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ChangeUp

# Modernisation Project



**End of Project Report 2011**

**for the Kent Voluntary Infrastructure Consortium**

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## Executive Summary

The Modernisation project is the culmination of Kent's response to the government's Change Up agenda. Launched in 2004, the Change Up programme aimed to ensure that 'by 2014 the needs of frontline voluntary and community organisations in England are met'<sup>1</sup>. This was to be achieved through the strengthening of support services. In Kent this agenda has been administered by a multi-agency consortium that has been known by various names:

- VICK (Voluntary Infrastructure Kent)
- KCDB (Kent Consortium Delivery Board)
- KVIC (Kent Voluntary Infrastructure Consortium)

For more information on the consortium please go to [www.kentcan.org](http://www.kentcan.org). Research undertaken in 2004 led to the creation of a Kent-wide plan, the Kent Infrastructure Development Plan which has formed the basis of subsequent work.

The Modernisation project built on the success of previous Change Up initiatives delivered, Back Office Support Systems (BOSS) and Kent COVE (Centre of Volunteering Excellence). The project sought to increase the effectiveness of support services for frontline Voluntary and Community Organisations through:

- Greater efficiencies amongst support providers
- A user focus in service delivery
- Ensuring local consistency in support through improved collaboration

### Headline achievements include:

- The creation of an outcomes framework for support services, the Core Service Support Offer
- A model for long-term collaboration between voluntary sector training providers
- Exciting development and redesign of the Kent COVE website
- A successful Kent Wide marketing campaign

A significant legacy of this project is built upon the trust, honesty and collective leadership of all support organisations involved. The work of the project has acted as a catalyst for future partnership and collaboration between support organisations across the county.

*"The Modernisation Programme has been one of the most informative, worthwhile projects that it has been my pleasure to be a part of."*

Alex Krutnik, CaDVAS

#### • Collaboration

Greater efficiency among sector support providers through organisational changes, including enhanced collaboration, alliances or mergers

#### • Frontline Organisation (FLO) Engagement

Strong user-focus in the way sector support services are planned, delivered and evaluated, by enhancing the way diverse frontline organisations are engaged in sector support services

#### • Neighbourhoods

Ensuring consistent and reliable sector support at community and neighbourhood level, developing appropriate linkages and referral for smaller organisations and effective working between services operating at different levels

## Introduction

### What is the Modernisation Project?

Nationally, in 2007 the Modernisation programme set out to 'help achieve significant transformation in the ways support services are planned, delivered and evaluated'. At its core the intention was for support services to:

- meet the changing needs and expectations of frontline organisations
- respond to changes in the policy and funding environment
- promote better use of available resources

The administrator, Capacitybuilders set distinct criteria for projects, with a particular focus on those that would deliver real and lasting change. These criteria were based on seven priority themes, of which Kent chose three; collaboration, frontline engagement and neighbourhoods.

It is key to mention at this point that Capacitybuilders put significant emphasis on the adoption of an 'outcomes focused' approach. All outcomes and milestone indicators were agreed prior to the start of funding being awarded. These are the outcomes against which achievement is reported and measured.

*(Appendix A)*

*"One of the most important aspects of this programme was to bring together organisations in Kent; to 'modernise' the third sector and I believe that this project has begun to achieve this."*

Pauline Annetts, Swanley & Districh Volunteer Centre

## What is Infrastructure?

Kent's voluntary and community sector provides a range of services and activities to support and improve the quality of life for people in the county. The frontline organisations that deliver these services and activities to the community need to be assisted through high quality and effective support - this is often referred to as voluntary sector infrastructure, or support services. In Kent this includes organisations such as Councils of Voluntary Service (CVS), Volunteer Centre's and Action with Communities in Rural Kent.

Support organisations have some common characteristics. Nevertheless, there are a number of differences that are worthy of note. Some volunteer centres are integrated with CVSs, and many deliver frontline services themselves. In addition to the creation of a 'core offer' many deliver support services to meet specific need identified locally. For example, payroll support, project management, events organisation, supported volunteering and befriending and community transport schemes.

All of the CVSs and most of the volunteer centres in Kent and Medway are part of the Kent & Medway Infrastructure Partnership (KMIP). This is the forum which has, and will continue to facilitate and enable support organisations to meet the changing environment in order to better support frontline organisations meet their challenges. KMIP aims to:

- Provide a countywide portal to the sector
- Ensure consistency of service across the county
- Be recognised as an appropriate forum to meet the national, sub regional and local agendas
- Engage in policy response, campaigning and marketing
- Share the learning and outcomes from quality systems
- Providing platforms to maximise opportunities

*"All partner organisations are committed to the project aims, objectives and the delivery of outcomes."*

Marilyn Keating, North West Kent CVS

### Support organisations in Kent have some common characteristics:

- Locally based independent organisations
- Not for profit organisations
- Services designed to strengthen other organisations/groups
- Work to nationally developed objectives

### Examples of work undertaken by support organisations:

- Governance support
- Fundraising
- Parish planning
- Volunteer brokerage and good practice
- Acting as representatives from the voluntary sector to public and private sector partners

### The steering group comprised:

- Voluntary Action Within Kent
- Swale CVS
- Volunteering Ashford
- North West Kent CVS
- CaDVAS
- Canterbury & Herne Bay Volunteer Centre
- Swanley Volunteer Centre
- Action with Communities in Rural Kent
- Voluntary Action Maidstone

## How was the project delivered?

The project was delivered using a partnership approach where all organisations had an active involvement, both as contributors and as participants. Voluntary Action Within Kent and Swale CVS led the project with direct support with specific skills and expertise. At the outset of the project each organisation signed up to the Partnership Agreement setting out roles and responsibilities within the context of the project. *(Appendix B)*

The North West Kent Racial Equality Council was originally a member of the partnership but withdrew as they were undergoing significant organisational change and did not feel that they had the capacity to engage with the project at that time.

A main aim of the project was to ensure that benefits were effective across Kent. In order to achieve this all aspects identified by the Modernisation partnership were discussed with KMIP, and many actions delivered by and with KMIP.

*“The partnership has been highly successful and has fostered a new sense of cooperation, collaboration, sharing of expertise, joint working.”*

Sue Towns-Okorududu, Voluntary Action Maidstone

## What was achieved?

**Outcome 1:** Greater efficiency among sector support providers through organisation changes, including enhanced collaboration, alliances or mergers.

**Outcome 2:** Stronger user focus in the way sector support services are planned and delivered and evaluated, by enhancing the way diverse frontline organisations are engaged in sector support services.

**Outcome 3:** Ensuring consistent and reliable sector support at community and neighbourhood level, developing appropriate linkages and referral for smaller organisations, and effective working between services operating at different levels.

## Core Service Support Offer

The rationale for this work was to clearly define the support offer available to all frontline organisations across Kent. This piece of work has identified an overarching framework for collaboration and increased efficiencies. Frontline organisations across Kent were consulted on the draft document.

*(Appendices C & D)*

*“The core service support offer has been a remarkable piece of partnership working which has led to a collaborative model that can be used across the county. It has proved to be an extremely valuable use of peoples time being used as best practice by Charities Evaluation Service and a tool to enable important discussions to take place with public sector commissioners”.*

Sarah Williams, Swale CVS

*“The development of an agreed ‘core service support offer’ of CVSs and VCs across Kent is an excellent, constructive and sustainable way forward.”*

Marilyn Keating, North West Kent CVS

## How has this made a difference?

Both Volunteering England and Charities Evaluation Services have described the result of this work as ‘exciting’ and have placed the Outcomes Frameworks on their respective websites as examples of good practice. Kent County Council commissioners have used the framework as a basis for realigning their spending priorities, using the frameworks to help shape and influence the focus of future commissioning of support services. This initiative was previously attempted in 2005; the work of the Modernisation project has developed a truly inspiring and trusted approach to partnership working with individual organisations coming together to find collective solutions.

### How has this made a difference?

At the time of writing this report this piece of work is to be completed. We anticipate that this standardised approach will support CVSs to demonstrate the value of their support to the sector and the impact these services make to local communities. The process has enabled CVSs to identify a coherent approach to collecting and analysing data in the future.

### How has this made a difference?

KMIP has become a more cohesive group with improved lines of communication; trust has developed between partners and there is a desire to work collaboratively. There is a strong emphasis on doing not just talking. This is now a robust, sustainable partnership which is currently considering incorporated status. KMIP is increasingly recognised as an appropriate portal to the sector.

## CVS Member Impact Survey

A joint survey, based on the CVS outcomes framework has been created. This will enable a greater understanding of the impact of CVS support services, and will identify local and county needs. This joint survey has been developed as a direct result of the core offer work and the desire of CVSs to work collaboratively.

*“There is a commitment by all CVSs and volunteer centres to ensure that KMIP continues as a meaningful and effective conduit for change and development.”*

Sue Towns-Okorududu, Voluntary Action Maidstone

## Kent & Medway Infrastructure Partnership (KMIP)

The Modernisation project has facilitated and supported this partnership over the last three years, enabling members to increase the knowledge, skills and confidence required to deliver effective services locally.

*“KMIP is being used as a mechanism to support challenge in a positive environment leading to the improvement of performance and greater efficiencies”*

Sarah Williams, Swale CVS

*“The Kent and Medway Infrastructure Partnership (KMIP) is extremely well attended, and has been an effective conduit for Volunteer Centres and CVSs to share and promote good practice, work collaboratively, share and develop skills and jointly deliver work and training.”*

Sue Towns-Okorududu, Voluntary Action Maidstone

## Volunteer Brokerage Network

The need for a new network for volunteer brokerage staff was identified at inaugural meeting of the Kent Development Workers Network. This network is led by Swanley VC, and provides a platform for volunteer centres to provide peer support, share good practice and improve communication.

*“It was good to actually meet each other. Network members gained the confidence to question another Volunteer Centre or simply ask questions.”*

Pauline Annetts, Swanley & District Volunteer Centre



## Collaborative Training

Some additional funding was identified and the Modernisation partnership supported the development of an effective model of collaboration to improve efficiency amongst training providers. The project was led by CaDVAS.

*(Appendix E)*

*“As a result of the work undertaken on the collaborative training project, all the CVSs in Kent decided to publicise their training events in each others newsletters and areas. In addition, East Kent CVSs decided to both standardize the charges for training events and to open up these training events to their respective members across East Kent. This, at a stroke, addressed the potential imbalance as regards differentials in pricing and access based purely on an arbitrary notion of organisations’ boundaries.”*

Alex Krutnik, CaDVAS



### How has this made a difference?

Yes, the network provides effective communication and collaboration between volunteer brokerage staff and assists peer mentoring. Collaboration has been achieved through joint training, a greater understanding of individual volunteer centre operations and the establishment of a platform in which to build further collaborative opportunities and consistencies. Some aspects of consistent reporting and monitoring are still under discussion, for example recording of volunteer placements.

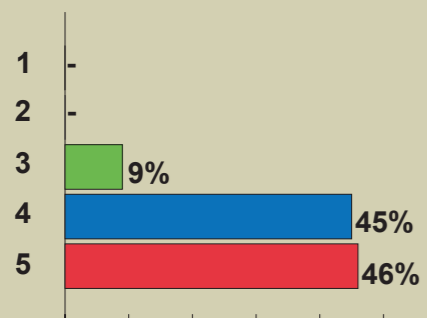
### How has this made a difference?

Organisations have come together to share training programmes and identify areas of expertise which are made available to all infrastructure organisations and frontline VCO's across Kent. The project has established a platform for training managers to come together and develop new models for working together; there has been a significant step change in the attitudes and willingness of organisations wishing to work more closely together and can be evidenced by the amount and level of joint training now on offer across the county. A significant move towards standardised charges and collaborative marketing has increase access to training opportunities for frontline organisations. This work addresses potential imbalances in terms of cost and access based on arbitrary geographical boundaries.

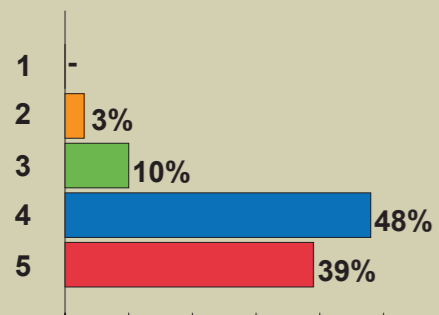
### How has this made a difference?

A total of 184 learning opportunities have been provided to up skill support organisations, and in some cases frontline organisations. In many instances support organisation staff and trustees have had the opportunity to 'learn together', further strengthening relationships of trust and mutual understanding.

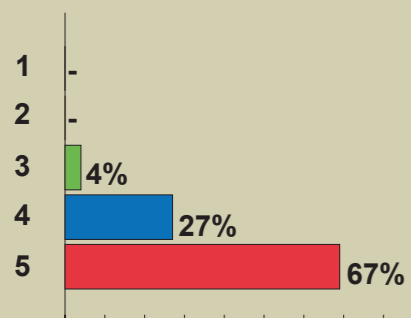
#### My personal objectives were met



#### My level of skill in this area has increased



#### I would recommend this event to others



KEY:  
5 = Definatly  
1 = Not at all

### Training and Workshops

The Modernisation project has delivered a range of learning opportunities throughout the life of the project. These include:

- V-Base training delivered by YouthNet
- Media Training delivered by BBC Radio
- Youth Volunteering Workshop by V Involved Kent & Medway
- Volunteering Opportunities for Adults with Learning Disabilities delivered by VAWK
- Compact Workshop delivered by Chair of Kent Partners Compact Champions Group
- Tendering courses delivered by Tendering 4 Care
  - An introduction to tendering
  - How to write winning tenders
  - What trustees needed to know about tendering
- First Aid delivered by Mediaid
- Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees delivered by VAWK
- Campaigning workshop delivered by Voluntary Action Maidstone
- Outcomes training delivered by Charities Evaluation Services
- Research methodology and data collection delivered by Charities Evaluation Services

### Kent Volunteer Centres Website

This website was created by the phase one Capacitybuilders project, Kent COVE. The Modernisation project has upgraded the site to incorporate a wider range of information about support services. An in-depth review of the original site was undertaken and the new website will act as a marketing tool and a 'window' for volunteer centres and CVSs across Kent. All upgrading activity will be completed by the end of March 2011. This work has been led by Volunteering Ashford.

*"This has raised the profile of volunteering and Volunteer Centre across Kent, allowing our voice to be heard in a joined up way."*

Jenny Lane, Gravesham Volunteer Centre



### Diverse Communities

The project undertook a comprehensive review of current research in order to provide clarity on what is often considered an issue of 'race'. The project concluded that whilst there is no simple, or consensual definition of what constitutes a 'diverse community' it must include the 'white working classes'. The new coalition government's emphasis on the 'Big Society and 'Localism' will draw in diverse communities.

*(Appendix F)*

### How has this made a difference?

The site has become a focal point of information for all volunteer centres across Kent as evidenced by greater use of the site. The addition of CVS information will result in improved ease of access to information. For example, an area will be devoted to training events. By improving and developing the current website it is anticipated that there will be better and stronger engagement with our clients including a stronger sense of connection for CVS with groups and individuals within communities as they become more aware of the services on offer. KMIP members have agreed 'in principle' to contribute financially to ensure sustainability.

### How has this made a difference?

The Modernisation project has concentrated therefore on citizen engagement as a means of developing contact with diverse communities. Acceptance of the terminology in its broadest sense encourages support services to be user focused in a manner that is effective and inclusive for all. This supports the development of a stronger representational role, a key function of CVSs.

### How has this made a difference?

These toolkits are available to all development workers within Infrastructure and FLO's with up to date information that will strengthen any position when being involved in any consultations about the support services that are offered. There have been very few toolkits developed at a local level and this has been an ongoing piece of work for a few years in Kent now. It is becoming a place that users can look first for support.

### How has this made a difference?

CADVAS, Action for Communities in Rural Kent and Canterbury & Herne Bay volunteer centre have all undertaken full organisation training needs analyses and a further twelve KMIP members received advice and referrals to learning opportunities.

## BOSS Toolkits

Three toolkits developed through the phase one Capacitybuilders project, BOSS (Back Office Support Services) have been reviewed and updated by the project. The toolkits are; Human Resources, PR & Marketing and ICT. These toolkits are available on the VAWK website, and have been marketed in partner's newsletters and disseminated widely.

- PR & Marketing toolkit reviewed by an external consultant, and now includes a section on social networking sites.
- HR toolkit has been thoroughly reviewed by an external practitioner, all policies reviewed to reflect legislative changes and appropriately updated in consultation with an HR expert

The toolkits will shortly be available on the upgraded Kent COVE website.

## Organisational Training Needs Analyses (OTNAs)

Although this element was initially included in the business plan Voluntary Action Within Kent has subsequently been commissioned to provide this support to the voluntary and community sector in Kent as part of a regional co-financed ESF/LSC project. Across the South East region take up of full OTNAs has been less than anticipated. This seems to be due to the fact that many organisations have already identified their training needs and require only advice and signposting support. An additional factor has been a general reluctance to identify training and development needs against a backdrop of financial uncertainty.

*In regard to the OTNA which we undertook in March 2010, I would just like to say how useful this was in regard to reflecting on the current and future needs of the organisation. Whilst no concrete training needs came out of this process at that time, it certainly led me to think about our future needs as an organisation and, given the current economic climate, was a very useful process to have gone through.*

Alex Krutnik, CaDVAS

## Specialist Groups: Campaigning, Safeguarding and Disabilities Volunteering

CVSs and VCs have indicated 'areas of excellence' with a view to organisations with similar areas of expertise/interest coming together to provide information and support in their specialist area to all volunteer centres and CVSs. It was agreed that meetings be on a virtual basis and that information be disseminated via KMIP; the groups act as a first point of contact where organisations had queries they were unable to resolve. There will be pages for existing and any additional specialist groups on the upgraded Kent COVE website.

## Marketing Strategy

An external consultant was engaged to develop a marketing strategy with CVSs and volunteer centres across Kent. The principle of the marketing strategy has been adopted; however there have been differences of opinion in terms of the specific detail. Arising from the strategy it was agreed to have a marketing campaign across Kent (see below). *(Appendix G)*

### How has this made a difference?

This activity has supported working towards three virtual centres of expertise for the dissemination of information, discussion on new developments in each field and for signposting organisations to other support for the benefit of frontline voluntary and community organisations.

### How has this made a difference?

An opportunity to work with an external consultant has enabled partners to challenge their views on how they market their services and products. It has encouraged collaboration and created an atmosphere where bulk purchasing has been an option, for many for the first time.

## How has this made a difference?

Local relationships were developed with local communities and public sector partners throughout the lifetime of the campaign. The campaign raised the profile of the role of the voluntary and community sector among elected councillors. An increased number of potential volunteers have been identified through this process. In addition, a standardised approach to generic marketing material supports a greater understanding of who we are and what we do.



## Marketing Campaign

Big Bus/Volunteer Centre Information cards and CVS Information cards; a countywide marketing campaign developed from the strategy. A mobile exhibition vehicle visited 27 locations across Kent to publicise the work of the voluntary and community sector and the work of volunteers. County wide volunteer centre information cards were updated and county wide CVS cards were designed and produced for the first time. The campaign raised awareness of the role of the voluntary sector both with local communities and public sector organisations.

*"Having participated in The Big Purple Bus tour, can I say what a great idea it was. The bus was a big draw and my local Town Council, who allowed us the site, thought it was fantastic and have asked when we are going to do it again, as have the other VIOs who joined us on the day."*

Pauline Annetts, Swanley & District Volunteer Centre



*"The development workers network is the first local communities of practice site in Kent. It has steadily increased membership and has offered voluntary sector colleagues and public sector colleagues a platform in which to converse informally".*

Sarah Williams, Swale CVS

## Development Workers Network (Communities of Practice)

A virtual network to support enhanced communication and encourages collaboration; the network has 27 members and a Diverse Communities sub-group with 14 members. There have been 98 documents uploaded (none unread); active encouragement to frontline organisations to join the network; Modernisation officers investigating development of additional sub-group to support user focus in planning.

Swale CVS has added a sub-group to this site: Progress through Partnerships. This has 15 members.

*(Appendix H)*

## Compact

There are strong links with the Kent Partners Compact Implementation group (now the Kent champions group); including support from the Modernisation partnership and one of the lead organisations, Swale CVS, which also acts as the Chair of the group. In light of the new coalition government and the Big Society agenda, the champions group is now rewriting the Compact where there will be significant involvement from local support and development organisations. The document can be viewed [www.kpcig.org](http://www.kpcig.org)



SWALE COUNCIL  
for  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

## Member Engagement

A memorandum of understanding has been developed between KCC Cabinet Member responsible for Localism and Partnership (Cllr Alex King, Deputy Leader) and Andrew Bowles, Leader of Swale Borough Council and the Kent & Medway Infrastructure Partnership where it was decided that a Memorandum of Understanding be agreed between the voluntary sector and KCC (elected members). The proposal is that KMIP members will lead on behalf of the voluntary sector locally and KCC on behalf of the Kent Partnership (now the Kent Forum). The Memorandum of Understanding being considered has four outcomes. *(Appendix I)*

## How has this made a difference?

The Network has facilitated greater external communication, has increased collaboration and knowledge base. Although we originally anticipated that this site would primarily provide a platform for discussion, it has become a valuable library source.

## How has this made a difference?

There is an increased flow of information to and from the champions group. A greater knowledge base has been established

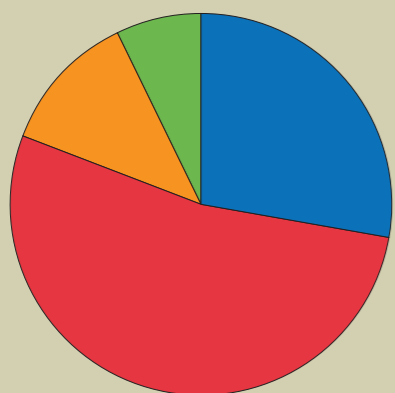
## How has this made a difference?

Through improved lines of communication, trust has developed and a willingness to work collaboratively is evident. There is a continued emphasis on centralised coordination local delivery.

Before Matt Leach, Capacitybuilders' Chief Executive left to join the Big Society think tank ResPublica he said:

*"We need to ensure that in all parts of the country we retain a robust, resilient organisational base for the provision of key support and advice services to frontline groups."*

### Summary of expenditure



- Direct staffing costs
- Direct project delivery costs
- Management
- Office and on-costs

## Conclusions

Building sustainable services and organisations is a key part of the vision in Kent the Modernisation Project is the tangible outcome of that aspiration and vision. This report has provided important insight to where support providers are today at a time where there is increasing demand for their services, and ongoing financial pressures.

There is a significant range of opportunities and challenges ahead, including the need to engage with public sector commissioning tendering and procurement regimes dealing with potentially severe financial implications and the increased pressures for organisations to collaborate further and merge.

The Modernisation project has been part of a process to support the readiness of organisations to some of the pressures alluded to. KMIP has acted as a sounding board to ensure that the effectiveness of all activities reached beyond the steering group and that the outcomes have been able to demonstrate effectiveness across the county

The Modernisation Project leads, VAWK and Swale CVS have worked towards developing purposeful relationships management through the use of the Modernisation development officers. Through this leadership style the project participants and contributors feel that the development officers have greatly supported the continuity and consistency in the delivery of the project over its lifetime. A culture where performance and challenge is accepted is beginning to develop as a positive aspect of working together across the county.

The work to develop sustainable and effective support organisations will carry on long after the end of the Modernisation project, however the groundwork has been established and relationships have flourished leading to trust, commitment and a tangible desire to work better together that has never been in existence before.

## Recommendations and Next steps

With the onset of Big Society, localism and decentralisation the further engagement of elected members at all levels, including parishes is further harnessed to recognise and encourage local flexibilities about the way services are delivered and the value that local support and development services can bring.

- That the survival and sustainability of local support and development organisations is crucial to the development of frontline organisations and, in turn, the communities that they serve.
- To further explore the future of the Kent and Medway infrastructure partnership
- To look at enterprising ways to build on the sustainability of local support and development services and organisations
- Ensure that any arrangements developed support the strategic executive and operational elements of collaborative working
- Driving economy, efficiency and effectiveness using an outcomes focused approach is essential to success

*"Although this project is finishing, the foundations that have been set will be in place long after."*

Pauline Annetts, Swanley & District Volunteer Centre