



Strategic Grant Report

April 2014 –
October 2014

eVOLution (Darlington CVS)

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Outcome Required

- Leadership and development of the third sector in Darlington- evidence of progress in networking, leading, influencing and enabling the third sector to maximise its role within the community, including:
 - Supporting the development of new groups and collaborations to address local needs and opportunities
 - Contributing to the delivery of Darlington Together, and other new directions in working to meet local needs that may be brought forward
 - Acting as the voice and champion of the third sector in Darlington
 - Identifying and developing collaborative models of working to build a sustainable third sector.

- Contributing to local priorities- evidence of activity to lead, facilitate and encourage the sector organisations to contribute to the priorities identified and agreed through Darlington partnership, including the annually reviewed Action Priorities.

- To support and promote volunteer activities in Darlington.

Leadership and development of the third sector in Darlington- evidence of progress in networking, leading, influencing and enabling the third sector to maximises its role within the community

This year infrastructure has been through a comprehensive review during this reporting period and eVOLution are working with the local authority to ensure everything is in place to meet the demands of the VCS. Work has started on meeting the actions agreed with the local authority and evolution will continue to deliver on the action plan and report back on its progress.

Supporting the development of new groups and collaborations to address local needs and opportunities.

Our aim this year has been to continue a focused approach and support organisations to support themselves. In doing so we have continued to develop the resources on our website to provide as much information and support as possible and is the first point of contact for most organisations. Looking forward we are developing the website further to become a platform of information for the VCS. Over the last 6 months the website has seen a steady average of over 800 visits per month.

The process for group support has changed and now groups are asked to fill out an initial form about their requirements before they access support and again signposts to the resources on the website. This has reduced the number of organisations accessing 1:1 support but has allowed for more in depth support for organisations that need it

The team has continued to support organisations over varying requirements and in these times of austerity are supporting organisations to work together and encourage sharing of resources. Demand from organisations to provide development advice and to improve sustainability has increased, and the team continues to support organisations in this area. Over the last 6 month the team have worked with and supported 36 organisations on a 1:1 basis.

The level of support and service delivered has varied dependent on the need and capacity of each group, and the team have striven to deliver services that are tailored to the individual groups' requirements.

During this reporting period eVOLution team have supported a setup of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This is a fairly new charitable status and enables charities to have limited liability and company status without having to set up register both with the Charity Commission and Companies house. The CIO is then only responsible for reporting to the Charity Commission. After going through this process eVOLution now have the developed templates and resources to take further organisations through this process.

eVOLution has continued to develop a tool on the Mirus system called Connect Us. It enables a way of co-ordinating community activities. Anyone who signs up to Mirus will be able to set up a community discussion group which could be used to identify issues and problems within their area and look at developing their own solutions. For example keeping green areas which were once looked after by their local authority tidy, maybe even looking at how they might be able to put the area to more use with development of children play area or urban gardening.

Further information on the monitoring of group support can be found in Appendix A.

Acting as the voice and champion of the third sector in Darlington

eVOLution aims to ensure that the voice of the sector is represented through strategic partnership arrangements, alliances and networks with the council and other statutory agencies in Darlington. Under the voice function, eVOLution facilitates a number of forums Action Task and Finish Groups to promote engagement and listen to the concerns and issues of the voluntary and community sector.

eVOLution continue to represent the VCS at 22 multi-agency meetings.

Through representative structures we aim to strengthen the reputation and coordination of the sector in Darlington by creating processes and platforms for the gathering the views of the sector and to represent these to the local authority, other statutory agencies, funders and government.

eVOLution facilitates a number of specialist forums aimed at keeping members informed and consulted on the latest developments pertaining to their area of work. The simple structure ensures the voluntary sector is effectively represented on key issues with the resulting information being used to influence decision-making and change at the appropriate level.

Through research and gathering evidence we also try to promote the social and economic contribution the VCSE makes in Darlington to the development of a healthy and vibrant society.

We also listen to the policy and practice concerns of the sector and try and distil and make relevant the changes in policy and practice at a local, regional and national level.

The voluntary and community sector in Darlington needs a strong and unified voice. This voice needs to communicate the strategic importance of the sector to policymakers at a time of rapid changes to the provision of essential services. It needs to ensure that policy is responding to the needs of vulnerable people in Darlington.

eVOLution's Executive Director is part of the Tees Valley Unlimited Social Inclusion Task and Finish Group as a VCS representative for Darlington along with Diane Woodcock from Morrison's Trust. Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU) along with partners, is currently in the process of preparing for the next round of European Structural Funds for 2014 2020.

eVOLution have ran a series of Big Conversations to enable to the sector to talk about topics that are relevant to the sector. These events invite presenters to talk about a particular topic and allow for open questions and conversation.

eVOLution has facilitated a senior leader's lunch and invited senior leaders from VCS organisations as an opportunity to look at how we can work together in the Voluntary and Community Sector to grow, trust and working in collaboration. The Chair of the CCG attended to discuss how the VCS can work together with the CCG.

eVOLution sits on the Darlington CCG Community Council and part of its role is to identify VCS organisations to engage with relevant agenda items.

Contributing to the delivery of Darlington Together, and other new directions in working to meet local needs that may be brought forward

eVOLution now has over 480 VCS organisations on the Mirus online directory. This allows anyone to search for Voluntary Sector Services that are delivered in Darlington. It allows for search of organisations by the nature of their clients and or the services that they deliver. This allows the general public and public services to access information on the vast services that the VCS has to offer. We are aware that a database is only as useful as the information on it and we are currently rolling out permissions to VCS organisations so that they can keep their information relevant and up to date.

eVOLution have been involved with the proposals for Cockerton Library. This has involved consulting with the VCS and eVOLution taking a lead role to look at solutions to keep the Cockerton Library open to the community.

Identifying and developing collaborative models of working to build a sustainable third sector.

We set a group up with the local authority to look at the development of a model of working for co-production between the Voluntary and Community sector and the local authority. We want to identify good practice and embed it into service delivery.

Implementing co-production is challenging and complex. It involves looking at every aspect of how an organisation works. This resource draws on the learning from a wide range of sources to help managers, practitioners, people who use services and carers to both understand and implement co-production in social care and beyond.

eVOLution's Executive Director has been involved in developing the Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT) and through this work has enabled voluntary sector organisations be directly involved in an MDT pilot. The voluntary sector involvement in the Better Care initiative is a vital component if the sector is to make a significant contribution to the welfare of vulnerable adults in Darlington. DAD, Age UK Darlington and Darlington Mind are currently part of a five month pilot and represent the whole of the voluntary sector in the new multi-disciplinary teams working in GP's surgeries.

eVOLution continues to represent the VCS on the Darlington Partnership Board, Executive group and the task group for the Darlington Partnership Good Friends Project.

To support and promote volunteer activities in Darlington.

The volunteer centre has brokered 226 volunteers to organisations during this reporting period.

During this reporting period evolution has had a focus on working with organisations of developing volunteering in Darlington. During volunteers week this year we launched our volunteering good practice guides. This consists of 17 guides for organisations around the recruitment and retention of volunteers. During volunteers week we had a stall in the Cornmill Centre to promote volunteering to the public.

We have developed a volunteer development network for volunteer coordinators to come round the table and discuss issues, best practice and to offer support.

The delivery of the volunteer us section on Mirus is positive and Mirus currently holds volunteer positions from 95 different organisations. Mirus has continued to be the 'go to' site for all new registrations and we are continuing to work with organisation to assist in adding their opportunities onto the site, and training key workers on how to use the system. All 1:1's and volunteer contacts are directed to Mirus as a matter of course and all publicity and information regarding volunteering refers back to Mirus.

Progress against Infrastructure review Action Plan

APPENDIX 2 (continued)

DRAFT ACTION PLAN

Infrastructure Action Plan

Excerpt from Infrastructure Review:

It is recommended that a short term (6 month) action plan is made outlining the priority areas in which the sector will work with the Darlington Partnership including Action priorities.

The action plan will state objectives and means of achieving them including working in concert with other nfp agencies.

eVOLution has added a column to the action plan to demonstrate the progress made on the action plan. This plan is yet to be signed off by the eVOLution board and therefore certain section have not been reported on.

Rationale	Action	Measures	Time for Completion	Progress
Vision				
Evolution have identified the need for them to set out a clear vision and role for Evolution. Evolution has appointed external consultants to help them carry out this work.	Vision developed with input from members of the sector and key commissioners/funders including DBC that gives a clear vision, core aims and is signed off by the Board	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evidence of process for engaging with the sector to develop the vision – workshop by consultants with the wider sector 2. Clear priorities linked to strategy. 3. Performance measures in place for each priority in the plan. 	March 2015	eVOLution has done significant work with their consultants on the vision for eVOLution. eVOLution will use the strategy and development group to engage with the wider sector and will look to put on a workshop in the new year.

Strategic Development				
The infrastructure review identified the need for wider discussions with the nfp sector moving forward, and the need for joint objectives and evaluation. Need for Leadership and strategic view for the sector and engage with	<p>Establish a Strategic Development group with key representatives from the sector</p> <p>Stage 1</p> <p>Executive Director develops joint understanding of the group with key leaders</p>	<p>Stage 1</p> <p>Terms of Reference agreed by the Group.</p> <p>Timetable of Meetings also agreed at the meeting</p> <p>Minutes distributed to all members within two weeks.</p>		<p>eVOLution have had the first strategic development group in November. A draft remit has been circulated to the group to be agreed at the next meeting in January.</p> <p>A timetable of meetings has been done for the next year and have been circulated to the sector. It was agreed at the last meeting to change the time of the meeting in the hope it will allow more organisations to attend.</p>

<p>the sector and wider partners in a joint response to a changing climate</p>	<p>from the sector and public sector to co-produce the Terms of Reference for a Strategic and Development Group. Membership to be from across the sector and involve people whose remit covers priorities as agreed</p> <p>Stage 2 Group established with clear agendas as a forum for strategic discussion, representational feedback and evaluation.</p> <p>Group provides a mechanism for reviewing funding performance of Darlington as a whole and considering and responding to opportunities for joint funding bids.</p>	<p>Agenda plan to include invitations to key commissioners to jointly agree priorities and key areas of emerging work and sector involvement.</p> <p>Stage 2 Agreed process for conducting 360 appraisal of Evolution.</p> <p>Agreed process for establishing sub-groups for key areas (financial inclusion, social care, employment and skills, supporting people etc)</p> <p>Agreed process for providing representation and providing feedback for the sector on key bodies and discussion fora.</p>	<p>January 2015</p> <p>Stage 2 End of March 2015</p>	<p>These items are scheduled in to be agreed at future meetings</p>
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Representation				
<p>The sector requires a clear and understood mechanism for providing representation into key decision making and discussion forums, and for ensuring information is disseminated to the wider sector. This will include a process for sector views to be explored, distilled and agreed on key issues such as changes affecting the sector and its members. Evolution needs to provide leadership and representation for the sector as a body with core service delivery. The capacity and skills to provide representation on a range of other bodies should be explored and agreed with the sector.</p>	<p>Evolution will provide the representation for the sector at the Darlington Partnership and other strategic meetings</p>	<p>Revised membership of the partnership will be agreed with the Chairman of the Partnership</p>	<p>End of November 2014</p>	<p>eVOLution had gone out to the sector to elect new voluntary sector representatives, however due to a restructure of the whole partnership board this work has been recalled and we are awaiting instructions as to how we proceed.</p> <p>There will be a standing item on each strategic development group meeting for feedback from representatives of various multi agency meetings.</p> <p>This item is on the agenda and will be discussed at the next strategic development meeting.</p> <p>eVOLution has developed a partnership meetings page on the website and has started to populate the page with information on multi agency meetings including who the voluntary sector rep is (if applicable), dates of meetings, remit of meetings and who to contact for further information.</p>
	<p>They will also act as VCS organisations representative on the Health and Wellbeing Board alongside the statutory role of Healthwatch.</p>	<p>The strategic development group agenda will demonstrate consultation with the sector on partnership and HWBB agenda.</p>	<p>End of February 2015</p>	
	<p>Representational roles for the sector on other bodies will be agreed with the sector through the Strategic Development Group and wider consultation.</p>	<p>Agreed process for providing representation and providing feedback for the sector on key bodies and discussion.</p>	<p>End of January 2015</p>	
	<p>The role of a 'sector representative' and a mechanism for ensuring effective representation will be agreed with the sector through the Strategic Development Group and wider consultation.</p>	<p>Evidence of wider consultation with the sector.</p>	<p>End of January 2015</p>	
		<p>Formal contributions will be put forward from the Strategic Development group to</p>	<p>End of March 2015</p>	

		the partnership and other fora.		
Directory				
Infrastructure review identified clear need for effective information database	<p>MIRUS working and operating as both a database and volunteer tool.</p> <p>Action is taken to promote the use of MIRUS as a database by the sector.</p> <p>Work is undertaken with DBC to develop MIRUS as a framework from which organisations will be selected to engage in function specific activity including co-production.</p> <p>MIRUS is developed (if possible) as a geographical map based facility.</p> <p>Work with developers and DBC to look at the capability to provide further information about organisations, the</p>	<p>Well populated database which enables search among the not for profit sector only on subject areas.</p> <p>Provides a list of all the main nfp bodies and a significant number of smaller community groups including what they do and how to contact them.</p> <p>Database is populated and kept up to date by bodies.</p>	<p>December 2014</p> <p>February 2015</p> <p>March 2015</p> <p>April 2015</p>	<p>The organisational database on the Mirus system is live and currently hosts information on over 400 voluntary sector organisations that operate in Darlington. Organisations can be searched for by work areas and client groups.</p> <p>The information that can be shown by each organisation includes the organisations logo, a description of who they are and what services they offer, what client groups they work with, links to their website, and contact details.</p> <p>An article has been put together for the December Darlington Together magazine to promote the database to the public and to encourage organisations to join the Mirus database.</p> <p>Currently eVOLution can update the details of organisations but we have started work to enable organisations to take control of their own account and update the details themselves.</p>

	accreditations they hold, areas of interest and experience for contracting purposes.			
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Volunteering				
The need for an effective Volunteer Centre that is accredited to match volunteers with volunteering opportunities.	Mirus to enable the sector to place opportunities for volunteering and for volunteers to receive information about opportunities either through a search or through alerts.	Effective system the use of which can be clearly demonstrated and is well populated with opportunities.	December 2014	The volunteer section of Mirus is live and currently has 134 local volunteering opportunities live on the system that can be searched by areas of interest. This will sit within the volunteer campaign. An article on Mirus including the Volunteer Us section will be published in December's Darlington Together magazine. Mirus is being rolled out to the sector so that organisations can upload their own opportunities
	System in place to enable effective monitoring of the usage of Mirus and the extent to which it is used effectively.	Data which shows number of opportunities, number of volunteers registered and number of organisations using Mirus.	February 2015	
	A campaign to promote Mirus to the schools and colleges, universities, through Darlington Cares and to the wider public.	Clear evidence of an effective publicity campaign including advertisements, social media and articles in local media.	May 2015	
	Mirus to be promoted to the sector.	Clear evidence of a promotion campaign including through meetings, individual training sessions and demonstrations and incentives to use the system.	February 2015	
		All volunteer contacts with Evolution are recorded through Mirus.	May 2015	

	<p>Face to face visitors encouraged and helped to use online Mirus facility.</p> <p>Volunteer Centre accreditation completed successfully for current period</p>			<p>and can use the system to manage their volunteers.</p> <p>Mirus literature is used in all publicity, events and within the volunteer centre. It is promoted verbally in all contacts with volunteers and organisations and at the Volunteer Manager Network.</p>
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Member Toolkit for nfp sector				
The review identified the need to support nfp bodies and community groups	Evolution will improve the online facility providing advice to nfp organisations and community groups.	Effective online toolkit with multiple sections on the areas outlined.	February 2015	<p>The eVOLUTION website will be the platform of information for VCS organisations.</p> <p>There are currently up to date help resources and template documents on the eVOLUTION website and evolution direct users to this as a first point of call. If they require further support then we offer 1:1 advice. This will be an ongoing refresh to ensure the information is up to date for organisations. If a 1:1 is needed eVOLUTION will use this to see if further information could be developed to assist online around that subject.</p> <p>The information of what groups already exist will be hosted on the mirus database. A link to the database is on the homepage of the eVOLUTION website.</p>
	Information to include: What groups already exist and what to do they	Accessible and user friendly with help guidance in completing online forms and templates.	February 2015	
	Is there scope for joining up Setting up a new group Governance Becoming a charity Being an effective organisation (including IT, HR, data law, contracting and accounting). Applying for funding – including where to apply, learning how to submit quality bids, developing joint bids etc)	Alternative models and advice about which model is appropriate for which type of body/situation.	February 2015	
		Information about where further advice and support may be available.	February 2015.	

Tendering and Contracting	
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Evolution needs to play a leadership role in helping the sector to respond to a changing environment. It needs to provide support to nfp organisations to broker joint bids and help to develop tendering skills.	Provide an online facility with alerts to enable any organisation who signs up to be kept updated with all funding opportunities notified to Evolution or researched by them from other sites such as the DBC funding newsletters, commissioning notifications and procurement plan.	Online facility established. Regular updates apparent with all current opportunities. Evidence that pages are well used by the nfp sector	December 2014 December 2014 February 2015	eVOLution has developed a page on their website for funding news. The page is now live and people can sign up to newsletter that is just for funding. eVOLution will monitor the usage of these pages and will review this in February.
	Brokering of joint bids for larger contracts or funding. Where possible the consortium will be used for this.	Clearly documented evidence that Evolution has worked with more than one nfp body in Darlington to enable a joint bid for funding or contracts in excess of £100,000.	February 2015	eVOLution worked with 2 VCS organisations to submit a £25000 bid, unfortunately it was unsuccessful and only projects in the country were chosen.
	Brokering of relationships with other regional bodies for a joint geographical bid across regional areas		February 2015	

Capacity				
Evolution needs to have clear objectives driving	Need to identify low, medium and high	Review document demonstrating	January 2015	This section is yet to be signed off by the eVOLution board therefore no update will be available.

<p>the business and ensure that its time and resource is devoted to the delivery of its key priorities.</p>	<p>priority areas and its relevance to the organisations key aims and objectives and identify the outcomes of each priority.</p> <p>Need to develop tools for carrying out low priority activity with minimum resource.</p> <p>Need to devote expensive resource including time of paid staff and the Executive Director to key priorities.</p> <p>Need to be able to refer clients to other organisations where they require specialist support.</p>	<p>systematic analysis of all key priorities and outcomes</p> <p>Ability to evidence how resources including staff have been used to deliver the priorities. Evidence as per the attached spreadsheet.</p> <p>Update report demonstrating lower priority areas and proposed process changes to minimise resource devoted to these areas.</p> <p>Evidence of referrals.</p> <p>360 degree appraisal of infrastructure carried out by Strategic Development group, infrastructure peers, volunteers and Board Members.</p>	<p>January 2015</p> <p>February 2015</p> <p>March 2015</p>	
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Co-production				
<p>A term widely used to describe a situation where those using or in receipt of services work together and with providers to determine what is to be provided and how it is to be delivered. In the context of the voluntary sector it includes the sector acting as the voice of the community and helping public sector commissioners to design services and work together in the provision and delivery of the service. These type of arrangements can benefit from the support of infrastructure to identify the members of relevant discussions and support the role of the sector in informing commissioning and co-</p>	<p>Evolution to provide information and support to approaches made by commissioners to work with the sector in this way.</p> <p>To help the sector to understand need for different approaches and responses which may fall outside the compacts or arrangements designed to ensure equality in contracting processes.</p> <p>To broker relationships between a range of nfp bodies to facilitate this type of working.</p> <p>To raise awareness within the sector about the way this type of approach can work and help the sector to be ready to meet the</p>			<p>eVOLution will use the strategic development group to provide information on co production and will invite commissioners along to this group.</p> <p>eVOLution’s Executive Director has begun to talk to organisations about co production and is emphasising the message that it is a positive move for the voluntary sector to be involved in the design/delivery of services.</p>

design.	challenges this type of approach can present.			
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Marketing and Communication Plan				
<p>Evolution have a role in co-ordinating the promotion of the , the services it provides to its members the sector as a whole and in particular the benefits of volunteering to the residents of the area, and Darlington voluntary sector to funding organisations, business leaders and the wider world.</p>	<p>Prepare a plan of communications and in particular the main purposes of communications and the messages that need to be conveyed and some analysis of the stakeholders.</p> <p>Prepare specific campaigns on key areas like promoting volunteering and the Mirus facility.</p>	<p>Document which sets out the key objectives of Evolutions marketing and communications activity.</p>	<p>February 2015</p>	<p>Work is underway with an eVOLution communications plan and is on target to be finished in February.</p> <p>An article will be published in the December Darlington Together to promote Mirus.</p> <p>A campaign plan is underway for the promotion of volunteering and this includes identification of relevant outreaches to promote volunteering. Work is underway for a volunteer fair to be held during volunteer’s week.</p>
		<p>Media coverage of Mirus facility promoting use. Articles produced for the DT magazine or elsewhere which promote volunteering.</p>	<p>December 2014</p>	
		<p>Campaign plan moving forward with further promotion of volunteering.</p>	<p>January 2015</p>	

Data Collection and Analysis			
Data collection should be developed which will provide the necessary management information to accurately and objectively assess performance.	Data collection should focus on the number of contacts and the effectiveness in terms of key outcomes of each contact. Ability to demonstrate key elements of work through performance measures agreed as part of existing funding and contracting arrangements.	Clear record of each contact what in each case was delivered and the outcome of that work. Compliant submission against performance data request as set out in the contract with DBC	eVOLution has a monitoring form in place to capture the information required and this will be produced at the end of each reporting period.