

Infrastructure Organisations Providing Support To The Voluntary Sector

A number of voluntary organisations (infrastructure organisations) do not provide services directly to the public but support other voluntary organisations, and represent the voluntary sector.

Councils For Voluntary Service – funded by the county council and district councils, there are 5 in Swindon and Wiltshire, each providing support services to voluntary groups in their area. In Swindon, Voluntary Action Swindon provides advice including on governance, fundraising, training, and accounting. They provide printing and other resources, and publish a monthly newsletter for local voluntary groups. They are the leading voluntary organisation in the work to develop an agreement (“compact”) between the local voluntary and statutory sectors.

Community First is the rural community council for Wiltshire and Swindon and is funded primarily by the county council and other public agencies. It manages county-wide and local community-based projects to improve the quality of life of people in Wiltshire and Swindon. Community First supports, for example, village halls and parish councils; helps to set up credit unions; and works with rural communities to provide transport schemes.

Charities Information Bureau – set up by Community First, CIB provides advice on charity law and on funding sources to voluntary organisations (and individuals in need) across the county and Swindon. Where the local CVS has its own funding advisor (eg currently in Swindon), CIB provides a specialist, complementary, service and where the CVS has no funding advisor, CIB provides all the funding advice needed. CIB’s knowledge of local corporate community support led to their involvement in the setting up and running of Swindon Employees in the Community Network.

Volunteer Centre - a member of Volunteering England, Volunteer Centre Swindon provides information to people interested in volunteering and advises organisations who involve volunteers in their work. The Centre markets volunteer opportunities on behalf of organisations; matches volunteers to organisations; helps organisations to develop new volunteering opportunities; and advises on good practice in involving volunteers. Volunteer Centre Swindon is the only volunteer development agency in Wiltshire and Swindon. Outside Swindon, the local CVS’s offer some local brokerage and marketing of opportunities. Volunteer Centre Swindon, together with CIB, represents the voluntary sector on Swindon Employees in the Community Network.

Learning Curve – set up by the CVS’s and Community First, Learning Curve provides training and consultancy for voluntary organisations. Its courses and services include IT, basic skills, management, capacity building, and

volunteering. Learning Curve now is substantially funded by the Learning and Skills Council and also provides community-based learning for adults, leading to NVQ or key skills qualifications.

Support For Organisations Addressing Particular Needs

The above infrastructure organisations support a wide range of local voluntary organisations. Other support organisations provide advice and guidance to organisations addressing specific needs. These include:

Race Equality Councils – Wiltshire Race Equality Council and Swindon Race Equality Council – provide information, and advice to individuals and voluntary sector organisations from minority ethnic communities, and to professionals working with individuals from minority ethnic communities. They support and represent individuals experiencing racial harassment; encourage other bodies to implement race equality policies and practices; and support the development of services to meet the needs of minority ethnic communities.

Disability Coalition – Swindon Coalition of Disabled People - maintains a contact network of individual disabled people and organisations, communicating in appropriate formats and through a variety of mediums, eg newsletters, and local media. The Coalition has a programme of consultation initiatives with statutory, voluntary and commercial organizations.

Youth Action Wiltshire – provides information, advice and support to new and existing youth clubs.

Age Concern Swindon/Age Concern Wiltshire - work to promote the well-being of all older people both by providing services and products directly and by supporting other groups working with older people.

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust - helps to set up and supports local wildlife conservation groups.

National Bodies – some local organisations are affiliated to, or are branches of, national charities. For example, Scouts and Guides are affiliated to their national bodies; pre-schools are often members of the Pre-School Learning Alliance which supports them through regional branches; and the national charity MIND has local affiliated groups who raise funds and deliver services to people with mental health problems.