

Part of the Stronger Communities Programme funded by Devon County Council

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Voluntary Voice

This project is part of a series developed by the Devon Consortium of Infrastructure organisations to support the Voluntary and Community Sector in Devon.



The project aims to improve the skills and capacity of the voluntary and community sector to contribute to strategic partnerships across Devon and to develop simple but useful representative processes and procedures. We hope to ensure that local people and voluntary and community organisations have a greater awareness of, and more access to, their representatives



dacvs :: local focus :: county voice
strengthening local voluntary and community action in Devon



Representation

Why Get Involved?

Why do we need representatives?

Not everybody who has a stake in decisions can be present at meetings about these decisions. A representative can share the views of those who cannot be present and give a stronger voice for the VCS.

When we talk about 'representing the voluntary sector' we mean:

- Gathering the views of the sector
- Taking the sector's diverse views to strategic or decision making forums
- Feeding any comments or results back to the sector
- Returning any reactions from the sector back to the forums.

We want the process to be on-going, transparent and democratic.

What is Representation?

Representation is when you stand in for people or groups and speak on their behalf;

It is when you act as an official delegate or spokes-person, rather than a representative of your own organisation.

Where do we need representatives?

Potentially, the VCS may be represented at any meeting or committee where plans are made or decisions taken, though this varies from area to area. They can be at local or County level. Representation has often taken place on Children's Trust Boards, Local Strategic Partnerships and their sub-groups, neighbourhood forums and commissioning groups, among others.

Why is it important that the VCS are represented on these bodies?

If VCS organisations want to ensure that the interests of their service users are considered and the unique value of the services they provide is included and funded, they must have a voice in the process of deciding on local priorities and strategies.

How are representatives chosen?

There are different processes for district and county level representation roles. Some roles are elected through processes delivered by the Devon Consortium and others are elected by local groups and forums.

Representatives will be given training and support.

What difference does it make?

As a representative you will be in a position to

- Influence change for the people of Devon/your local community
- Help others understand the role played by the Voluntary and Community Sector
- Build relationships with senior managers in local authorities and statutory partners such as Devon County Council and the NHS
- Promote joint working between local groups and statutory agencies.
- Help support sustainable communities
- Help identify gaps and support solutions

Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information about becoming a representative or finding out more about who your local representatives are and what they do, then please contact the project by phone or email (see details on the back page).