

Halton & St Helens VCA

VCA Forum

Date: Monday 10th August 2026

One Neighbourhood Programme

Michelle & Erin (St Helens Council)

Emerging priorities when insights are triangulated with data sets. The North Neighbourhood in St Helens priorities are:

1. Health Inequalities and Prevention
2. Community Voice & Co-production
3. Aging & Loneliness
4. Community Safety
5. Families & Early Help
6. Integrated Neighbourhood Working
7. Access, Navigation & Visibility of Support
8. Youth Provision & Safe Spaces of Teenagers
9. Mental Health Support for Young People
10. Transport & Connectivity
11. Safety for Women & Girls
12. Practical Hardship Support, including Foods and Cost of Living

The One Neighbourhood Programme aims to bring together council services, health partners, the VCSE sector, communities and existing local assets to deliver more joined-up support closer to where people live.

The programme is centred on prevention and early intervention. It will consider how community and voluntary sector support can help people earlier, prevent needs from escalating and reduce pressure on acute services.

The approach will be introduced across St Helens over approximately 18 months to two years. It will begin in the North Neighbourhood, with learning used to shape delivery across the remaining neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood delivery model

- There are four council-owned neighbourhood hubs, with JSNA-led, needs-based offers developed according to local demand.
- The hubs are intended to provide a starting point rather than being the only locations from which services can operate.

- Existing VCSE, health, community and sporting venues could also be used as local delivery points, particularly where residents cannot easily access the main hub.
- Existing locations include the South Community Hub at the former Chester Lane Library and the North Community Hub in Moss Bank. Space is also being developed at Earlestown Town Hall.
- Services could work flexibly from different venues or maintain a core base within a particular hub.
- Each neighbourhood will have a different model based on its communities, local assets, available data and identified needs.
- Representative community voice is vital in bringing the lived experiences of residents across different wards into the programme.
- Data from the council, health partners and the VCSE sector will be considered alongside resident insight to understand what is happening within each neighbourhood.
- The programme will consider what the data is showing, what matters to residents and how people can access the right support at the right time.
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Workstreams

There are seven workstreams supporting the development of the One Neighbourhood model:

1. Population data and insight.
2. Place and environment.
3. Workforce development.
4. Digital enablement.
5. Families First.
6. Neighbourhood health.
7. Community engagement and empowerment.

The purpose of the workstreams is to create a coordinated approach and prevent services and organisations from working in isolation.

St Helens has also been selected as a pioneer area for neighbourhood health. This work will align with the One Neighbourhood Programme.

North Neighbourhood blueprint

- The initial blueprint is being developed in the North Neighbourhood, covering Rainford, Billinge and Seneley Green, and Moss Bank.
- North will act as a test area, allowing partners to experiment with different ways of working and identify what can be applied elsewhere.
- The learning gathered will inform a shared blueprint for the remaining neighbourhoods across St Helens.
- The blueprint will become a shared plan across the council, health partners, the VCSE sector and local communities.
- Ownership, leadership and measures of success must be shared. The programme cannot be solely council-owned.

- Each neighbourhood's leadership model will need to reflect the needs and circumstances of the residents it supports.
- VCSE organisations were encouraged to consider whether their existing services could be delivered differently or expanded into the North Neighbourhood.

Emerging priorities

The following priorities were identified by triangulating resident insight with available data:

1. Health inequalities and prevention.
2. Community voice and co-production.
3. Ageing and loneliness.
4. Community safety.
5. Families and early help.
6. Integrated neighbourhood working.
7. Access, navigation and visibility of support.
8. Youth provision and safe spaces for teenagers.
9. Mental health support for young people.
10. Transport and connectivity.
11. Safety for women and girls.
12. Practical hardship support, including food and the cost of living.

Additional insight included:

- There was a mismatch between recorded community-safety data and how unsafe some residents reported feeling.
- Concerns about the safety of women and girls came through particularly strongly during engagement with girls at Rainford High School. This highlighted a gap within the available data.
- Loneliness among older people, including the continuing effects of the pandemic and lockdowns, was particularly raised in Billinge and Rainford.
- Young people valued the existing green spaces within their neighbourhoods but wanted more formal and safe places to meet.
- Transport and connectivity were especially significant for residents in Billinge.
- Practical hardship and cost-of-living pressures were particularly raised in Moss Bank.
- Residents recognised that support may already be available but often did not know what existed or how to access it.

Your Voice

Engagement approach

A Neighbourhood Voice Network was established to bring together residents and local partners and develop constructive conversations about the North Neighbourhood. Engagement included residents, local partners, housing providers, PCSOs, schools, VCSE organisations and Local Champions.

Targeted engagement also took place through Rainford High School, uniformed youth organisations, local food support services and community venues.

Open-ended questions were used deliberately to allow residents to describe what a good neighbourhood would look and feel like.

The questions included:

- What does good look like?
- What would a good neighbourhood feel like?
- Theme 1: Feeling safe and welcome.
- Theme 2: Health and wellbeing.
- Theme 3: Support and services.
- Theme 4: Places and opportunities.
- What one thing would make the biggest difference here?

A key finding was that residents were passionate about their neighbourhoods and wanted to continue being involved in shaping the programme.

Stakeholder workshops

Stakeholder workshops have commenced to gather further insight into how the programme should develop:

- Stakeholder Workshop 1: Multi-agency workshop in Rainford, including health, PCSOs, council colleagues and the VCSE sector.
- Stakeholder Workshop 2: Council officers from across different service areas.
- Stakeholder Workshop 3: VCSE organisations attending the VCA Forum.

The workshop questions included:

- What are we already doing to support this priority in North?
- What is working well at the moment?
- What is missing that would help us to deliver this priority?
- What could we do differently?
- Who should be involved?
- What collaborations would help us to deliver this priority together?

The transcript does not capture the discussions or post-it note responses from the group activity.

Question from the sector

A question was raised about whether the hubs would be purely physical and whether there was potential for virtual or VCSE-led hubs rather than using only council-owned properties.

It was confirmed that the four council-owned hubs are the initial anchor points. However, existing VCSE, health, sporting and community venues could also form part of the neighbourhood delivery model.

Introductions to New Staff

Ant Burns – Communication & Engagement Manager

The role:

- Leading the VCA's communications across Halton and St Helens.
- Promoting VCSE organisations, services, events and opportunities.
- Managing communication channels such as newsletters, social media, the website and wider campaigns.
- Helping organisations share their impact, successes and good-news stories.
- Improving how information flows between the VCA, the sector and statutory partners.
- Supporting engagement activity so that the experiences and views of VCSE organisations and communities are heard.
- Strengthening awareness and understanding of the contribution the VCSE sector makes locally.

Impact on the sector:

Ant's role helps make the sector more visible, connected and influential. Effective communication ensures organisations know about funding, training, partnership opportunities and local developments. It also provides a platform for smaller organisations to showcase their work and helps communicate the collective value of the VCSE sector to commissioners, funders and statutory partners.

Heather Hale – Programme Manager

The role:

- Overseeing and coordinating key VCA programmes and workstreams across Halton and St Helens.
- Developing clear programme plans, outcomes, reporting arrangements and measures of impact.
- Monitoring programme delivery, funding requirements, progress, risks and emerging priorities.
- Working with VCSE organisations, communities and statutory partners to support joined-up delivery.
- Bringing together evidence, data, insight and lived experience to demonstrate what is happening across the sector.
- Identifying opportunities for collaboration, improvement and the development of new approaches.
- Supporting programmes to remain aligned with local priorities while responding to the needs of communities.
- Helping translate strategic discussions into practical activity and ensuring learning is captured and shared.

Impact on the sector:

Heather's role helps ensure that programmes are coordinated, purposeful and informed by what communities and organisations are experiencing. By bringing together delivery information and sector insight, the role can demonstrate impact, identify gaps and

strengthen the sector's influence within wider systems. It also helps create stronger connections between individual organisations, the VCA and statutory partners, ensuring the VCSE sector is involved in shaping programmes rather than only being asked to deliver them.

Things To Know

Nicola Marke – Come Together Hub

- The Come Together Hub has been operating for five years and has recently secured its own space on Bickerstaffe Street.
- The service is led by people with lived experience and primarily supports people at the beginning of their recovery journey.
- Other organisations and individuals are welcome to drop in.
- Professional referrals can be made through the website or by email.
- People can also self-refer, attend with a professional or drop into groups without completing extensive paperwork.
- A fundraising event will take place on Thursday 27 August 2026 at Gamble Hall.

Jill Parry – Halton & St Helens VCA

- The Volunteer Coordinators Network has identified increasing volunteering opportunities for younger people as an area requiring further development.
- Organisations should ensure their volunteering opportunities, particularly those suitable for younger people, are listed on the volunteering portal.
- Organisations with volunteers were invited to share volunteer stories and case studies.
- Organisations were also invited to participate in a game show-style session.
- Carmel College was suggested as a possible venue.

Monica – Women's Health and Wellbeing Day

- A Women's Health and Wellbeing Day is being developed, with dates to be shared in the coming weeks.
- The event aims to introduce women to services within a familiar and trusted setting.
- This will help reduce barriers and make it easier for women to access those services later within community locations.

Tanya Butt – St Helens Carers Centre

- The Carers Centre is delivering online training for professionals this week.
- Further information about the organisation's work will be shared following the meeting.

Craig Tetlow – Proposed Mental Health Hub

- An application has been submitted to develop a mental health hub in St Helens.
- The proposal has a particular focus on neurodiversity, with neurodivergent people involved in designing the offer.
- The space could also accommodate wider mental health and wellbeing services.

- The proposal is currently with the council as a potential community asset.
- Craig is seeking relevant contacts, organisations and partners to help progress the development.

Rose Davis – International Glass Festival

- The International Glass Festival will take place at the World of Glass over the weekend.
- Heritage events and film screenings will also take place at Lucem House Community Cinema.
- A film for the Glass Art Society will be shown on Sunday 16 August 2026.
- Further information is available through the Lucem House website.

Lis Abbott– Halton & St Helens VCA

- The Funders Festival will take place on Thursday 24 September 2026 from 10:30am to 3:30pm.
- Approximately 26 stallholders are already booked.
- Funders covering both Halton and St Helens will attend, alongside some funders specifically focused on St Helens.
- Workshops will also be available during the event.

Annie Houghton– Home Start St Helens

- Home Start is currently recruiting volunteers.
- The next 40-hour volunteer training course will begin in September.
- A Sip and Paint fundraising evening will take place on Friday 2 October 2026 at Haresfinch Rugby and Community Club.
- St Helens Town will hold a race night on Saturday 19 September 2026.
- Organisations were asked to share publicity for the events and contribute raffle prizes where possible.

Lian Miller – Ways to Work

- Ways to Work is looking for community hubs and venues from which it can support participants.
- Some participants find travelling to office-based appointments difficult or expensive, so the service wants to deliver more support within communities.
- The programme supports the wider steps people may need to take before they are ready to secure employment.
- A future presentation was suggested to help partners better understand the full Ways to Work offer.

Dan Hughes – Youth Justice Team

- Young Futures is a new Home Office-funded programme focused on making communities safer and diverting young people away from the criminal justice system.
- The programme also includes a focus on the safety of girls within the community.
- The emphasis is on diversion and positive activities rather than intervention.
- Referrals can only be made by Merseyside Police and schools.

- The programme will support young people displaying concerning behaviour or who may have had early contact with the criminal justice system.
- Funding may be available for local organisations to deliver bespoke diversionary activities.
- A boxing programme has already been identified as one planned activity.
- Wider support for the young person's family may also need to be considered.

Sean O'Hare – Cup and Create

- Cup and Create will provide adults with two free hours each week to learn something new and creative.
- Activities will vary each week and may include digital art, drawing, clay projects, graphic design and filmmaking.
- Similar focused eight-week creative programmes will be available for young people aged 11 to 16.
- The Family Arts Club will be a free weekly drop-in at St Helens Library in the World of Glass.
- It will begin on Monday 7 September 2026 and run every Monday from 4:30pm to 6:30pm.
- No advance registration will be required.

Cath Sowler – Active Travel Event

- An Active Travel event will take place at the North Community Hub on Monday 17 August 2026 from 10:00am to 2:00pm.
- More organisations are being invited to participate and host stalls.
- The Wellbeing Service will lead a lunchtime walk around Carr Mill Dam.
- Organisations interested in having a stall can contact Cath, who will liaise with Mandy Brown.

Michelle Powell – St Helens Council, Engagement Lead

- A stakeholder newsletter is distributed every Friday to organisations, schools, businesses and other stakeholders across St Helens.
- The newsletter shares events, activities, sessions and good-news stories.
- It includes some council-led content but is primarily community-focused.
- Organisations can send information to Michelle for inclusion.

Lesley Barton – Live Well Directory

- Organisations were strongly encouraged to check that their information on the Live Well Directory is accurate and up to date.
- The directory is an important tool for improving access to information and supporting effective signposting.
- Lesley can provide training and guidance to staff and volunteers on how to use the directory effectively.