

Key qualities of VCSE leaders on the Worcestershire VCSE Alliance board

A strong VCSE leader on the Worcestershire VCSE Alliance Board needs to be more than a representative of their own organisation. The role is really about stewarding the wider sector — balancing strategy, relationships, influence, and credibility with communities. Alliance Board members are expected not only to provide strategic leadership but also to take shared ownership of delivering the Alliance workplan. Each member will lead or support specific priorities, ensuring progress happens between meetings.

Essential Qualities:

1. Sector-First Mindset

The best board members don't just advocate for their own organisation's interests. They:

- Think about what benefits the wider VCSE ecosystem
- Understand the diversity of the sector — from grassroots groups to larger charities
- Can hold a countywide perspective while staying grounded in local realities

This is the single most important quality.

2. Credibility and Trust

People need to believe they genuinely represent and understand the sector.

That comes from:

- Strong relationships across VCSE networks
- A track record of collaboration
- Listening well and communicating openly
- Being approachable to smaller organisations, not just strategic partners

Grassroots credibility matters just as much as strategic influence.

3. Strategic Thinking

Alliance board members need to operate at system level.

That means:

- Understanding health, local government and integrated care systems
- Seeing long-term opportunities and risks
- Helping position the sector strategically, not reactively

- Translating complex system conversations into practical implications for VCSE organisations

The board should avoid becoming purely operational or discussion-based.

4. Collaborative Leadership

A good Alliance board member:

- Builds consensus
- Brings people together
- Is politically aware without being political
- Can work constructively with statutory partners while still advocating for the sector

You need people who can challenge professionally without damaging relationships.

5. Commitment to Equity and Inclusion

The board should reflect and champion the breadth of the sector.

That means leaders who:

- Understand barriers faced by smaller and underrepresented organisations
- Create space for quieter voices
- Value lived experience
- Recognise inequalities across geography and communities

An Alliance loses legitimacy if it only reflects larger, established organisations.

6. Ability to Influence

The Alliance exists partly to shift systems and strengthen the sector's voice.

Strong members can:

- Speak confidently with senior system leaders
- Advocate clearly for VCSE value
- Use evidence and stories effectively
- Influence without becoming confrontational

This requires confidence, diplomacy and clarity.

7. Accountability and Transparency

Board members should:

- Communicate back into the sector

- Share decisions openly
- Be clear about conflicts of interest
- Be visible and accessible

VCSE alliances can quickly become disconnected if communication flows only inward.

8. Action Orientation

The sector gets frustrated with “talking shops.”

Strong leaders:

- Take clear ownership of agreed workplan areas
- Drive progress/delivery between meetings
- Turn strategy into practical action
- Follow through on commitments
- Help maintain momentum and unblock barriers

The Alliance needs people who move things forward.

9. Emotional Intelligence and Humility

This matters more than many people realise.

The strongest leaders:

- Listen before speaking
- Handle disagreement constructively
- Avoid ego-driven behaviour
- Understand partnership dynamics
- Bring calmness and maturity to difficult conversations

Boards function well when members are secure enough not to dominate.

10. Passion for Community Impact

Finally, the board should be made up of people who genuinely care about improving outcomes for communities across Worcestershire.

Not just governance.

Not just influence.

Not just profile.

But real impact.

That sense of purpose is what keeps alliances authentic and prevents them becoming another system structure disconnected from communities.

Role Title

VCSE Alliance Board Member

Purpose of the Role

To provide strategic leadership, sector representation, governance oversight, and collaborative influence to support the Worcestershire VCSE Alliance in strengthening the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector across the county.

Board Members act as ambassadors for the wider sector and contribute to ensuring the Alliance is representative, credible, inclusive, and impactful in improving outcomes for communities. Alliance Board members are expected not only to provide strategic leadership but also to take shared ownership of delivering the Alliance workplan. Each member will lead or support specific priorities, ensuring progress happens between meetings.

The members are part of an alliance which delivers the activity in the workplan.

Tenure: a board member will serve a tenure of 2 years before review for re standing.

Expression of interest for the role should be for the attention of the chair for review against meeting the requirements of the workplan for the alliance.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Contribute to the development and delivery of the Alliance's strategic priorities
- Support long-term planning and sustainability of the Alliance
- Champion the role and value of the VCFSE sector within wider systems and partnerships

Sector Representation

- Represent the interests of the wider VCFSE sector, not solely individual organisations
- Ensure grassroots voices and lived experience inform Alliance priorities
- Maintain strong links with local organisations and networks

Partnership and Influence

- Build effective relationships with statutory, health, local authority and community partners
- Advocate for equitable partnership working and investment in the sector
- Support collaborative solutions to countywide challenges

Governance and Accountability

- Contribute to effective governance and decision-making
- Uphold transparency, integrity, and accountability
- Identify and appropriately manage conflicts of interest
- Attend and actively contribute to board meetings and Alliance activity

Communication and Engagement

- Act as a visible ambassador for the Alliance
- Share Alliance information and opportunities across networks
- Support engagement activity and sector consultation for the Alliance

Person Specification

Essential Qualities

- Commitment to the values and purpose of the VCFSE sector
- Strong understanding of Worcestershire communities and partnerships
- Strategic thinking and collaborative leadership skills
- Excellent communication and relationship-building ability
- Ability to work constructively within complex partnerships
- Commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and community voice

Desirable Experience

- Senior leadership or governance experience
- Understanding of health and care systems
- Experience of partnership boards or collaborative programmes
- Knowledge of grassroots community engagement
- Financial, organisational development or commissioning insight

Commitment

- Attendance at regular board meetings (Must be 75%+ annually)
- Participation in strategic workshops or subgroups where appropriate
- Taking a lead role for areas of Alliance activity
- Acting as an ambassador for the Alliance across Worcestershire, as a lead representative for the Alliance and Sector first before organisation

Values & behaviours framework

Value	What This Means	Expected Behaviours
Collaboration	We work collectively for the benefit of communities and the wider sector	Shares information openly, builds partnerships, values collective solutions
Integrity	We act transparently, ethically and accountably	Honest communication, manages conflicts appropriately, follows through on commitments
Inclusion	We champion diverse voices and equitable participation	Listens actively, creates space for others, values lived experience and grassroots perspectives
Respect	We value different perspectives and experiences	Engages constructively, challenges professionally, treats others with dignity
Ambition for Communities	We focus on improving outcomes for Worcestershire residents	Keeps community impact central to decision-making
Leadership	We lead with purpose, humility and accountability	Demonstrates strategic thinking, takes responsibility, supports collective leadership
Innovation and Learning	We remain open to improvement and new ideas	Encourages reflection, learning and continuous development