

Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire

VALUES STATEMENT

Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire is committed to strengthening the effectiveness of the voluntary and community sector in South Bedfordshire by developing, enabling, promoting and supporting voluntary and community action. All aspects of our work are informed by the vision of an organisational culture underpinned by agreed values. These determine what we do and the way we do it. In summary, *Voluntary and Community Action*:

- *believes that voluntary and community action is fundamental to the development of a democratic and socially inclusive society;*
- *values diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity;*
- *values the work of volunteers and is committed to volunteering;*
- *is committed to sustainable development;*
- *values its independence and is committed to working in partnership with others;*
- *values the relationship between trustees, staff and volunteers;*
- *is committed to the achievement of quality standards and services.*

Voluntary and Community Action believes that voluntary and community action is fundamental to the development of a democratic and socially inclusive society.

- We are committed to working with the people, voluntary organisations, community groups and service providers of South Bedfordshire to make it a better place in which to live, work, volunteer and participate in leisure and cultural activities;
- We are committed to the development of communities, through enabling people collectively to play an active part in local voluntary organisations and community groups.
- We believe the voluntary and community sector has an important role to play in influencing local strategic planning, policy development and implementation.
- We believe that all people have an equal right to meaningful participation in genuine consultation, decision-making processes and local action.

Voluntary and Community Action values diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity.

- We are fully committed to social justice, equality of opportunity and the elimination of all forms of discrimination as a fundamental principle of our work.
- We are committed to ensuring that no individual or group of people is less favourably treated or denied opportunities because of their background.
- We recognise that South Bedfordshire is socially and culturally diverse and believe our work is enriched by the varying qualities and experience brought by people from local communities. This diversity is recognised, respected and valued.

Voluntary and Community Action values the work of volunteers and is committed to volunteering.

- We believe volunteering is a valuable and integral part of society, which includes action that effects social change and improves quality of life. It is not confined to the performance of a service for another.
- We recognise that volunteering can be associated with a charitable or voluntary body and that it can include involvement with statutory agencies, self-help and informal community groups.
- We recognise volunteers as people who, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit other people or the environment.
- We believe volunteering is something an individual chooses to do and that every individual has the right to volunteer without experiencing coercion or discrimination.
- We value the contribution of volunteers to local voluntary and community action and believe they deserve support and recognition for this.

Voluntary and Community Action is committed to sustainable development.

- We recognise the interdependence of individuals, groups of people, living things and the natural and built environments.
- We are committed to taking into account economic, environmental and social issues, even when they may be in conflict, and to assessing the environmental impact of community action.
- We are committed to inclusion and to enabling people actively to participate in society.
- We are committed to improving quality of life and to a sense of well-being and social justice.
- We are committed to sustainability, to understanding the process of development and to a sense of looking forward, not just living for the present.

Voluntary and Community Action values its independence and is committed to working in partnership with others.

- We believe that an independent and diverse voluntary and community sector is fundamental to the well-being of society.
- We recognise the importance of maintaining our independence as a local voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisation and the responsibilities this brings to trustees, staff and volunteers.
- We recognise the value of, and are committed to, co-operation, collaboration and partnership working. We believe that this enables Voluntary and Community Action to achieve its objectives, and contribute to the achievement of others' objectives, where there are mutual aims and values.
- We recognise that each organisation with which we work will have its own priorities. Common to all is the need for integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness and honesty.
- We believe that statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector have distinct but complementary roles, and that by working together we will achieve more for the people and communities of South Bedfordshire.

Voluntary and Community Action values the relationship between trustees, staff and volunteers.

- We value the contributions of trustees, staff and volunteers in the running and development of the organisation.
- Voluntary and Community Action recognises that employees, volunteers and trustees can benefit from flexible working arrangements, which enable individuals to achieve a healthy work-life balance.

Voluntary and Community Action is committed to the achievement of quality standards and services.

- We will work towards recognised quality standards for the voluntary and community sector.
- We are committed to the continuous improvement of our services, policies and practice.
- We are a learning organisation that values the sharing of good practice and learning from experience.
- We adopt a professional and structured approach, which ensures consistent quality standards, clear and agreed expectations and careful, timely planning.
- We will monitor service provision through user feedback, needs surveys and other means of measuring effectiveness.
- We will continue to develop a dynamic and responsive organisation, which meets the needs of the voluntary and community sector in South Bedfordshire.

Voluntary and Community Action has an *Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy*, supported by a Code of Practice, and a *Volunteering Policy*, which expands upon the values set out in this statement. Policies related to other values statements are currently being developed.