

Impact Report 2025

Empowering local communities and the Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise & Faith Sector in Medway for over 35 years.



A message from our CEO

As we look ahead to 2026, we do so with both pride in our progress and clarity about the challenges that lie ahead. Over the past year, we have worked alongside partners, members, volunteers, funders and communities across Kent and Medway to strengthen the Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise and Faith sector at a time of significant change.

On behalf of MVA, I extend my sincere thanks to every organisation and individual who has collaborated with us in 2025, your commitment, resilience and shared ambition make our collective impact possible.

In 2026, we begin an important new chapter. Our refreshed five-year strategy (2026–2031) sets out a bold and necessary development for MVA.

We will continue to champion and build the capacity of the VCSEF sector, while expanding our role in community-led delivery, strengthening volunteering pathways, and deepening our influence within local systems. At the same time, we will focus on securing MVA's long-term sustainability through diversified income, stronger partnerships, and investment in our people and infrastructure.

With a clear strategy, strong governance, and the continued support of our funders and stakeholders, we are confident that 2026 will mark the beginning of a resilient, innovative and impactful future for MVA and the communities we serve.

Jack Packman
CEO, MVA Kent & Medway



Looking Ahead

Empowering Communities,
Reducing Inequality
to Shape a Better Future



Our Vision

*Empowering Communities,
Reducing Inequality
to Shape a Better Future.*

A future where empowered, inclusive communities thrive, inequalities are addressed at their roots, and social and economic outcomes are improved for all.



Our Mission

Strengthening communities and the VCSEF by building capacity, tackling inequalities, and inspiring community-led action. Championing collaboration, innovation, social action, inclusion, and high-quality service delivery; ensuring organisations and marginalised voices are empowered to deliver sustainable support into the future.



Our Purpose

To invest in people, place, and potential, enabling local leadership, and working collaboratively to ensure no one is left behind, we will shape a better, fairer, and more resilient future, one that is just prosperous, and sustainable for current and future generations.

Programme Delivery Headline Achievements...



6,571

people were reached through a ripple effect sparked by 219 people and organisations directly supported through Joy, across 18 community events and activities.

£133,803

Additional income distributed to the sector through a 37% increase in Joy Social Prescription Payments.

1,311

people engaged face-to-face through Cancer Screening outreach, with 10 activities helping raise awareness and indirectly supporting c.2,000 people.

1,840

people engaged and were supported through 11 targeted events and activities delivered by 15 organisations collaborating with the Community Health Catalyst programme.

280

people were positively impacted through 10 sessions, building on the direct support provided to 71 people through PCN Connect and Prevent programme.

1,000+

people across Medway improved their wellbeing through 110 group sessions, building on direct support provided to 215 people through Befriending..

Meet Susan...

“MVA has introduced me to lots of other key stakeholders in Medway.”



“Medway Children’s Foundation is a brand-new charity, so have been building our approach from zero.

Before finding MVA, we weren't connected to the wider charity sector in Medway which was a major barrier to our development.

We operate in four Local Authorities and MVA in Medway provides “by far” the best support. Your regular communications are very useful, and the sessions you organise with other charities are always excellent.

Tricia met me early on in the establishment of our charity and was super at being supportive and informative about who to speak to to get support, and which organisations to join and approach.

It's lovely to see her at lots of events, providing a friendly face when I am often alone, not knowing anyone else in the room!

MVA has introduced me to lots of other key stakeholders in Medway – from public health to other charities working in the same field as us.

MVA gave me the opportunity to present to their members, setting out what we do at Maritime.

Partnership working has emerged from these connections, including us joining the Medway Place Partnership funded by Sport England.

I am joining the VCSE Leaders Network shortly and look forward to being part of this.

Finally, £4,000 of Joy Seed Funding was received by our charity to fund our programme working with parents of babies and toddlers.

This is one of our first successful grant applications and has given us a huge boost to our confidence in our grant application work.

I have found MVA to be a hugely effective infrastructure group. A warm welcome from the very start from Trish – both online when I joined with lots of great ideas of who to speak to in Medway, but also in person when I attend meetings too.

As a new person in the sector, that means a lot! High-quality meetings, innovative responses to lottery grants and a steady stream of excellent communications so we know what is going on.

Collaboration in Medway is so much more effective as a result of MVA and all you do, thank you.”

Maritime Children’s foundation were successful in securing in September 2025 £300,000 funding.

VCSEF Infrastructure Headline Achievements...



824+

organisations were supported through governance development, volunteering support, and partnership strengthening.

£585,213

was secured during the first three quarters of 2025 by some of the organisations we supported with funding. These figures represent only the outcomes we are aware of to date.

99%

of organisations we supported were satisfied with the service, found the information helpful and felt better connected to other services and support networks.

1,812

people participated in 23 outreach events during this period.

Return on Investment of **£6.12 for every £1** spent from Medway Council and Kent & Medway ICB

Meet Nii...

"When people feel heard and empowered to contribute, communities become stronger and more capable of shaping their own health outcomes."



For Nii Larte, the Early Cancer Diagnosis project began with a simple but powerful belief: improving cancer health outcomes requires listening to the full diversity of the community. From the start, he valued the decision to bring together people of different ages, cultures, beliefs, and life experiences. To Nii, this breadth of participation was not just beneficial but necessary to capture honest perspectives and develop solutions that reflected real community needs.

As the sessions unfolded, Nii observed participants bringing more than concerns. They brought their "gifts" – professional expertise, lived experiences, languages, and cultural insight. The group created a safe and respectful space where these contributions were valued. At first, conversations were cautious, but over time trust grew, and discussions became more open and collaborative.

A key insight for Nii was the importance of ownership. When participants were encouraged to shape the development, design, and outcomes of the work, their creativity and critical thinking flourished. This process allowed people to identify challenges, highlight resources, and suggest practical solutions grounded in lived experience. Nii often described this as uncovering "project idea gold".

Throughout the process, several shared values guided the group's work: transparency, openness, empathy, and active listening. Participants also highlighted practical challenges to cancer care, including language barriers, unclear communication and the need for better coordination between health professionals and community members. In response, the group explored ways to improve communication, including using local dialects and multiple channels such as video, print, telephone, and WhatsApp to reach different audiences.

Nii also recognised the value of connecting different project groups to share ideas and avoid duplicating efforts. One tangible outcome was the creation of a community flyer that reflected the group's key messages and could be translated for wider use.

By the end of the journey, many participants wanted to remain involved in future initiatives. For Nii, the experience reinforced a simple truth: "when people feel heard and empowered to contribute, communities become stronger and more capable of shaping their own health outcomes."

Programme Delivery Headline Achievements...



152.5%

of the participant target total exceeded for Year 1 of the PCN Connect and Prevent, with groups across 17 sessions also surpassing the session attendance target by 152%.

88%

of participants reporting increased awareness of bowel cancer signs and symptoms following 35 pop-up events and 22 information sessions delivered through the Cancer Screening project.

£10,620

was generated by organisations through the Involving Medway and Swale project.

485

Medway & Swale residents supported through projects funded by c.£14,000 investment managed through newly launched Social Impact Gateway.

284%

Community Health Catalyst engagement targets achieved in Medway, with **426** engagements and **130** listening interactions delivered; whilst in Swale we exceeded by **194%** with **291** engagements and **91** listening interactions.

Meet Catherine and Becky...

As an organisation with a limited training budget, we are extremely grateful to Mid Kent College for providing the bursary to MEGAN CIC. [...]Without this bursary, we simply wouldn't have been able to access such a valuable opportunity." - Catherine

MVA's new "Realise Your Potential" Leadership programme, which began June 2025, aims to empower senior leaders in Medway's VCSEF, enhancing their impact, strategic vision, and networks. Eligibility criteria requires delegates to be 'Gold' level members of Medway's VCS Leaders Network with a fee of £150 per year.

In line with our commitment to upskill the sector and improve accessibility to development opportunities, MVA launched a Bursary Scheme supporting participation from resource-limited

organisations. The scheme's success is demonstrated by its first cohort including our first Bursary Contributor: Becky Farley, Director of Community & Civic Engagement, Mid Kent College - who are strong collaborators with the sector. They funded our first bursary recipient Catherine Button, Director, MEGAN CIC, who recognised the bursary's role in providing valuable opportunities that strengthen community leadership in Medway.



"[...]As a leading provider of training and education in our local area; we are always seeking to find ways to create and participate in opportunities for those individuals and organisations who may not always have the resources to transform their learning potential." - Becky

Programme Delivery Headline Achievements...



88%

of bowel screening programme participants increased understanding on how to access screening and undertake a FIT test, with **90%** intending to seek medical advice on symptoms.

243

individuals supported, from 11 organisations, in Frailty & Heart Failure via Involving Medway and Swale Project.

235

individuals and 13 professionals from 13 organisations in Living Environment were supported, and **190** children and young people from 9 organisations in Self-Harm via Involving Medway and Swale Project.

£20,000

generated by organisations collaborating with early cancer diagnosis project

23.5%

Average increase in participants' confidence across Medway & Swale early diagnosis project in relation to understanding and ability to impact their health - they also shared information and increased awareness across **193** family and friends' members.

Meet Don...

**“I feel very well in the group.
Keep up the good work,
Helen and Nichola.”**



In September 2024, Don’s wife, Doreen, moved into a dementia care home. After months of providing round-the-clock care and surviving on only two hours of sleep each night, Don’s own health had begun to deteriorate. He had also become socially isolated, having lost many friendships during the years he spent caring for his wife.

Although his daughter was present and supportive, she was struggling with the impact of her mother’s illness, leaving Don with no one he felt able to talk to about his own emotional wellbeing. [...].

Don reports feeling “energised” after each seated exercise session, and his regular involvement in activities has improved his mental health and

reduced his need for healthcare services.

Today, Don has become an integral part of the MVA Befriending community. New members often choose to sit beside him at their first session—something he welcomes. As he explains, “I’m more than happy with this. I remember what it felt like to be new, looking for help and friendship to ease my loneliness.”

Through MVA’s Befriending Programme, Don has not only gained friendships and support but has also rediscovered a sense of purpose. His journey highlights the profound impact of compassionate, community-based support—strengthening both individual wellbeing and the wider community.

Meaningful Impact



“This has been a life saver for me as I have multiple new friends and do not see next winter as being as lonely as the last one.”

Befriending Member



“I felt seen, heard and valued. The CPSOS space let me be vulnerable, connect with others, and find a shared purpose.”

Beth Atkins (MIFA)



“I managed to walk 1.5 miles which I never imagined I could do this has been the highlight of my year.”

Befriending Member

Nikki's story...

“Bowel cancer screening saved my life.”

When Nikki walked into the Pentagon Shopping Centre in Chatham and heard about the bowel cancer screening awareness event taking place, she introduced herself and agreed to share her own cancer journey.

She was only 43 years old when she received the news: stage 3 bowel cancer.

The intermittent bleeding she experienced for six months didn't seem alarming—she assumed it was piles.

She visited her GP and was given a FIT (Faecal Immunochemical Test). The results were concerning, leading to a colonoscopy that confirmed her worst fear: a rectal tumour.

Nikki underwent surgery to remove the tumour and part of her large bowel.

She commenced treatment and finally, ten months after her diagnosis, she was declared cancer-free.

More wonderful news, Nikki has found a new calling: raising awareness about bowel cancer and screening.



Meaningful Impact



"I feel extremely connected to other services and support [...] their guidance, encouragement, and responsiveness have made everything run smoothly."

Lyse Pichou, Fort4Youth Foundation



"The group was very welcoming, activities were interesting [...] you felt better associated with the area. [...]and while I can't get out much being able to chat to someone lifted the spirits."

Ann Smith, Befriending Member



"I left the sessions with a new voice and the courage to use it. I now speak up when it matters, take initiative at work, and bring that confidence into every part of my life."

Neil – Sunlight Development Trust

Meet Chris...

Chris attended almost all the 'Protect & Connect' sessions offered by MVA in partnership with a Medway PCN.

Living alone and using a walker, Chris couldn't travel far and often went days without seeing anyone.

After receiving a text from her GP surgery, Apex, Chris decided to give the programme a try.

Chris quickly found the sessions invaluable, saying, "I have been to lots of interesting events and have made lots of new friends and have really enjoyed it."

Wanting to stay connected and support others, Chris became a volunteer telephone befriender with MVA.

"I want to give something back, but I also want to stay connected," Chris explained.

Chris now speaks weekly with at least three befriending members.

Chris laughs that she went from seeing almost no one to having many friends and contacts – people she would genuinely miss if they were no longer there.

"I have been to lots of interesting events and have made lots of new friends and have really enjoyed it."



Meaningful Impact



"I have identified quite a few much-needed volunteers as well as having conversations with another organisation about working with them in the future. [...] we couldn't do it without you".

Volunteers Week Event VCSEF Participant



"It's been really comprehensive and because I feel listened to by staff at MVA, I feel like I now actually might have something real to offer the communities I work with."

New community start-up, Medway



"The RYP programme has helped to give me confidence in my ability as charity manager and has opened up opportunities to work with other organisations."

Kirsty Scurr, All Saints Community Project



Social Impact Gateway (SIG)

Medway, Swale & North West Kent

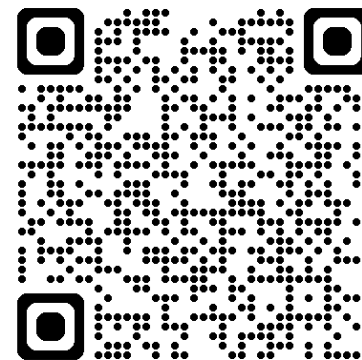
Launched in 2025, the Social Impact Gateway (SIG) helps VCSEF groups access funding, build partnerships, and strengthen financial resilience across Medway, Swale, and North West Kent. Free to join, it offers a simple, transparent way to connect with partners, collaborate, and access opportunities without repeated sign-ups.

We have 58 SIG affiliates signed up already, with registrations since September increasing by 225% as the model starts to gain momentum. Over £100k of investment has already secured for distribution via the SIG to affiliates.

The SIG isn't just another grant funding model; it's a growing network of VCSEFs and funders committed to long-term, meaningful impact. To find out how you can connect with new opportunities and amplify your impact, scan the QR code or visit: <https://www.mva.org.uk/organisations/sig-vcsef>

Why should you become an affiliate of the SIG?

- Potential to access new sources of income
- Only need to sign up once, then apply for relevant funding opportunities
- Free support to develop your 'contract readiness' status
- Opportunities to build new partnerships with fellow SIG affiliates
- Participate in co-design conversations with buyers and commissioners.



"[as] an initiative to bring together the VSCE sector and assist with funding opportunities, a great idea, great initiative."

Swale VCSEF CEO

Key Programmes in 2025



Supply Chain /
Process Improvements



Better Together Consortium VCSEF Infrastructure

We are a proud and active member of the Better Together Consortium, working alongside Kent Association for the Blind, Carers First, and Healthwatch Medway; plus IMAGO as an affiliated member. Together, we bring the VCSEF sector together in a way that strengthens collaboration while allowing each organisation to remain fully independent. Guided by shared values, goals and outcomes, the consortium is committed to reducing health inequalities across Medway.

Our collective health inequalities focus this year is diabetes as a primary priority area.



The programme is kindly funded through Medway Council & Kent & Medway ICB who we are proud to be partnering with.



Befriending Programme

Our Befriending service continues to support people experiencing loneliness and isolation across Medway & Swale through a growing range of social and wellbeing activities. Social outings, group sessions, and events have been popular, while activities like horticulture, seated exercise, and health checks are helping improve wellbeing, independence, and confidence.

Social connection remains central, with increasing participation in regular groups and events, and feedback highlighting stronger friendships, improved wellbeing, and a greater sense of belonging.



The programme is kindly funded through Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board who we are proud to be partnering with.

Key Programmes in 2025

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Project Joy

Project Joy is making it easier for people to access support while investing in the local VCSEF sector to support their sustainability. The Joy Marketplace now includes 928 activities, with referral level increasing monthly, recently reaching 179 per month, and increased VCSEF payments of £50 per referral. This year, over £178,000 will have been directed to local services, alongside £138,000 in seed funding supporting 29 new projects.



The programme is funded through Kent and Medway ICB. We are proud to be working alongside Medway and Swale Health and Care partnership and Medway Council public health.

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Community Health Catalyst Programme

The Community Health Catalyst Programme has worked with Core20+5 communities across Medway and Swale to tackle health inequalities in some of our most deprived communities. In this, its final year, we've engaged 717 people and delivered 221 listening activities—far exceeding targets. Using community-led approaches, the programme has successfully amplified local voices, improved access to health support, and helped reduce inequalities.



Kent and Medway

The programme is kindly funded through ICB and HCPC who we are proud to be partnering with.

Key Programmes in 2025

5

Realising Your Potential Programme

Following the success of the Transformation Academy, 'Realising Your Potential' became its 2025 senior leadership legacy programme and a platform for leadership development and collaboration across Medway.

We supported 11 emerging leaders, delivered 10 sessions and strengthened leadership skills, networks, and partnerships, particularly supporting small and micro charities – they have also developed a fundraising day to support all smaller organisations.

This cohort now joins the Transformation Alumni.



The programme is kindly funded through Lottery Community Fund who we are proud to be partnering with.

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Bowel Cancer Screening Awareness

Over 12 months, our Cancer Screening Project has boosted awareness, encouraged earlier checks, and supported faster diagnosis—helping save lives in our community through targeted outreach and education.

In total, 1,311 people engaged at the 35 pop-up events and 22 information sessions delivered – with 88% of people reporting that they are very likely to undertake a FIT test and 90% reporting they would seek medical advice on a symptom.



Kent and Medway
Cancer Alliance



The programme is kindly funded through Kent and Medway Cancer Alliance who we are proud to be partnering with.

Key Programmes in 2025



Early Cancer Diagnosis – Community Power and Self Organisation

CPSOS supported Medway & Swale communities to tackle late cancer diagnosis, particularly in low-awareness groups.

Participants shared and increased their cancer and inequalities knowledge, co-developed solutions and encouraged others to attend screenings.

This community-led approach has improved awareness, boosted screening uptake, and piloted an innovative model for reducing health inequalities and saving lives.



The programme is kindly funded through Kent and Medway Cancer Alliance, who we are proud to be in partnership with, and delivered with Medway and Swale Health and Care Partnership.



Primary Care Networks – Protect & Connect

A unique project working in partnership with a Medway Primary Care Network to help older adults build confidence, reduce loneliness, and improve wellbeing through engaging sessions and social connection.

Participants reported improved mental health and many went on to become volunteers, extending the impact. With a strong focus on 'progression', the project empowered people to stay connected, independent, and resilient while reducing reliance on health services.



RICHARD WATTS CHARITIES
founded 1579



The programme is kindly funded through Richard Watts Charity & Kent Community Foundation who we are proud to be partnering with.

Key Programmes in 2025

Supply Chain

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Involving Medway and Swale

Involving Medway & Swale brings together and empowers community organisations and health partners to build healthier communities.

Residents of all ages and from a diverse range of communities engaged on key issues and helped shape local health and policy decisions. This year included a focus on Young People and Self-Harm – and encouragingly, through the programme and other collective local efforts, a reduction was seen in A&E attendances at Medway Hospital by children and young people.



Kent and Medway



The programme is kindly funded through Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board who we are proud to be partnering with.

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Youth Volunteering & Empowerment

Building upon last year's Power of Youth engagement and co-development work, Phase 1 of the Shared Prosperity Funding Youth Empowerment Project has given young people at Clarion House the space to be heard, build confidence, and discover their potential.

Through relaxed, trust-building conversations, they explored their interests, challenged negative perceptions, and began seeing the value of their own experiences—taking positive and supported steps towards volunteering and community involvement.



**Funded by
UK Government**

The programme is kindly funded through Medway Council's UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund who we are proud to be partnering with.

If you would like to get involved...

Whether you take part in an event or fundraise, become a volunteer or act as a local ambassador for MVA – you're helping us work towards a Kent & Medway where communities are active, empowered and connected.

We ask you to join us in our vision – a future where empowered, inclusive communities thrive, inequalities are addressed at their roots, and social and economic outcomes are improved for all.

We are inviting our supporters to consider the possibilities of a better world, to help us empower people and leave the world a bit better than when we came into it; inviting you to share our ideals and to help make what was only a thought become a reality.

There are many ways you can support MVA, for inspiration and to find out more please visit our website or scan QR code:
www.mva.org.uk/about/support-us



If you're looking for quick and easy ways to show your support:

Support via Medway Lottery:
www.medwaylottery.co.uk/support/medway-voluntary-action

Support via Easyfundraising:
www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/mva/



Thank you to all of the incredible communities and partners we have worked alongside this year.

If you would like to learn more about MVA and our work, then our team would love to hear from you – please find our contact information below.



**Supporting Communities
in Kent & Medway**

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