

Annual Impact Report

2020 - 2021



Voluntary Action Rotherham

YEAR IN REVIEW

If there is one thing recent years has taught us it's to expect the unexpected. It has certainly been one of the most challenging and uncertain periods many of us have experienced. We, like everyone else, have needed to adapt, pivot and respond to rapidly changing circumstances and emerging needs.

In the last year two things have been clear.

Firstly, that in times of crisis local organisations and networks become more important and are the front line for local communities.

Secondly, that during tough times people and organisations can be resilient. We have witnessed this across the board with people stepping up and responding with community spirit and incredible generosity in caring for friends, neighbours and strangers.

The challenges of the year have seen our staff and volunteers display a great deal of flexibility

and responsiveness to changing circumstances and community needs.

Our thanks over the last year go to all VAR Staff, our Volunteers, Board members, Partners and Funders and most importantly everyone who is involved in some way or other in the Voluntary and Community Sector locally.

This report provides a very brief snap shot of the range of services and support that we provide and how we have delivered our work over the year. Please contact us, speak to VAR staff, read our Bulletins and website to find out about the full range of support we offer.

“in times of crisis local organisations and networks become more important and are the front line for local communities”



Shafiq Hussain
Chief Executive

Sarah Whittle
Chair

THIS YEAR IN NUMBERS

We distributed **£689,135** in grants

We examined and audited over **£5 million** worth of accounts

Food in Crisis Partners provided over **20,000** food parcels

We shared **1,700** items of key information

Rotherham Social Prescribing received **1,500** referrals

We now have **920** members





WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Partnership working is hugely important to Voluntary Action Rotherham. We represent the local VCS on a number of boards and committees, making sure that the voice of the voluntary sector is heard and considered in decision making; we work with our partner organisations to deliver local, community-based projects; and we encourage and facilitate partnership working with and amongst our members.

Our existing partnerships became invaluable, as we worked together with other voluntary sector organisations, as well as statutory partners, to support our communities. We worked with Rotherham Council and Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group on volunteer recruitment, food delivery and the mapping of community services.

We gave the sector a voice on partnership meetings coordinating the covid response in Rotherham, highlighting the needs and challenges faced by the sector and in communities and championing the need for resources to support with delivery.

We worked with Rotherham CCG to ensure front line staff and volunteers, working on a one to one basis with people throughout the pandemic, received the vaccination in line with health and social care colleagues.



600+

**Partnership meetings
attended**

VOLUNTEERS WEEK 2021

Rotherham Pride

2020 saw us having to do lots of things differently and without the opportunity to hold our annual volunteer walk to celebrate Rotherham's wonderful volunteers, we adapted and delivered a week long campaign aimed at thanking Rotherham volunteers and raising awareness of the support they provide.

We offered many different ways for everyone to get involved including a drawing competition for young people, a Facebook profile frame for social media people and the opportunity to appear in a video dedicated to thanking volunteers.

Groups, volunteers, partner organisations and Rotherham residents all got involved and you can view the resulting video on our YouTube channel.



“Thank you Rotherham volunteers, we couldn't do this without you!”



youtu.be/YBj3ne0k2lc



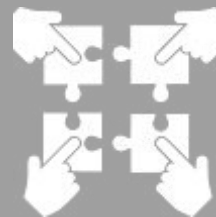
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BEFRIENDING PROVIDERS NETWORK

An important role of Voluntary Action Rotherham is to bring the voluntary and community sector together to deliver a coordinated response to local needs.

Following involvement in a number of partnership meetings, in response to the pandemic, we supported the creation of a Befriending Providers Network, bringing together groups and organisations that deliver befriending services to improve outcomes for local people who are lonely and isolated.

The members of the network offer support to individuals and families across Rotherham and the monthly meetings provide the members with a platform to share ideas, network and work together.



7

**Organisations
working together**

FOOD FOR PEOPLE IN CRISIS

In Rotherham, Voluntary Action Rotherham has coordinated the Food for People in Crisis Partnership since 2011, bringing emergency food providers together to co-ordinate and strengthen provision across the borough.

Lockdowns and reductions in income saw an increase in food insecurity and community food members saw a 447% increase in the number of food parcels given.

We supported the partnership throughout by coordinating the partnership, supporting fundraising activity and administration of the Covid Winter Grant to enable groups to provide Christmas food hampers to families.



“Thank you so much for the food that you sent us we really appreciate it all mummy was crying she was so happy because now she doesn’t have to worry about food”



330

Christmas food hampers delivered

TIMELINE OF EVENTS 2020 - 2021



April 2020

Rotherham Gismo becomes the directory for Covid support in Rotherham



July 2020

Building refurbishment at The Spectrum after flood damage is completed



June 2020

Rotherham Volunteers Week goes digital



August 2020

Our An Audience with... sessions go online



September 2020

We launch the LA Emergency Assistance Grant for food and essential supplies



December 2020

We launch the 'Putting Rotherhams VCS in the spotlight' video



February 2021

We published Health Inequalities in Social Prescribing report



October 2020

We join the National VCSE Partnership supporting the local VCS to have a voice and access support



January 2021

We support frontline VCS staff and volunteers to access the Covid vaccine



TIMELINE OF EVENTS 2020 - 2021



JOB RETENTION SCHEME

Throughout the year, the payroll bureau has supported clients through the pandemic by offering tailored support with furlough and implementing the coronavirus job retention scheme.

We supported 47% of our clients to furlough some, or all of their employees.

We supported them to calculate the amounts due, to reclaim and, where needed, assisted with the reclaiming of the furlough grants from HMRC.

Covid related illness and isolation periods were also supported. We calculated any SSP owed here too and provided the amounts reclaimable from the HMRC.

Throughout, we kept everybody up to date with the latest guidance and legislation.

47%

Supported with furlough

100%

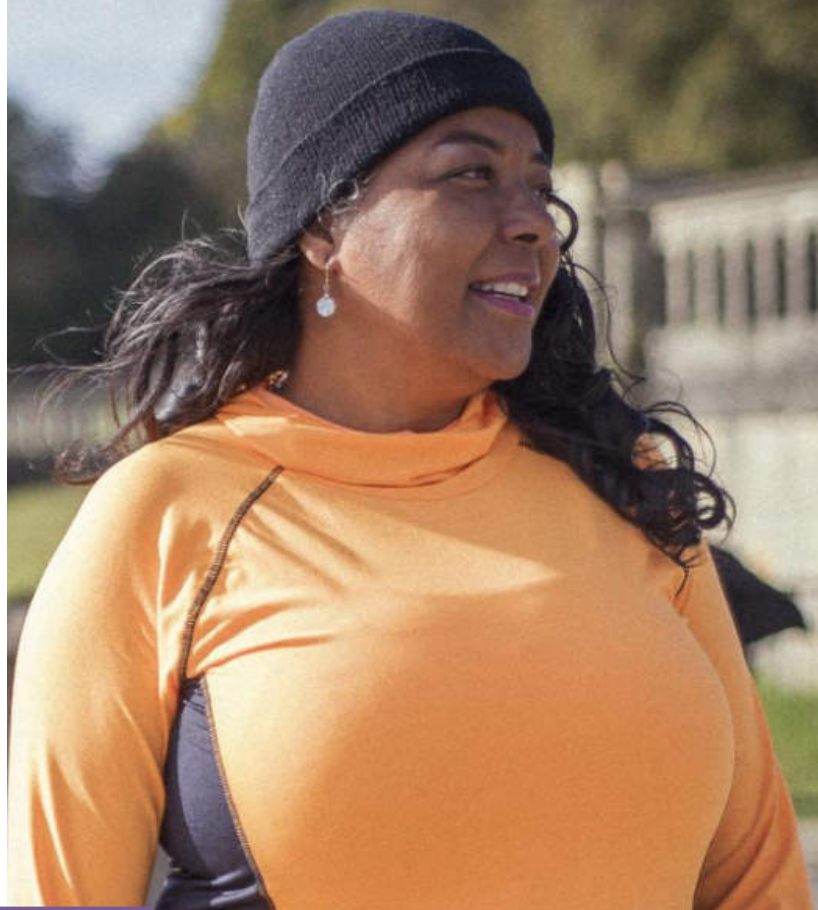
Kept up to date with legislation and guidance

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING LINK WORKERS

Voluntary Action Rotherham employs 7 Social Prescribing Link Workers on behalf of Primary Care Networks across Rotherham.

Based within GP surgeries, the Social Prescribing Link Workers continued to support Rotherham patients throughout the pandemic by maintaining contact and coordinating support and services where needed.

Even with restrictions in place the Link Workers managed to support people to secure housing, secure employment, join activities, gain financial support and access mental health and substance misuse services.



“I never would have had the confidence to apply for the job without your support”



3000

Patient referrals received

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

Shining a light on Rotherham's VCS



There's never been a more appropriate time to shine the spotlight on Rotherham's Voluntary and Community sector and highlight the great work that goes on across the borough.

Rotherham has hundreds of groups and organisations that provide a diverse range of support, advice and activities across the borough, and there are endless examples of amazing work being undertaken by the sector.

On behalf of the Rotherham Together Partnership, Voluntary Action Rotherham developed a film highlighting the impact our groups make in our communities.

“Rotherham is blessed with thousands of volunteers and hundreds of organisations who do remarkable things.”

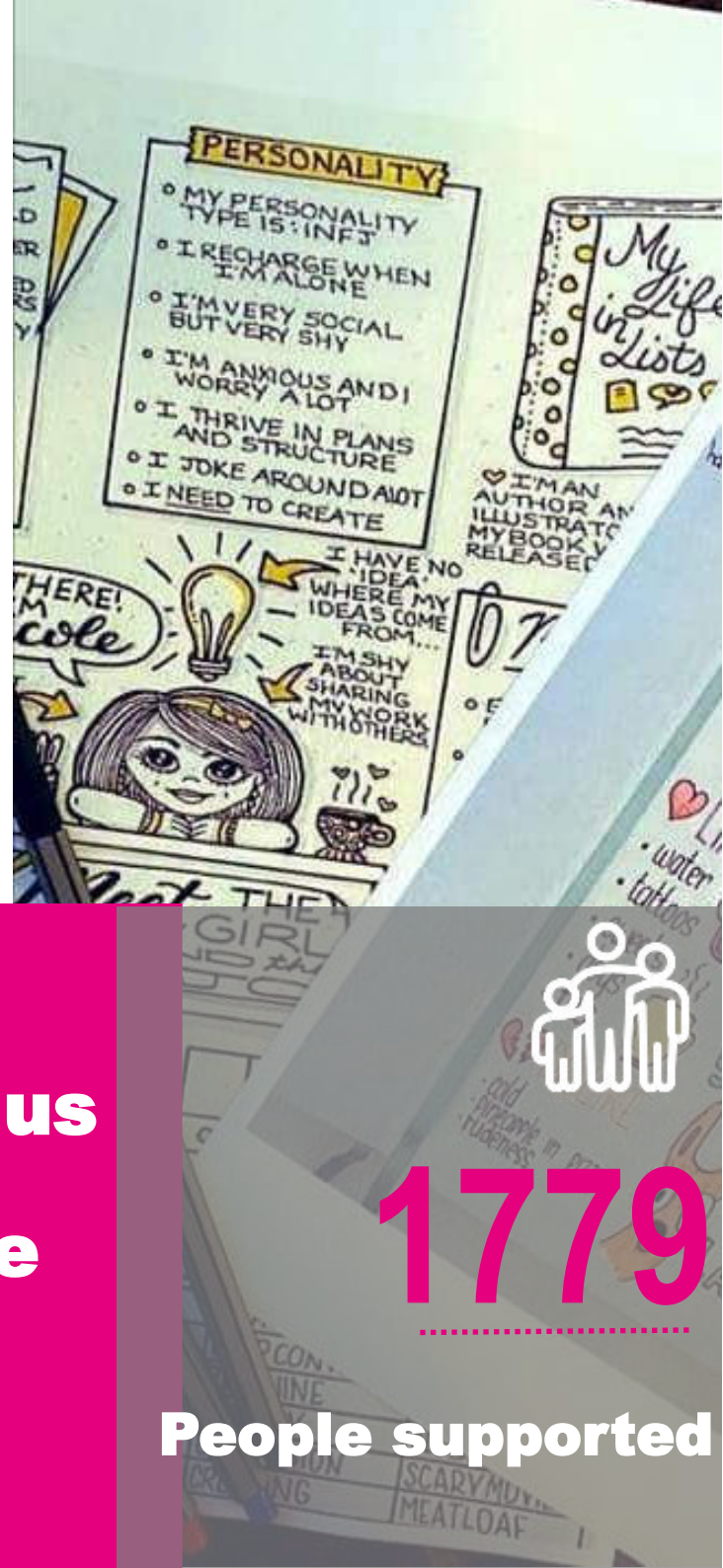


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CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

In September 2020, The Children, Young People and Families' Consortium was successful in securing £99,806 from the National Lottery Coronavirus Community Support Fund. The funding was used to deliver a 6-month project comprising 9 Consortium member organisations and aimed to enable a joined-up response to the impacts of COVID-19 on people and communities in Rotherham.

Despite encountering two national lockdowns and the challenges navigating fluctuating changes to government guidance Consortium members adapted and implemented appropriate service offers at any given time.



“These activities were a life line for us at a very difficult time when we were not able to meet with friends.”



1779

People supported



PAY IT FORWARD

During the height of the pandemic, Rotherham Pay it Forward made contact with Sheffield IT company, Affinity IT Services Ltd, to secure free PC's for registered charities in Rotherham.

As a result of lockdown and social distancing measures, charities had to quickly adapt to the changes with a more IT focused approach. The donated PCs ensured they could keep in touch with service users and were able to continue delivering their vital services.

With the help of the Pay it Forward register, managed by Voluntary Action Rotherham, nine Rotherham charities received donated PCs.



£9,000

**Saved by
Rotherham Charities**

COMMUNICATIONS

Our websites and communications became an invaluable source of information for many groups and organisations.

At a time when restrictions and guidance were constantly changing, our weekly email bulletin continued to provide the most relevant sources of information, guidance, and training.

Our online directory, Rotherham Gismo quickly adapted and became a directory of support available in Rotherham. Supporting individuals to source the food, supplies, support and activities they needed at a very difficult time.



“I just wanted to say I find the bulletins extremely helpful especially in these uncertain times.”



993

**Organisations
received the
weekly bulletin**

Voluntary Action Rotherham

Providing advice and support services to voluntary and community sector groups and organisations across Rotherham.



START UPS

We can help with setting up a group, developing a constitution and sourcing a group bank account, to developing your governing board, plus much more.



FUNDING

We can help with funding searches, advice on writing bids, offer a critical friend service and help you explore income generation options.



VOLUNTEERS

We can support with recruiting and managing volunteers, practical resources and policy templates and free volunteer management training.



EMPLOYER SUPPORT

We offer a professional, efficient and cost-effective service helping with contracts of employment, employee relations, redundancy, recruitment, payroll, plus much more.



FINANCIAL SERVICES

We offer a range of financial services, advice and information including accounts preparation, independent examinations and book keeping service.



MEETING ROOMS

We have a great range of multi-purpose meeting spaces available at competitive prices.



www.varotherham.org.uk

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