



CVS

North Herts & Stevenage

Together we are stronger.

Throughout the area, community groups and volunteers do extraordinary work every day. You support people when life is difficult, create spaces where others feel welcome, and step in where help is needed most. Quite simply, without you, many parts of our community would not function as they do. Without you, where would we be?

We recognise that this work is demanding, often unseen, and increasingly carried out under pressure. Alongside growing need in our communities, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector is facing a general lack of funding, increasing overheads, fewer volunteers and growing expectations.

Add to this the lasting effects of austerity, the pandemic and the cost of living crisis, and now, on the horizon, Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), and it is clear that the sector is once again being asked to stretch further with less support.

Taken together, these pressures create something of a perfect storm.

Some people will say that the sector has been through difficult times before. That's true. But this moment feels different, with several major changes happening at the same time.

LGR will matter for local groups. Within the next two years, neither Hertfordshire County Council nor Stevenage Borough Council will exist as they do now. Hertfordshire County Council will close, and Stevenage Borough Council will join with other areas to form a new unitary council, covering a wider area and taking on more responsibilities. As a result, priorities, funding routes, relationships and decision-making will change.

At the same time, changes to how the NHS is structured and funded, including the move to a new Integrated Care Board, will affect how services are commissioned. Some services will go. Others will emerge, shaping how the VCFSE sector is expected to engage.

North Herts & Stevenage CVS is here to stand alongside VCFSE groups in Stevenage when things feel uncertain. Not as an extra layer of work, but as practical support when the ground beneath you feels less stable.

Here is what that support looks like in practice:

- **Governance and compliance**

Helping make sure your policies, safeguarding (including DBS checks), trustee responsibilities and legal duties are clear, proportionate and manageable.

- **Funding and sustainability**

Supporting you to understand where funding might come from, how to apply, how to report, and how to plan beyond the next short-term grant.

- **Capacity and problem-solving**

Offering a space to think things through when you feel stuck, overstretched or faced with difficult decisions.

- **Navigation and translation**

Explaining what changes like LGR actually mean for your organisation, without jargon or alarm.

- **Connection, networking and voice**

Bringing local VCFSE organisations together through established peer networks, including a CEO's Network and a Volunteer Managers Network. Initiatives and events come online regularly, alongside opportunities for training, learning and skills development.

- **Volunteer recruitment**

Our www.GoVolHerts.org.uk portal is the leading volunteer recruitment platform in Hertfordshire. More people volunteer through this service than any other.

At its heart, this support is about making things simpler, not more complicated. It is about reducing pressure, risk and duplication, so your time and energy can stay focused on people, places and community.

As the system changes, we will have a route through to the top table at the new unitary council and the new Integrated Care Board. Through that, we will amplify your voice, and the shared voice of the VCFSE sector.

You do not have to face this next phase alone.

Together, we make the difference.

Enquire today about how North Herts & Stevenage CVS might be able to help you.

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