

## Risks to the Bassetlaw VCSE Sector & the communities they serve January 2025

### BCVS Summary Statement

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB (NNICB) is currently considering whether **to disinvest from the VCSE sector in Bassetlaw** (remove all funding) for 25/26. Simultaneously there is a continued reliance on the VCSE sector for service delivery and prevention work essential to the health and wellbeing of Bassetlaw communities.

3000 of the most vulnerable citizens currently receive direct support from 9 NNICB VCSE funded organisations in Bassetlaw per year, with a further 10,000 people receiving indirect support as a result of this investment. The threat posed to local residents by disinvestment, coupled with the significant potential impact on primary and secondary care in Bassetlaw, remains alarmingly high.

It should be noted that the VCSE grant investment levels are significantly lower per Bassetlaw head of population **at 21% of the level for England and 46%** of the amount per head of population in Nottinghamshire. (360 Giving, September 2024).

Within Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, as seen across the country, for all income, more funding per general charity is awarded to cities on average. **In Nottingham general charities received £560 on average per head of population compared to Bassetlaw general charities which received £203 per head.** (NCVO Almanac, 2023). ('General charities' excludes public sector registered charities such as universities.)

In addition, investment from public sector sources has reduced. We have seen for example a **50% reduction in Bassetlaw VCSE funding** from NNICB since Bassetlaw moved from South Yorkshire footprint into the Nottinghamshire footprint in July 2022.

In the same period, BCVS member organisations have reported significant growth in need and demand on VCSE organisations across Bassetlaw. Causes include commissioned and statutory services shrinking or closing and cost of living pressures increasing. Front line organisations have reported huge increases with one Bassetlaw organisation working at the heart of Core 20 communities reporting a **400% increase** in referrals in 24/25. All BCVS member organisations report a significant increase in the complexity and scale of issues presented and time needed to support each referral.

Research conducted by BCVS in 2024 found that 40% of Bassetlaw VCSE groups across the sector were utilising reserves to offset deficits in 24/25. This mirrors national NCVO Almanac data 2023 and VCSE Barometer Data 2024. VCSE leaders of NNICB funded services in Bassetlaw have confirmed that this is not sustainable in 25/26. VCSE leaders in the January NNICB VCSE Alliance meeting noted that risks of VCSE sector decimation in 25/26 should not be underestimated.

**The risks and issues facing the VCSE sector and Bassetlaw population have been escalated by BCVS** at all key system and place meetings every quarter throughout 24/25 including the VCSE Alliance, the Health and Wellbeing Board, The Bassetlaw Health Inequalities Forum, The Place Leaders Board, Bassetlaw Voices, The Frailty Programme Board and NNICB VCSE Alliance.

Public sector partners across Bassetlaw from the NHS and local authority continue to be **strong supporters of the VCSE sector**. Public sector partners in Bassetlaw recognise the essential contribution we make to both the wellbeing of the Bassetlaw population through

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prevention work and through the crisis support provided by over 100 Bassetlaw VCSE organisations involved in crisis support.

Above **undermines NNICB principles of Prevention, Integration and Equity** and further runs in opposition to all key health policy and reviews including the Darzi Review, the NHS Long Term Plan, the NNICB Joint Forward Plan, the Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Bassetlaw Place Plan.

As of January 13<sup>th</sup> 2025, **there has been no decision** confirmed by NNICB regarding investment in the Bassetlaw VCSE sector nor in the services currently resourced by NNICB for 25/26. Therefore, the risks to workforce through the loss of experienced teams are now becoming an issue as staff understandably seek more secure roles. At the January 2025 NNICB VCSE Alliance meeting, it was noted that some of the related risks to the sector, **but not the related risks to the communities we serve**, have been recorded on the NNICB risk register.

BCVS understands that **preparation for a public campaign and challenge to these risks is now underway**. Given the significant reliance on the VCSE sector for essential services, and the high risks to local residents of disinvestment in Bassetlaw, it is crucial for NNICB to make an informed decision for 25/26 to ensure the continued support and wellbeing of Bassetlaw residents and communities. BCVS is therefore publishing this summary statement and extended paper to support a fully informed decision.