



Pilot site snapshot: Norfolk

To accompany the year 2 evaluation
of The Coordinated Community
Support Programme



Norfolk (1)

Summary of funded activity in year 2

- Bridge Plus organisational capacity (£15k)
- NCAN communications support and referral system development (£10k)
- Smallwood funding - Grants to vulnerable women (£9k)

Position at the end of year 1

While responses to the pandemic were directly supported (via Norwich Integration Partnership and NCLS), work supporting the NCAN referral system and development of a grants database strengthened the infrastructure to improve coordination between the VCS and other statutory services

What Year 2 has focused on

Expanding coordination, creating capacity and LA engagement. Through a communications drive supporting continued training development, system roll out and wider communications; further development of the referral system introducing geographic information. Work with Food Banks is underway to encourage more referrals via the NCAN system

What has been achieved in year 2

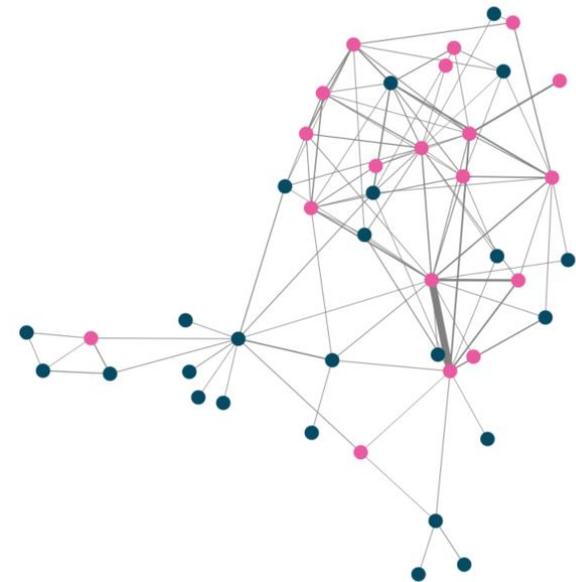
- **NCAN has grown and is an increasingly important feature of collaboration in the county** The average number of monthly referrals made via the NCAN referral system has increased by 73% since 2020 and 85% since 2019. 93 organisations are actively referring and the proportion of VCS organisations making referrals has increased from 18% to 26% between 2019 and 2021
- **Developed trust and supported culture change** Our qualitative research highlights increased levels of trust and collaboration between the VCS and LA. The programme has supported a change in culture to a more collaborative and open relationship between the VCS and the LA. Strong links have been made to NAS, supported by the formal referral system of NCAN. For some CCS funds have given them more time to engage in strategic conversations, for others the programme provided independent facilitation that brought organisations together

What has been learned in year 2

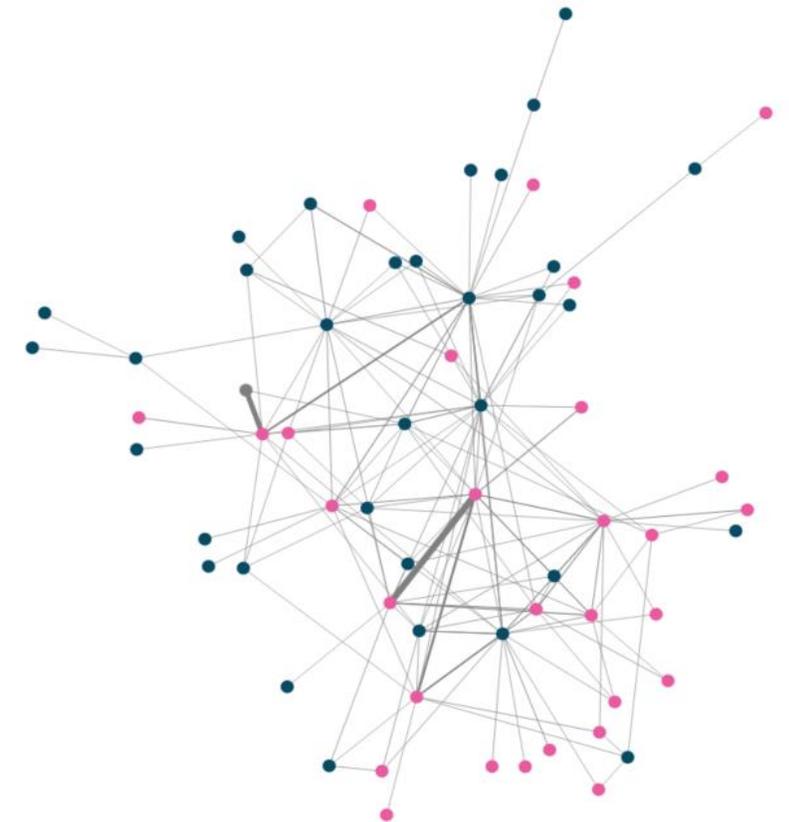
- Plugging into an existing agenda within a local council means you are 'pushing at an open door'
- Making best use of existing networks is important from both an engagement and sustainability perspective
- Initially there was a lack of clarity on the offer from CCS; which may have affected engagement and buy-in from a wider range of partners. Once organisations engaged, a different way of working with a funder was reported which was valuable
- Links have been made to other programme and non-programme areas, discussing and sharing best practice on coordinated crisis support

Norfolk (2)

2019 (n=3,283)



2021 (n=4,549)



How have referrals changed since CCS programme:

- 20% growth in referrals to the VCS
- More LA/Statutory (+48%) and VCS organisations (+37%) referring
- 80% growth in connections overall, & the average number per organisation increasing from 5.7 to 7.2

Key

● LA/Statutory organisations

● Voluntary and Community Sector

— Line thickness indicates volume of referrals

Norfolk (3)



How is CCS adding value in Norfolk?

Independent facilitation from a team outside the county helped to navigate historical issues around coordination between the VCS and LA

The CCS team also provided valuable support to funded organisations: “CCS were a sounding board to discuss more strategic plans and priorities. Not just giving funding, but expertise and different perspectives were really helpful as well.”

Crisis support reports were useful in communicating the value of the VCS. Smaller organisations were better networked and saw reputational value of being involved with the programme

Additional capacity helped NCAN to analyse data on unaccepted referrals and further engage food banks in the referral network

Programme-level recommendations to inform Year 3

The year 2 evaluation recommends that the CCS team should consider the following recommendations for the programme.

Referral system recommendations

Resourcing referral system as a focus for year 3. Clear progress can be evidenced around building network capacity and setting up digital referral systems. However, the long term resourcing of such networks and systems remains unclear. The long term sustainability of the referral system is critical in encouraging partners to work together. Without it, there is a high likelihood that organisations will fall back to siloed working. It is recommended that options / models for funding the referral system are clearly articulated with partners (and potential funders) in each pilot site.

Training on the referral system. Partners involved in the CCS programme stress that the sustainability of coordination is about more than funding for the referral system - there is a need to continue developing the network and quality of the work. Notably, there is a need for ongoing training costs to be built into any sustainability funding. It is recommended that any longer term funding for networks and referral systems ensure that ongoing training for system-users is part of the funding package.

Other local-system recommendations

Build upon work with statutory services, especially schools. The CCS programme focused primarily on the advice sector in the 4 pilot sites. This is where there has been most traction with the concept of coordination (when compared with other sectors such as food provision, statutory services and others). It is possible that other types of crisis-support providers will engage with the initiative in the future. The increased collaboration between advice services and schools in Tower Hamlets has, up until recently, taken place without a digital referral system (longer term there is an aspiration for at least 1 local school to be on the system). It is recommended that the programme promotes

the lessons learned around increasing collaboration between advice agencies and schools. This will be of interest in areas both with and without plans for a referral system. It is recommended that CCS identifies opportunities to collaborate with schools and leverage funding for specific school-focused collaboration projects both within and beyond the 4 pilot sites.

Long term ownership of local coordination. At the inception of CCS, it was assumed that local steering groups would be set up in each pilot site and would take ownership of the coordination agenda. To some extent, advice networks are fulfilling this role although there is heavy reliance on the capacity and skills delivered via CCS. Setting priorities has been facilitated (and on occasion, directed) by the CCS team and this function has been welcomed in localities. This indicates that coordination work can be facilitated by experts based outside of the area. It also points to a risk that once CCS funding ends, there could be a leadership void. It is recommended that steps are taken to mitigate this void (e.g. pilot-site leaders coaching / shadowing CCS colleagues).

Engagement plan for local authorities. Learning from years 1 and 2 illustrate a somewhat piecemeal approach to engaging local authorities in the programme. For many local authorities there are communication challenges within the organisation and efforts for an “authority wide” commitment to coordination (and associated referral systems, for example) has been unmanageable. Furthermore, the CCS team have had no mandate to incentivise change at this level. For year 3 it is recommended that each of the 4 local pilot sites has an engagement plan for each pilot site local authority which includes:

- Mapping out which teams are interested in the programme and what their needs are in relation to the referral system. Inviting them to join the network.
- Identification of senior stakeholders (revisiting signatories on the initial application to be part of CCS) to remind them of their commitment to the programme.