



DECEMBER 2023

Business Plan

What's Next for Nova?

Presented To: **Nova Board of Trustees**

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Links: Click a heading to go to that page in the document

Table of Contents

<u>Executive Summary</u>	3
<u>Our Vision</u>	4
<u>What We Currently Do</u>	5
<u>Sources of Income</u>	8
<u>Business Plan Process</u>	9
<u>Our Business Plan Priorities</u>	10
<u>Milestones</u>	14
<u>Risks</u>	15
<u>Conclusions</u>	16

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Business Plan

Aim

To set out the areas of focus for Nova over the next 3 years

It has been important for us to take the time to reflect and hear feedback from our members and stakeholders, to check and test that we are providing the support and services that moves us towards our vision, on behalf of our members.

Context

This Business Plan builds on Nova's track record of developing our member organisations, partnership working with both the VCSE and statutory sectors, supporting the Third Sector Strategy and Third Sector Framework, and being able to offer support and services that meet local needs.

This Business Plan recognises that life has changed and is changing for local people and local organisations. In particular, as a result of the pandemic, we are seeing changes in ways of working, the changing nature of volunteering and the impact of cost of living pressures that all organisations and local people are facing. We need to both respond to these changes and to plan ahead.

Through discussions with members and stakeholders, we have heard that there are areas of our work that we need to continue to develop and we have heard that there are some areas we need to change or to support differently going forwards.

This Business Plan will help to steer where and how we work as an organisation, and what we need in terms of current and future resources to be able to deliver this Business Plan and support our members over the next 3 years.

We have taken a collaborative approach to the development of this Business Plan and we would like to **thank all the members and stakeholders** who have taken the time to provide feedback, ideas, and enthusiasm in shaping "**What's Next for Nova**".

Nova is the local infrastructure charity for Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations in Wakefield District, a rapidly growing district with 1,200 VCSE organisations.

Wakefield is the 54th most deprived district in England out of 317, with 17.7% of the district's population living in neighbourhoods amongst the top 10% most deprived in England. Therefore, the VCSE sector plays a vital role in supporting the health and wellbeing of local people, working in partnership to develop and offer the best solutions to meet community needs.

In 2021, we spent time developing our vision, purpose, and values so that we could be clear about what we wanted to do, how we wanted to do this, and where we could have the greatest impact.

Our vision is to support the VCSE sector and our members so that we can build and sustain:

A VIBRANT VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY & SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SECTOR IN OUR DISTRICT

Our Values

Justice & Fairness
Support & Trust
Creativity & Innovation
Perseverance & Passion

Our Purpose

To enhance the effectiveness & sustainability of our members

Our vision is put into practice through three strategic aims and this Business Plan provides further details on **what**, **when** and **how** we will work towards these strategic aims over the next 3 years.

Our Strategic Aims

1

Supporting VCSE organisations to develop

2

Providing a voice for the VCSE sector and influencing local policies and practices

3

Securing resources for the VCSE Sector

What We Currently Do

During the past few years, Nova's role as a key infrastructure organisation for the VCSE sector has been recognised and grown. We developed and supported services in response to the impact of the Covid-19 virus across the district alongside continuing to provide advice and support to our members. The Nova Team and Trustees also had considerable success with the development of new and creative partnership arrangements with local statutory organisations during this time.

The areas below highlight our current support and services:

1. Supporting VCSE organisations to develop

Having responsive and accessible infrastructure support is essential to the development of VCSE organisations. Our support for members includes:

- **Universal**, such as monthly newsletters and exclusive resources
- **Specialist**, such as a wide range of learning and development workshops
- **Enhanced**, intensive support around growth, enterprise, and any issues the organisation is facing

We are committed to ensuring we address inequalities in provision across Wakefield District by supporting the distribution of services and finding the most effective and useful ways to support our members.



What We Currently Do

2. Providing an important voice for the sector, increasing influence and giving appropriate representation

It is key that the VCSE sector is at the heart of governance and decision making arrangements, working in collaboration and promoting diversity.

We do this through VCSE Voices, our new project that sees members of our sector attend strategic, decision making meetings across the district. This provides an opportunity for our sector to influence policy and take part in cross-sector discussions to improve services so that they meet the needs of local people. Therefore, Nova recruits and supports VCSE Advocates.

VCSE Advocates champion the sector, providing knowledge and insight about the needs of VCSE groups and the diverse communities they serve. Advocates share information from and to the sector, facilitated by monthly VCSE Voices Network meetings – a peer discussion space open to all colleagues from the sector.

3. Securing resources for the VCSE sector

We coordinate various funding opportunities for our members.

Grant funding

We administer a number of grants funds to financially support the work of local VCSE organisations.

The Third Sector Framework

The Framework is a fair, open and transparent way of distributing funding to the VCSE sector and engage the sector in the codesign, coproduction and codelivery of services. This is a partnership approach between Wakefield Council, Wakefield District Health & Care Partnership, Young Lives Consortium and Nova. We've been instrumental in the facilitation of the Framework and continue to administer it, enabling access to funding for more organisations.

Wakefield District Funders Forum

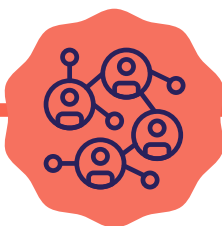
The Funders Forum is a strategic group that brings together local and national funders, and more recently local commissioners. It has proved valuable in encouraging grant makers to consider funding opportunities across Wakefield District.

What We Currently Do

4. Highlights from Our Year 2022/2023



We distributed
£680,386
to 72 VCSE
organisations
through contracts
& grants

1

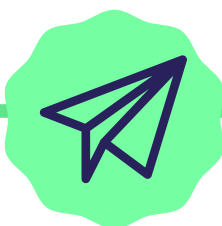
We welcomed
54 new members,
bringing us to
468 members!

2

Our team
supported 333
VCSE groups & organisations

3

We held
17 workshops
to help 163
members and
partners to learn
& develop

4

We shared info &
videos on our
social media that
received over
75,000
impressions

5

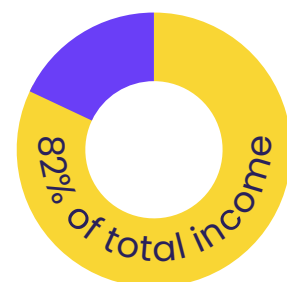
We launched
our brand
new website,
viewed over
23,000 times

6

Sources of Income

The main sources of income for Nova are through contracts and grants with **nearly 100% of all income being time limited and short term in its nature.**

Nova received a core grant from Wakefield District Council and West Yorkshire ICB of £244,820, representing 18% of our total income in 2022/23. This grant is discretionary and has always been subject to annual agreement. We have recently moved to a three year agreement following successful discussions, giving us greater security and improving our ability to plan to meet our objectives.



The remaining 82% of our income comes through **contracts and grants** that Nova bids for. Most of these contracts concluded before March 2023, with only one contract extending to December 2023.

This uncertain financial environment requires us to continually source and apply for new income streams which means we **must be responsive** to both the national and local economy and have the ability and skills to respond quickly to funding opportunities. This presents us with constant challenges to be able to plan ahead and invest in the future of the VCSE sector.

We are actively working towards securing more **diverse, secure and longer term funding arrangements.** We are keen to become more enterprising so we can maximise our ability to support the VCSE sector. We want to further promote enterprise within the VCSE sector, supporting organisational resilience and a move towards sustainability.

Some of our key strengths are being able to support members with the delivery of contracts through our governance, secure funds from wider sources, and follow up funding to support sustainability within the sector.



Business Plan Process

This Business Plan has been developed collaboratively with both member organisations and stakeholders from across Wakefield District, and we invited their comments, thoughts, and suggestions in the following ways.



The results and feedback from this engagement process have informed our priorities for this Business Plan, captured in the next section.

Alongside the engagement process, we have reviewed our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This has helped us to think about what Nova should do more or less of and when, where, and how we should focus our resources and support going forward. We need to think ahead and plan for future changes in local populations and the local economy.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Very positive profile and rated highly by a wide range of members and stakeholders Providing practical support Securing resources, providing grants and contracts Supporting organisations to develop themselves	Trying to do too much for too many people Volunteering has shifted since the pandemic	Greater opportunities with health partners New models of care and new roles emerging Longer term finances Collaboration to measure and evidence impact	Cost of living on the VCSE sector Short term funding for all members Reduction in volunteers across all sectors Any future reduction in core funding would destabilise the organisation

Our Business Plan Priorities

Through the engagement process we have collated the feedback, views and ideas to identify what, where and how we should focus our time and resources over the next 3 years.

1 Support our members to develop based on local, diverse population needs

Why this is important

As the needs of our local population change and the services and support from local organisations change, it is important that we provide the support, skills and connections that enable the VCSE sector to be sustained. Member organisations need to be as best equipped as they can to meet current and future needs.

To do this, we need to look ahead at the local demographics and work with local partners across organisations to focus on areas of inequality, deprivation and the determinants of wellbeing.

This means that we will continue to develop our offer for members and consider the infrastructure that is needed to be commercially viable, to support member collaboration and build connections for the future.

What we will do

- Continue to prioritise member development with a focus on enabling organisations to develop themselves
- Continue to engage widely and regularly with our membership, to be a “super connector” organisation
- Consider our member services model, offering virtual support and/or develop space that offers greater connections and coordination of VCSE activity
- Continue to work with local authority and NHS colleagues to identify future local needs and act as the bridge to our member organisations
- Explore further partnerships to offer skills and support to signpost members
- Improve the capability of organisations to provide a quality volunteering experience

Our Business Plan Priorities

How we will do it

- Ensure Nova has a core team of member support that offers the skills, expertise, and connections to support member development
- Review our membership policy, to ensure alignment with local population need
- Explore the use of community space across Wakefield District and the presence of the Nova Team and Nova members in community spaces
- Ensure Nova plays an active part in regional VCSE infrastructure to benefit from any economies of scale for back-office functions, support, and wider partnership opportunities
- Ensure representation at health and social sector meetings to understand strategic direction and the role of VSCE sector in that

What we will measure (linked to our KPIs)

- % of Nova members that have received direct support from Nova and Nova Partners
- % of organisations supported that report an improvement in organisational performance
- Number of existing and new members, linked to geography and health/social needs

2 Develop and strengthen community partnerships

Why this is important

Through our engagement process, people have told us that they recognise the role, influence, and value of the VCSE sector. Effective partnerships with the sector can deliver significant social value, deliver holistic services, and provide greater resilience to individual organisations.

These partnerships take time, commitment, and resources to develop and maintain. So it is important that Nova continues to invest in partnership working, to influence and operate at both the strategic and operational levels and be able to link policy and strategy to delivery on the ground through our members. Through the consultation we heard that Nova is seen as a trusted organisation and is recognised as being effective in developing partnership working, helping to add social value across Wakefield District.

Being a strong community partner organisation also means looking after our team at Nova and providing the support, opportunities, and training to support and develop our staff. We want to continue to invest in the development of staff and our Board of Trustees so that we have the skills and expertise to support our members and the VCSE sector.

Our Business Plan Priorities

What we will do

- Continue to build partnership infrastructure and develop representation from the VCSE sector to attend and represent the voice of the VCSE sector, to be a more integrated part of the health and care system
- Develop the role of Nova as a strategic partner with a wide range of public and private sectors organisations e.g. Housing, Sports and Leisure, Regeneration
- Develop capacity and capability to support the social and health sectors, in particular with primary care and community services, and continue to partner to explore new models of care i.e. virtual wards
- Help to bridge the gap between community and organisations with the codesign, coproduction and codelivery of support and services
- Help develop and test ways for commissioners to invest in VCSE sector organisations and services
- Ensure that local policies and practice take into account the views, needs, and assets of the sector
- Provide a platform for campaigning and engagement on key issues facing the sector

How we will do it

- Codesign and co-commission roles that bring social value to Wakefield District
- Enable members and VCSE Advocates to have a voice, attend relevant meetings and recognise the value of collaboration
- Actively support the revision of the Third Sector Strategy
- Be a two way link for sharing of information with VCSE colleagues and statutory partners
- Influence statutory agencies to ensure the VCSE sector is positioned to deliver contracts
- Ensure we listen to, support and develop the team at Nova

What we will measure

- Member representation on key strategic groups
- Third Sector Strategy revised with an implementation plan
- Staff turnover and career progression
- % of staff involved in professional development
- Number of staff indicating that they are happy working at Nova

Our Business Plan Priorities

3

Secure funding for the VCSE sector

Why this is important

The access to and fair distribution of resources is vital to the sustainability of VCSE organisations. Having transparent governance and fair access to funds supports the development of the VCSE sector and is core to our purpose as an organisation.

What we will do

- Continue to ensure the fair distribution of funds across Wakefield District and support transparent governance through the Third Sector Framework
- Continue to lead and develop the Third Sector Framework
- Actively support collaboration to maximise opportunities for funding and avoid duplication
- Actively support wellbeing and social value
- Operate efficient and effective processes to support our members and provide value for money
- Ensure that contracts are transparent and fit for purpose for our member organisations
- Revise and refresh our funding strategy to support the development of local markets and our viability

How we will do it

- Continue to prioritise funding allocation as a core activity and ensure we have the skills and expertise to support member organisations
- Lead the administration of the Third Sector Framework
- Revise our own funding strategy
- Collate information and impact on social value

What we will measure

- Range and impact of Third Sector Framework
- Small grants distribution, including the number and value of grants
- % of those organisations that secured funds
- % of member organisations supported to secure funds
- Number of months operating costs in reserves
- No single funding stream to exceed 50%
- Impact of contracts/grants on social value

[illegible]

There are risks that we recognise and will need to manage as an organisation and with our partners:

Risk Description	Impact	Likelihood	Risk Rating	Mitigation
Short term funding: Difficult to plan Unable to recruit	4	4	16	Revision of funding strategy Active income generation Diversity of funding streams
Cost of living impact: More pressure on the VCSE to provide support	4	3	12	Support to members with funding, infrastructure
Cost pressures in the public sector	4	3	12	Diversify income streams
Key contracts with no financial uplift or built in cost reductions i.e. Live Well Wakefield	4	3	12	Flexibility of service models, use of volunteers

The risk levels shown are calculated by multiplying the number assigned to the probability of the risk with the number assigned to the impact of the risk. The risk level can be from 1 to 25, with 1 being the lowest and 25 being the highest.



Conclusion

The aim of our Business Plan is help us to support our members the best way we can with the resources we have and to find ways to continue to develop the VCSE sector. The economic environment is very challenging, but we are confident that we can continue to offer value for money across Wakefield District, and can be both proactive and responsive in supporting Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations to deliver and develop.

There are asks that are important to recognise on behalf of the VCSE sector:

Our Asks

- **The VCSE sector is treated as an equal partner and the professionalism, expertise, and agility of member organisations is recognised**
- **Transparent governance continues to be developed through the Third Sector Framework to enable the fair distribution of resources**
- **Local people and local organisations continue to have a voice and influence what, where, when, and how services are delivered**



Thank you for reading!

The Nova Team

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