

1. What we call the sector in Gloucestershire

The term 'Voluntary and Community Sector' (VCS) should be used instead of 'third sector' or 'social purpose' to describe the sector in Gloucestershire.

2. The Compact

The active implementation of the Gloucestershire Compact is crucial to ensuring an environment for a thriving VCS.

3. Local Government

The VCS Assembly believes a unitary authority responsible for all local government functions would be more effective and efficient than a two tier structure.

4. Personalisation

Personalisation empowers individuals and communities and VCS support is crucial for its successful implementation. In the VCS we are committed to adapting and improving ourselves to ensure we are providing what service users want. We recognise that the transition to personalisation may bring challenges to some VCS members and they may need support.

5. Climate Change

We recognise that climate change is already having a significant impact on Gloucestershire, and believe that the VCS, in partnership, is ideally placed to provide creative, resourceful and positive solutions to local needs. We believe we cannot rely on top-down solutions to tackle climate change but that strengthening and empowering communities to take leadership is the way forward.

6. Thriving VCS

Voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) have a crucial role to play in creating thriving communities. A VCO can bring new or different skills and approaches to meeting a particular need; may be closer to the community they serve and therefore better able to ensure that a particular service meets the needs of the service users. Their independence, allows them to champion the needs and aspirations of marginalised communities and hold public services to account. They also have the reach and the expertise to access particular groups of people and providing accessible and appropriate services the VCS makes a key contribution to society.

We believe that VCS infrastructure is important to maximise this contribution. Finally and most importantly, in order to thrive, the VCS must have a 'can-do' attitude and assist and offer a lead to the public sector to make the changes it wants to achieve, in particular around equalities; personalisation; climate change and responding to the recession and promoting citizenship.