

John Dwyer, Cheshire PCC

Overview

The Police & Crime Commissioner for Cheshire, John Dwyer and his commitment to developing a Compact way of working with the VCS in Cheshire, to enable the sector to play a role in helping to make Cheshire safer.

Since November 2012, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire John Dwyer has committed to working with the voluntary and community sector across Cheshire. Building on “In Safe Hands”, produced by four local infrastructure Voluntary Community Sector and Voluntary Association Organisations (VCS/VA) on behalf of the Cheshire Safer Future Communities Network, the Commissioner has developed good relationships with the local sector. His leadership and commitment to the long term sustainability of the sector is demonstrated by the following:

Development of a Compact agreement between the Commissioner and the Cheshire VCS, ensuring that the local sector is enabled to play a key role.

Commissioning the VCS/VA to actively engage the local voluntary sector to provide capacity building support to help organisations respond to commissioning opportunities.

Support local communities with investment of £1,775,516 into the sector through a Crime Prevention Fund small grants scheme, supporting innovative activity at the grass-roots level, a number of Participatory Budgeting schemes across Cheshire as well as grants and contracts with local voluntary sector organisations.

The Commissioner supports the use of the Star Standard, a locally developed and specifically designed for the sector quality measure, and advocates VCS developed tools such as GRIPP to assist organisations to professionalise.

Included in contractual and grant terms are the requirements to recognise and work to increase social value, and to work with volunteers where possible, e.g. the RASASC Sexual Violence Aftercare contract, and the Commissioning team work with providers to develop outcomes monitoring enabling them to meet funding requirements.

Impact

The Compact will help to:

- Improve engagement and communication between both parties and recognise the role that the third sector can play in reaching people and communities that might not always have a voice
- Allow the third sector an opportunity to influence and shape the commissioning plans, strategies and intentions of the Commissioner
- Promote a greater understanding of the contribution that the third sector can make and to help the sector understand more about the work of the Commissioner
- Increase opportunities for the third sector to play a part in meeting the challenges that Cheshire faces
- Improve services by identifying and addressing community needs and gaps in provision
- Work together to make best use of resources and improve the effectiveness of services.

Each grant or contract awarded by the Commissioner is subject to monitoring and evaluation and key to increasing social value. The diverse range of projects show excellent outcomes as services to victims improve and crime and antisocial behaviour continues to fall across Cheshire.

The 'Change the Grange' Participatory Budget project was undertaken in a challenging area, 17% of the population involved in developing projects, which have increased community activity, improving the health and wellbeing of the residents. Data shows that there has been a reduction in crime and ASB. A further four programmes are scheduled for this year.

Investment has enabled the voluntary sector providers to develop their organisations by using quality assurance tools and a greater understanding of 'commissioning for outcomes'.

