**A Voice for the Voluntary and Community Sector**

**in Essex**

**Terms of Reference**

1. **Vision and Approach**

**Vision:** To strengthen the position of the voluntary and community sector as an equal partner with the NHS and Local Government with the shared goal of improving population health, wellbeing and connectivity.

**Approach:** The Alliance members follow the Nolan Principles of public life which are: Selflessness; Integrity; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Honesty and Leadership.

The steering group focuses at system level rather than at an individual agency level.

1. **Purpose**

The purpose of the Essex Alliance is to strengthen and maximise the position of the VCSE to become equal partners with Local Government, NHS and other agencies to influence improved population health, wellbeing and connectivity. Improving outcomes for the residents of greater Essex.

The primary aims are:

* Strengthen engagement and cooperation within the sector
* Strengthen engagement and cooperation across sectors
* Drive membership and engagement through Essex Map, events and Alliance membership

This will be achieved by:

* Having an open and collaborative approach to learning from each other and other system partners
* Developing the Essex Map as a centralised asset which is segmented and localised
* Developing the Essex Alliance platform to increase the membership base
* Taking a targeted approach to communications to drive membership
* Developing the newsletter to add value to the sector
* Delivering events through subject experts and effective Q & A sessions
* Developing opportunities for representation on relevant boards across Essex
* Taking an active role in pan Essex working groups and initiatives
* Work with colleagues in quadrant-based leadership for Essex-wide events cascaded to place-based activity
* To develop assets for the sector that are useful, time and cost-saving and strengthen the position of the VCSE.

1. **Membership of the Alliance**

People who have a role in the VCSE including but not limited to; staff, trustees, leaders and volunteers.

VCSE organisations in Essex.

Other system partners who have an interest in understanding and engaging with VCSE organisations in Essex.

There is currently no membership fee.

1. **Themes and General Forums of the Alliance**

Task and finish groups may be appointed as needed and include steering group and members.

1. **Steering Group and Coordination**

A Steering Group will exist to prepare and deliver on the primary aims and recruitment is from members of the Alliance.

The Steering Group will consist of VCSE leaders who are also members of the Alliance.

There are a maximum of 12 Steering Group places at any time. When positions become vacant applications will be sought from the VCSE. If there are more expressions of interest than spaces available a voting system will be deployed.

The Steering Group will elect their Co-Chairs on a two-year rotating electional basis.

Coordinator of meetings and communications is undertaken by a paid Communications Coordinator.

1. **Alliance Meetings**

The Alliance Steering Group will meet monthly however this may vary depending on current initiatives.

1. **Accountability**

The Steering Group is accountable to the full membership of the Alliance. The Alliance is independent and is accountable to itself.

Steering Group members should be committed to system working, be willing to leave their own organisation at the door and be proactive in supporting the delivery of our primary aims.