



what we do

Our vision is a healthier, fairer Scotland served by a thriving voluntary health sector.

Collaboration and networking

Leadership and influence

Promotion and advocacy

Knowledge into action

We work with our members and others to address health inequalities and to help people and communities live healthier and fairer lives.

since April 2017 we have

1. Organised 7 Health Inequalities Cross Party Group meetings
2. Held 3 major conferences: on public health, mental health, and volunteering
3. Engaged with 1400 e-bulletin subscribers and 3000 social media followers
4. Responded formally to 8 policy consultations
5. Contributed to 12 advisory boards, collaboratives and working groups
6. Launched guidance on third sector volunteering in NHS settings
7. Published research into third sector approaches to community link working
8. Brought together 1530 people at events
9. Generated collaboration and learning through our Health Policy Officers Network
10. Published 12 key message reports and policy briefings

our members

VHS has the support of a membership of 415 organisations and individuals from across the voluntary health sector.

Members say they value VHS's work on these key topics



Members say they are part of VHS for these reasons

- Want to develop solutions to Scotland's health challenges
- Are inspired by new learning, ideas and connections
- Want to be part of a powerful network
- Need a platform for their voice to be heard
- Thrive on collaboration
- For policy support

Members express a growing interest in health literacy; culture, health and wellbeing; public health reform; obesity, nutrition and food insecurity; our built and green environment.

Feedback from members helps shape VHS's future priorities

- Health inequalities and the need to stop tinkering at the edges of it and instead start tackling the difficult, long-term root causes
- One clear integrated vision for health and clarity between stakeholders led by voices of lived experience would make a world of difference
- Getting NHS on board with messages and approaches around prevention rather than the crisis focus
- Mental health is perhaps the greatest inequality in social understanding and statutory resourcing
- Access to and knowledge of health services by ethnic minorities
- Empowerment, community ownership and public health implications



our impact

7 headline stories about our work since April 2017

Loneliness and Social Isolation

Working with our members, we demonstrated leadership in addressing the health implications of loneliness social isolation.

- Engaged voluntary health organisations through a round table, briefings, social media and blogs
- Advocated for the Scottish Public Health Network (ScotPHN) to look at the scope for public health action on loneliness
- Advised NHS Ayrshire and Arran in its development of a health and social care partnership approach to the issues
- Gave the opening speech at the Scottish Government's 2017 National Stakeholder Event on *Developing a National Social Isolation and Loneliness Strategy*
- Worked with Glasgow Caledonian University to develop a suite of social marketing strategies on loneliness and health
- Briefed MSPs ahead of the January 2018 Parliamentary Debate on building a connected Scotland together
- Responded formally to the Scottish Government consultation on *A Connected Scotland*
- Met with Minister for Social Security Jeane Freeman MSP (now Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport), at her invitation, to discuss the strategy
- Conducted primary research into the loneliness and social isolation experienced by under-represented demographic groups, including BME women
- Collaborated with the Open University and Support in Mind Scotland on mental health, with a successful 2018 conference *Tomorrow's World Today: New Frontiers in Mental Health*.

Cross Party Group on Health Inequalities

VHS continued in its role as the very active Secretariat of the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Health Inequalities.

- Grew the membership to 60 external organisations and 11 MSPs, each meeting attracting 40 to 50 attendees
- Focused meetings on the underlying causes of health inequalities and on those groups for whom health inequalities are greatest
- Explored wide ranging topics including prisoner health care, health and social care standards, fuel poverty
- Showcased the CPG's work at our first Parliamentary reception, hosted by Clare Haughey MSP (now Minister for Mental Health).

Clear Pathway

Our collaborative *Clear Pathway* project resulted in guidance for health boards on the management of volunteers in NHS settings who are not directly recruited, managed or trained by health boards.

- Encouraged more strategic engagement, collaboration and shared learning between NHS and third sector organisations
- Focused on supporting health boards to manage the risks and opportunities associated with third sector volunteering
- Organised a successful cross-sectoral conference: *Volunteering, the Golden Thread in Health*
- Co-produced and published formal guidance in 2018 and ensured every health board Chair and CEO received a copy direct from the Scottish Government.

Health Policy Officers Network

In partnership with Queen's Nursing Institute Scotland, VHS provided the leadership and coordination for this dynamic network, supporting policy officers at the start of their careers or working for a small health charity.

- Welcomed 47 individual members from 40 voluntary health organisations to the network
- Developed members' skills, knowledge and confidence so as to maximise their organisations' policy effectiveness
- Received positive feedback from members: "The network provides a wonderful opportunity to get together in a supportive environment to discuss different health policy areas. The best bit is that there are no stupid questions".

Obesity, Diet and Food Insecurity

Our focus on obesity as a health inequalities issue grew in anticipation of the Scottish Government's *A Healthier Future: Scotland's Diet and Healthy Weight Delivery Plan*

- Chaired events for the Scottish Government, submitted a formal response to the draft action plan and published briefing papers
- Organised *A Weighty Issue* workshop in 2018, designed to support collaboration and learning across the third sector.

Health and Social Care

Working with the Third Sector Health and Social Care Collaborative we called for more progress in health and social care integration.

- Organised two round tables to enable Audit Scotland to engage with the third sector as part of its review of integration
- Joined forces with The Alliance, CCPS and SCVO to deliver a Digital Health and Care Strategy event for the third sector.

Public Health

It has been our job to ensure that our sector is as fully embedded as possible in national plans for the future of public health.

- Engaged voluntary health organisations in the development of the national public health priorities during 2017/18
- Debated prevention, public health and health and social care delivery at our 2017 Annual Conference *Get Real: Real People, Real Communities, Real Health*
- Played an active role on the Public Health Oversight Board, Protecting Scotland's Health Commission and Scottish Public Health Network Advisory Board
- Helped populate the various Public Health Commissions and Public Health Reform working groups with third sector voices during 2018
- Facilitated Scottish Public Health Network engagement with the third sector via a round table, resulting in three of the organisations helping to shape the new *Healthcare Needs Assessment of Gender Identity Services* for health boards.

looking to the future

looking to the future

2018/19 marks the first year of VHS's vibrant new three year strategy. This sets out the vision of a healthier, fairer Scotland served by a thriving voluntary health sector and a mission to improve people's health and wellbeing by providing an effective national network for voluntary health organisations. The strategy includes a revised set of values: excellence, collaboration and initiative, and it anchors VHS's work around the four priority health themes of health inequalities, public health, health and social care integration and mental health.

our strategic priorities

To work for sustainable improvement in public health, mental health, and health and social care services and for the prevention, mitigation and reduction of health inequalities.

To amplify the voice and influence of the voluntary health sector on health matters, and support the sector to understand and engage with health related priorities, policy and systems.

To promote the voluntary health sector's role, expertise and evidence to a wide audience, and work to make effective collaboration and partnerships on health related matters between the public and voluntary health sectors more normal and valued.

get involved we welcome new members

www.vhscotland.org.uk/get-involved

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