

Who we are

We are the national intermediary and network for voluntary health organisations in Scotland. We work with our members and others to address health inequalities, to improve health related policy, systems and partnership working, and to help people and communities to live healthier and fairer lives.



Our vision

A healthier, fairer Scotland served by a thriving voluntary health sector.

Our mission

To improve people's health and wellbeing by providing an effective national network for voluntary health organisations.



Our values

- **Excellence:** we strive to excel, learn and improve, act with integrity, be authentic, demonstrate leadership and add value.
- **Collaboration:** we are committed to communicate, engage, partner, be team players, respect and consider others, and embrace diversity.
- **Initiative:** we thrive on being proactive, agile, adaptable, resourceful, creative and inquisitive.

What we do

- **Collaboration and networking:** we promote more integrated working and co-produced solutions between the voluntary and statutory sectors in order to promote equality and reduce health inequalities. We facilitate networking and we promote partnership working, co-production and mutual support across our membership.
- **Promotion and advocacy:** we amplify the voice of the voluntary health sector by providing our members with a wide range of opportunities to share their experience, expertise, views and ideas with wider audiences. We gather, build and promote evidence about the third sector's contribution to health agendas and outcomes.
- **Leadership and influence:** we bring the voluntary health sector's voice and expertise into national policy making. We do this by connecting our members with Scottish Government, NHS and other public sector decision makers. We support a two-way flow of information and ideas, and provide a platform for our members to be critical friends to policy makers.
- **Knowledge into action:** we raise our members' awareness of health priorities, we analyse and translate policy for and with our members. We provide our members with a wide range of information and opportunities for learning, knowledge exchange and creation, development and action.

Who we work with

- Voluntary health organisations – large and small, national and local
- Other voluntary, community and third sector organisations
- Scottish Government and local government
- Health boards, partnerships and networks
- Universities and research bodies



Our strategic priorities

We will work for sustainable improvement in public health, mental health, and health and social care services and for the prevention, mitigation and reduction of health inequalities.

We will amplify the voice and influence of the voluntary health sector on health matters, and support the sector to understand and engage with health related priorities, policy and systems.

We will promote the voluntary health sector's role, expertise and evidence to a wide audience, and we will work to make effective collaboration and partnerships on health related matters between the public and voluntary health sectors more normal and valued.

Our priority health themes

We will anchor our work around four priority health themes:

- Health Inequalities
- Public Health
- Health and Social Care Integration
- Mental Health

These themes will help guide and shape our work to ensure it is focused, distinctive and adds value.

Within these themes we will continue to develop key areas of work already underway. These include the areas below, and new areas will be developed.

- Loneliness and social isolation
- Marginalised and overlooked population groups
- Obesity, diet/nourishment and food poverty

- Place, the built environment and green space
- Volunteering in health and care settings
- Adverse childhood experiences
- Poverty and low incomes

Through the four priority themes we will strive to understand and incorporate a human rights approach to health and to continue and extend our focus on the underlying social and economic determinants of health.

Our planned outcomes

The voluntary health sector's contribution to a healthier, fairer Scotland will be stronger and more effective.

The voluntary health sector's contribution to people's health and wellbeing will be better evidenced, understood and supported.

Our stakeholders value and utilise VHS as an effective, relevant network that delivers what it promises.

Implementing and sustaining our strategy

We will:

- Develop and implement annual operational work plans.
- Maintain strong relationships with our funders and strong accountability.
- Develop more self-generated income.
- Sustain and grow our membership base.
- Invest in the development of our staff and board members.
- Evaluate and report on our performance and our impact.

