concerning the work of the Consortium.

Steering / Working Groups and Scrutiny Committee

Steering Group, Working Group and Scrutiny Committee members will:

- Ensure that a representative attends Consortium meetings whenever possible. Members will submit apologies if they are unable to attend a meeting
- Provide a named contact
- Provide any information agreed and requested by the Consortium within agreed time scales
- Report progress and issues back to their individual Management Committees / Boards and their membership
- Reach decisions by majority vote.

Operating Principles

The Consortium will at all times seek to operate in an open, inclusive, accountable and representative manner. It will:

- Schedule meetings well in advance and strive to circulate agendas and other papers at least five working days in advance
- Support a process that allows continuous feedback from the grassroots up, promoting inclusivity, meaningful representation, flexibility and clarity of thought and presentation
- Develop a simple means of communicating with the wider sector in support of the above Operating Principles
- Review these Terms of Reference and Operating Principles annually.