



COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Building Community Capacity
and Carer Support

Community Solutions Strategy and Investment Plan 2022-25



CONTENTS

1. About Community Solutions	3
2. Strategy and Investment Plan Purpose and Development	6
3. Vision and Mission	7
4. Approach and Values	8
5. Priorities for Investment	11
6. Investment Approach	13
7. Evaluating Impact	15
8. Supporting Learning and Continuous Improvement	16
Appendix One: Background and Context	17
Appendix Two: Summary of Stakeholder Feedback 2021	20

This report can be provided in printed and other formats on request at communitysolutions@vanl.co.uk

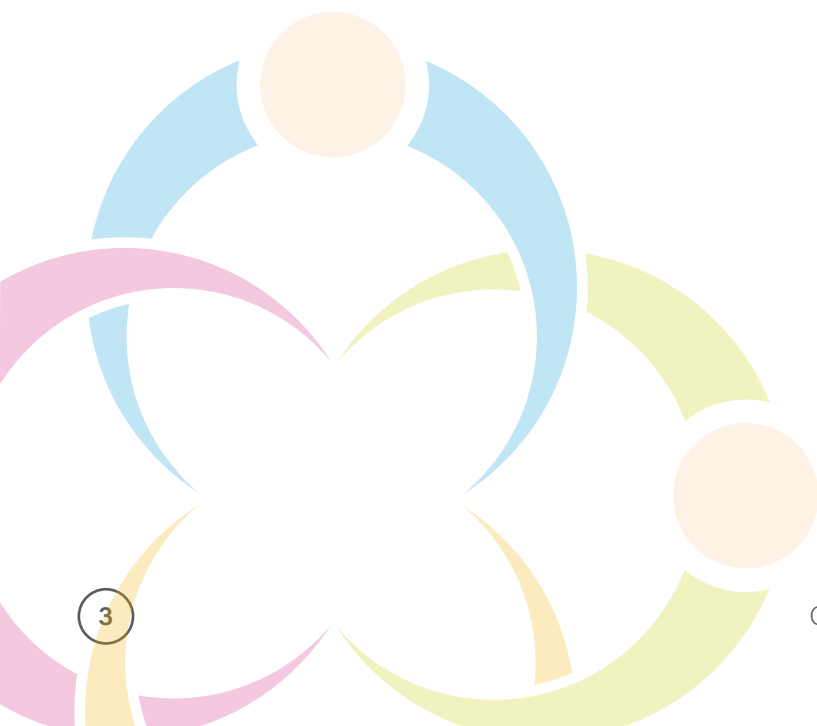
1. About Community Solutions

Community Solutions is a successful, cross-sector health and social care investment and improvement programme for North Lanarkshire, established in 2012, which is improving people's health, wellbeing, quality of life and equality by investing in community-led initiatives which build community, family and individual strengths and resources - with a focus on prevention and early intervention.

The programme is an innovative, effective and respected partnership and collaborative initiative between a statutory and community and voluntary organisations and the public.

- **Health and Social Care Partnership North Lanarkshire (HSCNL)** which is responsible for planning, commissioning and overseeing the delivery of community health and social care services across North Lanarkshire. HSCNL provides core and project funding for the Community Solutions Programme, as well as governance and delivery support for the programme.
- The **North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership**, which is responsible for planning, commissioning and overseeing children and young people services across North Lanarkshire. The Children's Services Partnership provides funding for the Community and Voluntary sector to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, which is managed through the Community Solutions Programme.
- **Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire (VANL)**, the local Third Sector Interface (TSI), which hosts and manages the programme on behalf of HSCNL and the Children's Services Partnership.
- The diverse, large and vibrant Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) operating in North Lanarkshire, which receives funding through the programme and other sources to provide information, support and care to individuals, families and groups and work with local people to strengthen community capacity, resources and resilience.
- Local people who support programme planning, delivery and evaluation as service users, carers, volunteers and residents.

The programme invests in CVS organisations operating in North Lanarkshire.



1.1 Funding

The Community Solutions programme manages a number of funding streams from a variety of funders to provide grant funding to the Community and Voluntary Sector.

The programme's current funders are:

- Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire
- Scottish Government
- North Lanarkshire Council
- NHS Lanarkshire

The amount of funding managed through the programme varies year on year and can reduce or increase. Also, CVS organisations which receive project funding through the Community Solutions programme usually have other funding for their core costs and some also raise matching project funding.

During 2022-23 the Programme managed £3.6 million in funding and this will increase to over £4 million from April 2023 for at least two years.

The programme's key funds and priorities for 2022-25 are as follows.

- **Improving Lives Initiative**, which includes funding for:
 - Six local community and voluntary sector (CVS) "anchor" organisations to act as locality hosts for the Community Solutions programme
 - Six Local Activity Funds to provide "micro-grants" to local CVS organisations
 - Ten "Community Connectors" who will capture and share up to date information about sources of community support by CVS organisations and assist local people with health challenges including cancer and other long term conditions by connecting them to local CVS services and facilitating access to statutory services if required.
 - All the above will also assist improvements to "social prescribing" approaches to supporting people, with improved collaboration between NHS staff and CVS organisations.
- **Thematic Funds** on a variety of key issues and for key groups, such as:
 - community Mental Health and Wellbeing
 - children, young people and families
 - older and frail people living at home
 - people discharged from hospital discharge support
 - unpaid carers

1.2 Achievements

Evaluation of services and projects funded through the Community Solutions Programme, up to March 2022, demonstrate it is highly cost-effective, providing support to thousands of people with good personal outcomes. More information about the Programme's reach and impact can be found online, including the 2020-21 Annual Report (and summary) and previous Annual Reports.

In 2019, an independent review of the Community Solutions programme by the national Improvement Service for local government, highlighted the programme's strengths as:

- having a strong focus on personal outcomes approach
- demonstrating positive engagement and participation
- providing an effective use of resources



1.3 Programme Governance, Management and Support

Community Solutions is governed through a “triple-lock” approach and supported and managed at both locality and North Lanarkshire wide levels.

- Six local CVS organisations receive funding to act as “locality hosts” for the Community Solutions Programme in their area and convene locality Community Solutions consortia meetings involving CVS funded organisations; HSCNL locality and VANL staff. These consortia review local needs and priorities ; agree a Locality Development Plan and manage a Local Activity Fund for their area.
- The six locality host organisations also meet regularly with key VANL staff to share information and discuss key issues to inform locality and NL-wide developments.
- VANL convenes and supports a Community Solutions Governance Subgroup, which meets at least quarterly with representatives from HSCNL, VANL and the CVS to support strategic planning, review, improvements and reporting.
- HSCNL senior management and its Integrated Joint Board agree the programme’s strategy and funding and review progress reports.



VANL is funded by HSCNL on a recurrent annual basis, to host, manage and support the programme, including:

- planning and development
- communications
- management of funding awards
- performance management, evaluation, learning and improvement

In addition, VANL is commissioned by HSCNL to provide capacity building support on key issues, including:

- Children, Young People and Families
- First Point of Contact and Three Conversations
- Improving Cancer Journey
- Volunteering

VANL staff also provide wider capacity building support for the CVS and support links between the Community Solutions Programme, health and social care, children’s services and community planning. Much of this work resourced by VANL’s complementary, core funding from the Scottish Government (SG) and North Lanarkshire Council (NLC).

VANL’s support for the Community Solutions programme is monitored through the programme’s “triple-lock” governance arrangements.

2. Strategy and Investment Plan Purpose and Development

2.1 Purpose

This Strategy and Investment Plan sets out how the Community Solutions Programme will invest the funding it receives from its funders as set out above, to contribute to improved health, wellbeing, quality of life and equality of the people of North Lanarkshire by strengthening community capacity and resilience and delivering person-centred, community-based support and services to priority groups.

This plan replaces the Community Solutions previous Strategy for 2018-2023. This is earlier than planned given major developments within the programme and the challenges of the COVID pandemic.

2.2 Development

This new Strategy and Investment Plan has been developed collaboratively with key stakeholders and is informed by:

- evidence of local needs
- experience of delivering Community Solutions and evaluation of Community Solutions funded projects to date
- priorities and commitments as set out in the **Plan for North Lanarkshire, Health and Social Care NL Commissioning Plan** and related strategies and plans on issues such as the **Tackling Poverty Strategy**, with reference to relevant national commitments (see Appendix One)

This Plan was developed consultatively with key stakeholders (see Appendix Two) supported by:

- discussions at the North Lanarkshire Partnership Strategic Investment in the CVS Working Group (2020-21)
- an online survey and focus groups for key Community Solutions stakeholders including funded projects (Aug-Sept 2021)
- discussion at the Community Solutions Governance Sub-Group (2021-Feb 2022)
- discussion with HSCNL Core Management Team and Strategic Leadership Team (Feb-March 2022)
- approval by the Integrated Joint Board (IJB) (March 2022)

3. Vision and Mission

The Community Solutions vision is for a North Lanarkshire where:

the community and voluntary sector have greater capacity to strengthen communities, improve lives and advance equality and human rights

priority groups are helped to “live their best life” with access to person-centred, timely, effective community-based preventative and early intervention support, provided by community and voluntary organisations, complemented by timely access to public sector services

communities are stronger, more resilient and inclusive, with improved health, wellbeing and quality of life, with reduced inequality and protection of human rights

The Community Solutions Mission:

to provide strategic investment and support to the CVS, so the sector is able to work with local people and public sector colleagues to achieve its vision.

4. Approach and Values

Community Solutions values and approach underpin our mission and provide the foundation upon which the Programme is built.

4.1 Hollistic and Integrated Approach

The Community Solutions Programme takes a **holistic and integrated approach** to health, wellbeing, quality of life and equality encompassing:

- Mental and physical health and wellbeing and their connection
- The social, economic, and environmental influences on health, wellbeing, and equality and the actions needed to tackle these



4.2 Strategic Investment Approach

Community Solutions takes a strategic investment approach which prioritises the following in line with HSCNL's ambitions.

- Investment in health improvement, prevention, and early intervention activities, which reduce inequalities and protect human rights
- Investment in crisis and ongoing support, with a focus on recovery and re-enablement, self-directed support, and self-management
- Cost-effective, community-based support and services provided by CVS organisations
- Capacity building within the CVS and wider community by supporting key CVS 'anchor' organisations and volunteering to build the community infrastructure and capacity to support provision of good community-based support over time



4.3 Values

Community Solutions also takes a **value-based approach.**

4.3.1 Person-centred and empowering

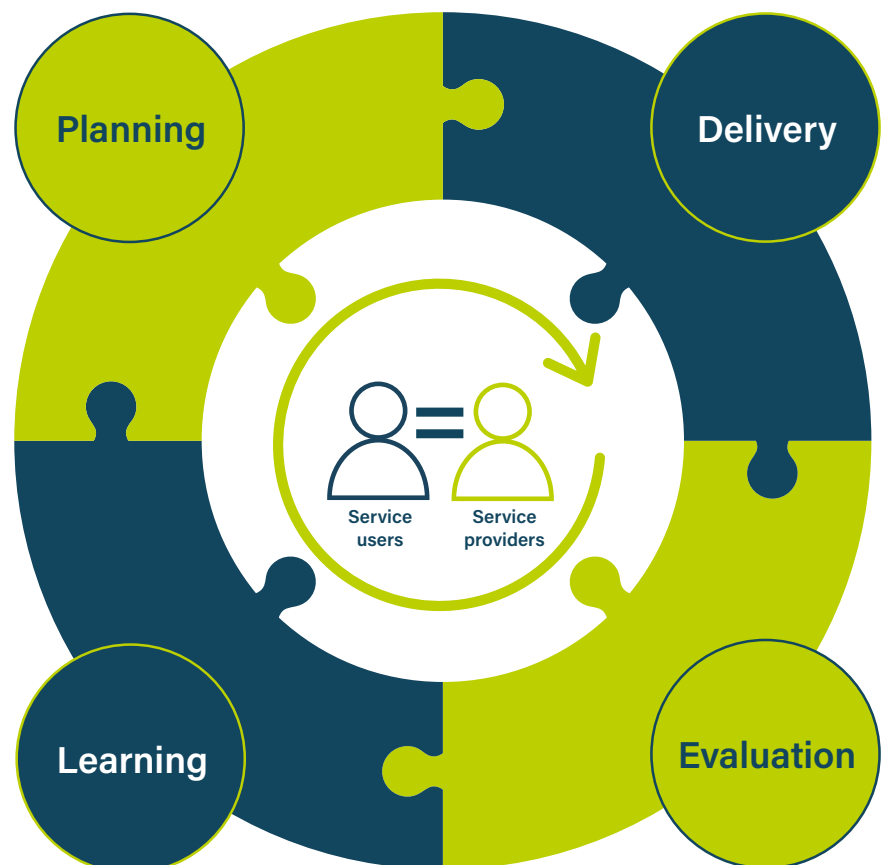
Placing the person at the centre of the service, helping them to live their best life and supporting their human rights by:



4.3.2 Collaborative working and co-production

To achieve goals and improvements where we develop equal relationships between people who use services and people who provide services – with support provided ‘with people’ rather than ‘to them.’ This means involving local people - including those receiving support - and service providers in the CVS and statutory sectors to facilitate a positive and participatory cycle of planning, delivery, evaluation, learning and continuous improvement.

This approach is informed by the **Ladder of Participation** and **National Community Engagement Standards.**



5. Priorities for Investment

5.1 Priority Groups

Community Solutions is committed to helping reduce health and related social and economic inequalities in North Lanarkshire - which are unfortunately extensive and deeply-rooted - and advance human rights. We will do this by focusing our investment on improving lives for priority groups who are experiencing one or more types of inequality.

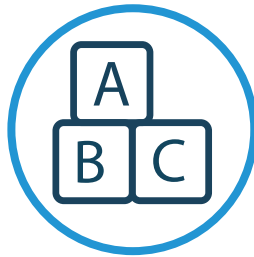
These groups are:



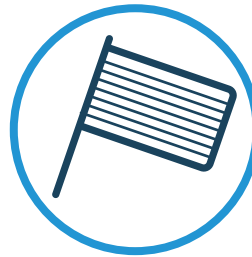
Black and minority ethnic groups



Carers



Children, Young People and Families



LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian; Gay; Bi-sexual; Transgender; Intersex; Queer; Asexual)



Older adults



People affected by addiction



People affected by cancer



People who are frail



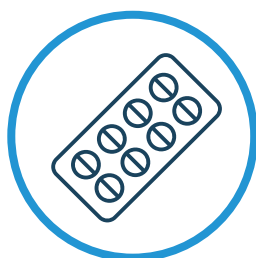
People on low incomes



People with physical disabilities



People with learning difficulties and/or neurodiversity



People with long term conditions



People with mental health challenges, including trauma

5.2 Support for Priority Groups

Community Solutions will invest in the following community capacity and supports for our priority groups to help improve people's lives, reduce inequality, and support their human rights.

- Enabling healthy living, wellbeing, and recovery by supporting:
 - creative activities
 - complementary therapies
 - good sleep
 - green wellbeing through access to green space and connection to nature
 - healthy eating
 - physical activity
 - smoke-free living and avoiding harm from other substance misuse
- Enabling positive relationships and social connections through befriending; family support; volunteering; and digital inclusion
- Increasing mobility and access to services through active travel, community transport and digital inclusion
- Providing home and community-based support to enable timely and effective discharge from hospital
- Enabling empowerment, recovery, and resilience through:
 - assisted self-management
 - peer-support and collective advocacy (with individual advocacy funded directly by HSCNL)
 - self-directed support

5.3 Building CVS and Wider Health and Social Care System Capacity

As well as facilitating allocation of funding to enable CVS organisations to deliver support to priority groups, the Community Solutions programme is supported by VANL staff to assist the CVS to increase capacity and impact by:

- Providing information and guidance to help organisations secure additional and future funding
- Providing guidance on key issues such as governance; planning; finance and evaluation
- Facilitating access to free or low-cost learning opportunities for staff and volunteers
- Providing volunteering guidance, including support for Volunteer-Friendly accreditation
- Facilitating information sharing and peer support; collaborative working; learning and improvement

The Community Solutions programme also supports improvements within the wider health and social care system including:

- Development and facilitation of the "first point of contact," "three conversations" and "social prescribing" approaches to help people express their needs; feel empowered; and access community supports and services as quickly as possible
- Supporting digital inclusion to enhance public access to health and social care information and services

6. Investment Approach

The Community Solutions Programme takes the following mixed investment approach to maximise impact and outcomes for local people.

6.1 Open commissioning

With any eligible CVS organisation able to apply Funding streams are allocated a budget to provide funding awards for 1-3 years, with annual review.

Examples include:

- Carers' Breather Fund – North Lanarkshire Council funding via VANL
- Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund - Scottish Government funding via VANL
- Children and Young People Mental Health and Wellbeing – North Lanarkshire Council funding, linked to North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership via VANL
- Prevention and Early Intervention Fund - HSCNL funding via VANL



6.2 Targeted investment

Restricted selected CVS organisations and structures, including:

6.2.1 Locality Community Solutions Hosts:

Recurrent, annual funding awarded to six CVS organisations in HSCNL localities through a targeted, competitive process to support:

- community engagement in HSC issues generally and Community Solutions programme, with links to Community Planning
- the six locality Community Solutions “Consortia” involving CVS and public sector staff to enable them to identify local needs and priorities; develop and agree a Locality Development Plan; agree funding for local projects and activities using their Community Solutions Local Activity Fund

6.2.2 Locality Activity Funds (LAF)

This fund is allocated to each locality, with small grants awarded to local projects and activities as agreed by each consortia in line with their priorities as set out in their Locality Development Plan.

6.2.3 NL Wide Projects

Funding for various NL-wide projects including:

- North Lanarkshire Carers’ Network: direct award to Carers’ Together from April 2022 for three years
- Community Support for Hospital Discharge: direct commission from the Getting Better Together Healthy Living Project based in Shotts – from October 2021 for three years

6.2.4 NL Wide Projects

Direct funding award to Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire for programme management and delivery support and capacity building as set out in section 1.3.



7. Evaluating Impact

The Community Solutions programme is committed to evaluating the impact of our investment on:

- people receiving support - with a focus on two main outcomes of improving health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities supported by relevant measures
- funded CVS organisations – reach and impact
- the programme as a whole

The programme develops appropriate performance and outcomes measures to support evaluation and reporting of reach and impact for each of the three levels above, which are reviewed and updated as required.

Funded projects are provided with guidance to enable them to capture, assess and report on outcomes for individuals receiving support and overall project impact, learning and improvements.

Programme staff capture and report on performance measures for the programme and wider CVS and health and social care system.

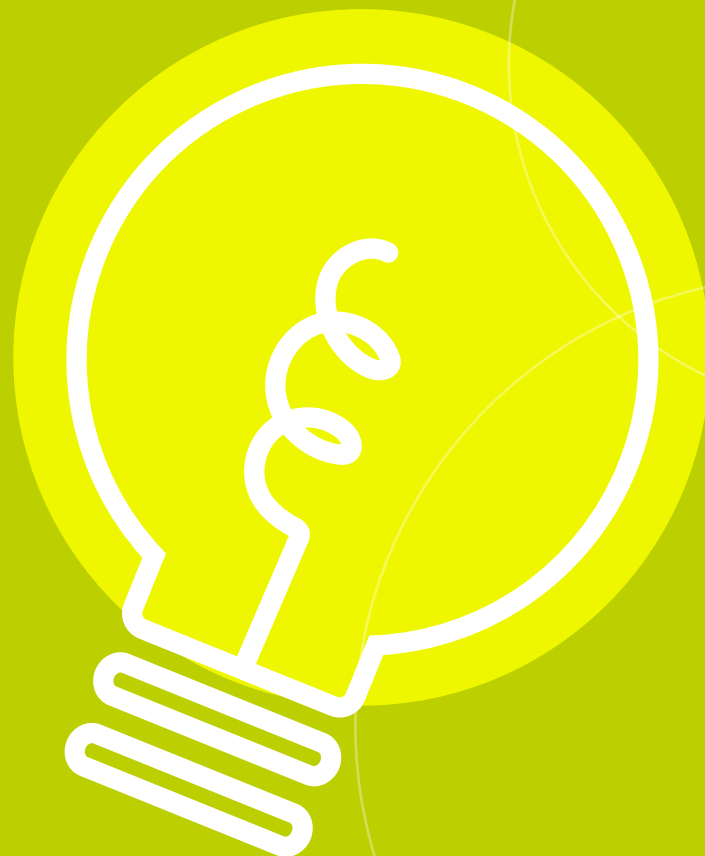
The following information about Community Solutions impact and learning will be available online from autumn 2022 on a new Community Solutions website

- information about each funded project, including activities, reach and outcomes
- personal stories of people supported by funded projects
- an annual Programme Impact and Learning Report

8. Supporting Learning and Continuous Improvement

The programme supports learning and continuous improvement within funded projects, the programme and more widely by:

- publishing and actively sharing:
 - an annual Impact and Learning Report for the Programme as a whole
 - summary information about each funded project, including their activities and impact and anonymized personal stories of people receiving support
 - selected in-depth case studies for priority groups and areas of support
- convening and facilitating learning and improvement events on key issues, informed by above information.
- using evidence and learning to facilitate improvements within funded projects; the programme as a whole; the wider CVS; HSC more widely.



Appendix One: Background & Context

1. North Lanarkshire and its people

NL is the fourth largest council area in Scotland with over 340,000 people. People aged 16-64 are currently the largest age group in North Lanarkshire, however projections show that in the coming years the proportion of over 75's will rise by as much as 20%.

1.1 Strengths

- North Lanarkshire is a key strategic location in central Scotland with affordable housing and good employment opportunities in all sectors.
- North Lanarkshire's communities of place and interest are diverse, with a wide range of different groups and over 50 languages spoken.
- Our people have many skills and contribute a great deal to their local community and North Lanarkshire as a whole through paid work, volunteering, and caring roles.
- North Lanarkshire has a vibrant and growing business sector which provides local employment, services, and goods.
- The public sector "anchor" organisations serving North Lanarkshire – North Lanarkshire Council, NHS Lanarkshire, Police Lanarkshire and Fire and Rescue Lanarkshire public services, are major employers.
- Our Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) is rich and diverse and provides a wide range of support and services to local people.
- Our statutory and community and voluntary organisations work together and with local communities to improve quality of life, wellbeing, and equality for residents, whilst managing COVID and climate emergency challenges.

- We have many excellent public and community and voluntary sector services and support, despite ongoing financial and COVID 19 pressures. These include:
 - school, further and community education
 - social housing
 - health and social care
 - money and welfare benefits assistance
 - employability support
 - digital inclusion support
 - healthy living support on issues such as nutrition, physical activity, and mental health.

1.2 Challenges

Many people in North Lanarkshire experience significant challenges which have increased due to the COVID pandemic, Brexit and the climate emergency. The nine **North Lanarkshire Community Board profiles** for 2021 show that:

- 15% of residents are income-deprived compared to a Scottish average of 12%
- unemployment rates are 5.7% compared to a Scottish average of 4.6%
- 19% of P4-P7 children receive school meals compared to the Scottish average of 17%.
- 8% of people aged over 65 receive attendance allowance helping them to manage their daily care needs, whereas the Scottish average is 14%
- 22% of older people receive pension credit as a top-up to their income: the Scottish average is 14%
- Number of people with long term conditions/disability – NL v Scotland
- Life expectancy for males in NL is 74.5, compared to the national average of 77. For females it is 79.2 in NL, compared to the national average of 81.

2. Local Plans and Strategies

The Community Solutions Strategy and Investment Plan supports delivery of the Plan for North Lanarkshire - our Community Plan - and its nine Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs) as well as the Health and Social Care Strategic Commissioning Plan.

2.1 Plan for North Lanarkshire and LOIPs

This plan supports the delivery of:

- the following four key themes within the Plan for NL:
 - support all children and young people to realise their full potential.
 - improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.
 - enhance participation, capacity, and empowerment across our communities.
 - improve North Lanarkshire's resource base (by investing in CVS capacity building including growth of its paid and volunteer workforce)
- key LOIP priorities such as tackling poverty, improving mental health and supporting digital inclusion

2.2 Health and Social Care Strategic Commissioning Plan

The HSCNL Strategic Commissioning Plan supports delivery of the ambitions of the Plan for North Lanarkshire and is the "parent" strategy for the Community Solutions programme. This plan will support progress of HSCNL's six ambitions:

- do the right thing first time
- provide a range of services to support people to live well in connected communities
- focus on what matters to people
- be at the forefront of technical and sustainable solutions
- promote prevention and early intervention
- ensure North Lanarkshire is the best place to volunteer, work and care

The Community Solutions Strategy and Investment Plan also supports progress on a range of other key North Lanarkshire Strategies and Plans, which are linked to the Plan for North Lanarkshire and HSCNL Strategic Commissioning Plan and include;

- **Action on Climate Together North Lanarkshire - Action Plan**
- **Alcohol and Drug Strategy**
- **Children's Services Plan**
- **Community and Voluntary Sector Strategy**
- **Lanarkshire Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy**
- **Lanarkshire Healthy Weight Strategy**
- **Sport and Physical Activity Strategic Framework**
- **A Smoke Free Lanarkshire: For You, For Children, Forever**
- **Strategy for Adult Carers and Young Carers**
- **Volunteering Strategy (forthcoming June 2022)**
- **Tackling Poverty Strategy**

3. Context: National Priorities

All North Lanarkshire's local plans and strategies listed above, and this Community Solutions Strategy and Investment Plan, support progress on key Scottish Government's priorities.

3.1 Scottish Government Health and Wellbeing Outcomes

- People can look after and improve their own health and wellbeing and live in good health for longer
- People, including those with disabilities or long-term conditions, or who are frail, can live, as far as reasonably practicable, independently and at home or in a homely setting in their community
- People who use health and social care services have positive experiences of those services, and have their dignity respected
- Health and social care services are centred on helping to maintain or improve the quality of life of people who use those services
- Health and social care services contribute to reducing health inequalities
- People who provide unpaid care are supported to look after their own health and wellbeing, including to reduce any negative impact of their caring role on their own health and well-being
- People who use health and social care services are safe from harm
 - People who work in health and social care services feel engaged with the work they do and are supported to continuously improve the information, support, care and treatment they provide
 - Resources are used effectively and efficiently in the provision of health and social care services

3.2 Public Health Priorities for Scotland

All partners in the Community Solutions programme support the vision of "a Scotland where we..."

- live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities
- flourish in our early years
- have good mental wellbeing
- reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
- where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all
- eat well
- have a healthy weight and are physically active

3.3 Getting it Right for Every Child wellbeing outcomes

The national "Getting it Right for Every Child" (GIRFEC) approach eight wellbeing outcomes for every child:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Achieving
- Nurtured
- Active
- Responsible
- Respected
- Included

Appendix Two:

Summary of Stakeholder Feedback

This Strategy was developed consultatively with stakeholders supported by various engagement activities during 2021-22, including:

- a stakeholder survey
- stakeholder focus groups
- discussion in key fora, including the Community Solutions Governance Sub-group; North Lanarkshire Community and Voluntary Sector Strategic Investment Working Group; Partnership for Change; North Lanarkshire Carers' Network

Key feedback from stakeholders is summarised below.

1. Continue to invest strategically in CVS to build the sector's capacity and sustainability so it is able to provide effective community-based support and services to improve local people's health, wellbeing, quality of life and equality with a focus on prevention, early intervention and recovery approaches such as:

- befriending and other social support
- digital inclusion support
- healthy living support
- money and welfare support
- "Three Conversations" and "social prescribing" approaches
- self-directed support in social care
- assisted self-management of conditions

2. Strengthen the CVS paid workforce and volunteering.

3. Strengthen links and synergy between the Community Solutions Programme and Community Planning both North Lanarkshire-wide and locality levels through the six Community Solutions consortia and nine Community Boards.

4. Continue to support unpaid carers; children and families; disabled people; and older adults; and also strengthen engagement with and support for other equality groups including:

- black and minority ethnic groups
- LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Intersex; Queer, Asexual)
- people with learning difficulties/neuro-diverse
- young people

5. Strengthen CVS support for mental health and wellbeing and assess their contribution more effectively – including:

- promotion of mental wellbeing
- suicide prevention
- challenging stigma
- support and recovery for people affected by trauma

6. Improve access to befriending support (map current provision and access to identify and address gaps)

7. Strengthen links and complementary investment between CS and Alcohol and Drug Partnership

8. Support CS-funded CVS organisations reduce their carbon emissions

9. Strengthen evaluation and learning from the programme to support ongoing service improvements, inform future investment decisions and contribute to wider "systems" change