

navca
local focus national voice

Our Impact 2020/21

The year of Covid-19



Our Response:

NAVCA's team of staff and trustees recognised that the pandemic was going to lead to massive change – for the voluntary and community sector (VCS), for the communities our members serve as local infrastructure organisations, and with the potential to increase inequality and disadvantage. We focused on:

- 1** Leading and advocating for local infrastructure and the wider VCS
- 2** Communicating with, supporting and advocating for our member organisations
- 3** Co-chairing the VCS Emergencies Partnership





“NAVCA has shown its ability to respond quickly and flexibly to support our members, who were meeting urgent Covid-19 needs in their local areas. NAVCA has listened, learned and acted for the benefit of communities and our members: as a leader and advocate for local VCS infrastructure; uniting and supporting our network of members; and in championing the voice of ‘local’ as co-chair of the VCS Emergencies Partnership. This report shows the impact we have had in 2020-21, with a promise of more to come.”

- **Judy Robinson** | NAVCA Chair



Absolutely vital: local infrastructure in the time of Covid

Nationally, we helped bring together sector bodies to work with the Government and shared our insight gathered about the risks the voluntary and community sector was facing. In response to Covid-19, there was significant need for community action and intense pressure on organisations due to the collapse of fundraising and income generation.

The Government recognised the critical impact of the VCS response to the pandemic and allocated £750m in support for the sector.

Between sector infrastructure bodies, collaboration has been unprecedented, leading to more sharing of information, plans, resources and impact as a sector.

Over **£1m** in government grant funding distributed **to local infrastructure organisations** by NAVCA through the VCS Emergencies Partnership

NAVCA secured regular sessions for our members to speak directly to Baroness Barran, then Civil Society Minister. Thirty of our member CEOs provided invaluable insight to the Minister and officials about the impact of the pandemic on local voluntary groups, their responses and the challenges this created.

The local VCS was the early warning system for emerging, changing and unmet needs. NAVCA channelled intelligence from our network about operational challenges in to the Government, meaning:

- people in urgent need of food could be referred by charities to DEFRA's online platform for priority deliveries.
- MHCLG supplemented guidance on keeping community facilities Covid-19 safe.
- volunteering guidance from DCMS reflected the needs of our members and their networks, enabling them to actively recruit volunteers at scale as needed.



“It's **crucial** to have voices speaking in places we **can't reach** or saying the things we need amplified at **national** level. Thank you all at NAVCA.”

- NAVCA Member CEO | 2021

Gathering and sharing trusted information

NAVCA was a trusted and reliable source of information, advice and guidance for our network and the wider VCS, providing:

- ▶ A decision tree for volunteering activity during lockdown, which helped organisations keep their volunteers and their community safe.
- ▶ Our #HeartOfTheCommunity video, which was used by our members across England to demonstrate the impact they (and we) had during the pandemic, bringing to life the vital role of local infrastructure with policy makers and decision takers.
- ▶ Sixty-five Bulletins from April to August 2020, packed with relevant, timely information and resources for our members and their networks, which they used to keep their operations on track.
- ▶ Influencing to the DWP Kickstart scheme,

helping our members and their networks create six month paid work placements for young people.

- ▶ One-to-one support for our member CEOs, helping resolve issues including bullying, mental health challenges, and decision-making.

One member was facing a hard choice: **furlough the staff and shut the organisation for the duration**, or use staff and resources for the community response to Covid-19 and risk the organisation being unable to survive. **We helped support their decision-making**, and also shared the insight with the Minister for Civil Society, as evidence of the pressure facing the sector. This contributed to the **Government's decision to provide financial support for the sector.**



£750m
£750m
£750m
£750m

The Government allocated **£750m** in **support** for the sector

Collaboration between sector infrastructure bodies has been **unprecedented.**

We worked with over 20 other national infrastructure charities to share a collective voice and respond to the crisis as a sector, co-producing the #EveryDayCounts, #NeverMoreNeeded and #RightNow campaigns and the Five Point Plan setting out the economic impact of the crisis for vital voluntary and community sector activities.

"Thank you to everyone at NAVCA - fantastic work telling the story of local infrastructure."

We offered **one-to-one** support for our member CEOs, **helping resolve issues** including bullying, mental health challenges, and decision-making.



We ensured that people in urgent need of food could be referred by charities to DEFRA's online platform for priority deliveries.

Our input to the DWP Kickstart scheme **helped our members** and their networks create six month paid **work placements for young people.**

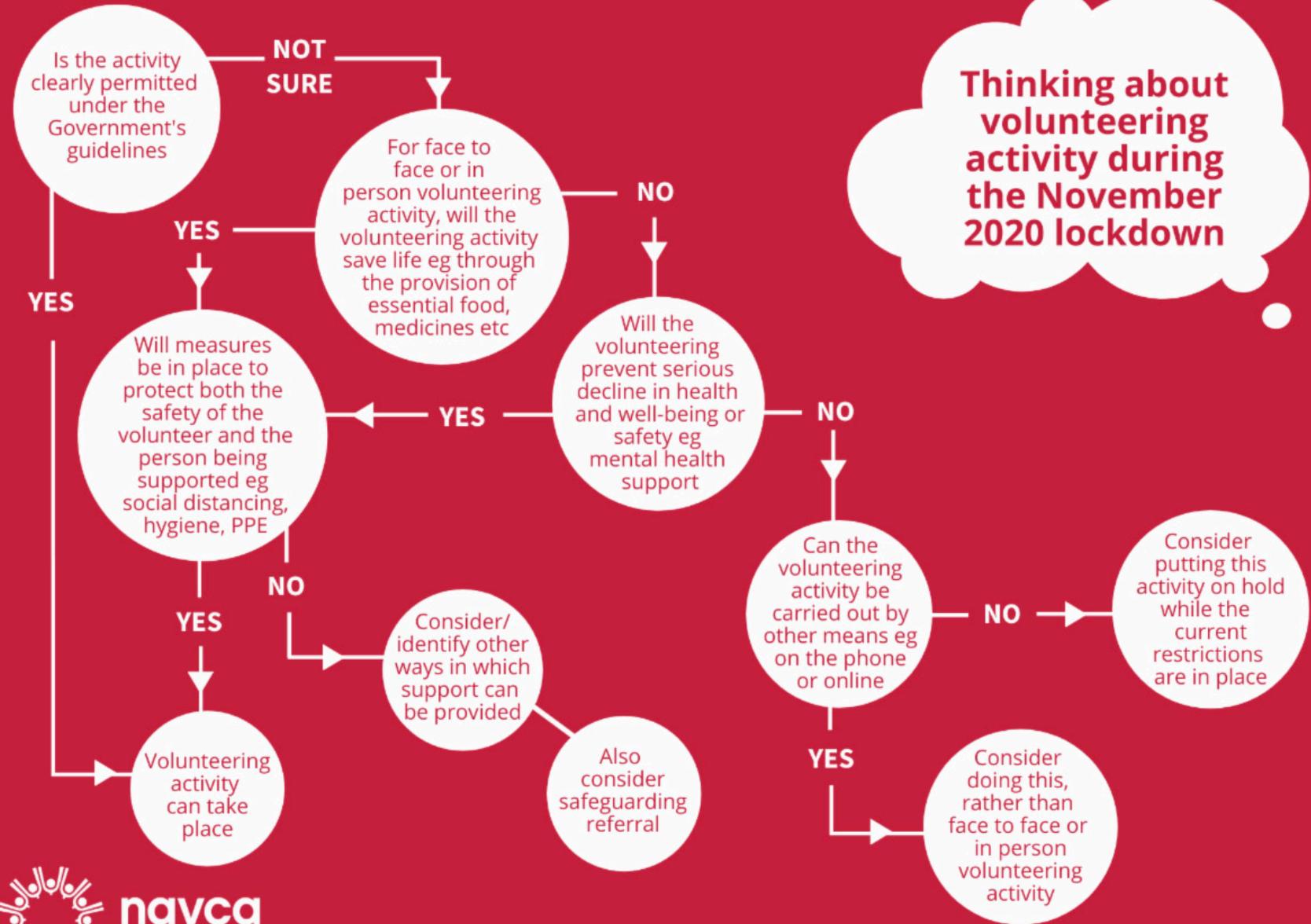
30,000

30,000

30,000

The 'find your local member' page on our website had over 30,000 visits, helping connect people to their local infrastructure organisation at a time of great need.

Thinking about volunteering activity during the November 2020 lockdown



Please always refer to Government guidelines in the first instance

www.navca.org.uk

A decision tree for volunteering activity was set up during lockdown, which helped organisations make choices in order keeping their volunteers and their community safe.

Making connections through the VCS Emergencies Partnership

NAVCA co-chairs the VCS Emergencies Partnership alongside the British Red Cross. Through this work, we:

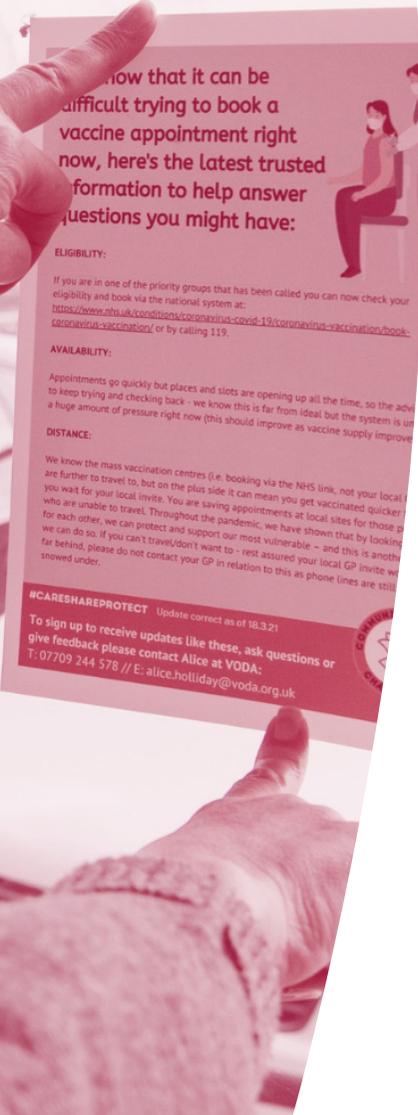
- > Brought together the skills, capacity and expertise of the local VCS and connected it to national players – something often missing historically.
- > Secured and distributed over £1m from the Government for the Local Infrastructure Network of 201 organisations working at local level.
- > Created a mechanism for those organisations to gather local information about unmet need which was then matched with additional resources.
- > Together the partnership has responded to over 220 requests for support on issues including volunteers (74%), PPE (10%) and transport (12%).

“NAVCA have played a vital role in the evolution of the Emergencies Partnership. Our partnership has always had the wisdom, experience and representation of local infrastructure at the decision-making table, and it has been that presence which has been key to our success. The partnership between our co-chairs, NAVCA and the British Red Cross, sets the tone of everything we try to achieve, and the NAVCA team have consistently aided and navigated the shared space between emergency planning and response and community and place based resilience building brilliantly.”

Robyn Knox, Director VCS Emergencies Partnership

“During one of the most sustained and wide-reaching crises of our time, the Emergencies Partnership’s work to build bridges both within the voluntary and community sector, and with external partners, has been invaluable.”

Baroness Barran, Minister for Civil Society



We have stayed true to our strategic direction

Assuring the quality of local infrastructure provision:

Our NAVCA Awards celebrated excellence and showcased the our members' high quality work and impact, demonstrating commitment and credibility with the local VCS networks, partners and funders.

We connected members' expertise in health and wellbeing to NHS England and NHS Improvement, helping local infrastructure shape proposals for the future development of integrated health systems and structures.

In partnership with Big Society Capital we co-produced a self-assessment tool on social investment. This means our members can evaluate their local sector's level of engagement and knowledge, identifying where this can be improved.

We provided expertise to one London borough on their work to commission new local infrastructure provision.

Making the case for local infrastructure across England:

Fifteen new members joined the NAVCA network this year. This means we have more coverage, with every local authority area in England now represented by a NAVCA member. Our media coverage for local infrastructure included the national press, giving new audiences an understanding of the role and value of local infrastructure.

Being an innovative national infrastructure body:

Like everyone else, we switched our activities with our members to online. Our members said this made them feel connected, supported and able to contribute to the Government's understanding of the reality of local response to Covid-19. We also created a new virtual network for communications specialists in local infrastructure. Through this network we also secured free access to a graphic design platform, saving our members at least £100 each.



35

We held 35 events engaging members with the Minister for Civil Society, and topics such as:

- > health and wellbeing, volunteering, funding
- > Covid-19 testing and vaccination programmes
- > equity, diversity and inclusion
- > communications and updates from the Charity Commission.

65

Bulletins from April to August 2020, packed with relevant, timely information & resources

for our members, which they used to keep their operations on track.

#HeartOfTheCommunity

Our video was used by our members across England and has been seen by over 1000 people!



Over 2,500 messages were posted on COIN, our Chief Officer's Information Network, providing a space for peer support and information exchange.

During the lockdown our daily "COIN compressed" shared up-to-the-minute distilled information.

Over 80 organisations active in the Barking Owl – our member network for communications specialists.

"I love it and shout about it regularly! So useful - tips, info, awareness etc. I've joined many 'groups' in the past with the promise of being useful but rarely find one that actually lives up to the promise! So thank you!" NAVCA member talking about the Barking Owl



“I got in touch with the Emergencies Partnership multi-agency cell that covers my area and they **swiftly helped** with my ask for more volunteers. We now have **over 80 volunteers** and counting and now the service can also support those who are feeling lonely and isolated.”

- NAVCA Member CEO | 2021

What next? Our aims for the future

1 Assuring the quality of local infrastructure provision: we can demonstrate and champion the quality of local sector support and development as delivered by every member of NAVCA.

2 Making the case for local infrastructure, and filling the gaps across England: the local VCSE in every part of England has access to the quality support and development services it needs, either through a NAVCA member, a non-member local infrastructure body or an effective alternative model of provision.

3 Being an innovative national infrastructure body: we have credibility and influence as the voice of local sector support and development, and provide the best possible support for our members, by being the best national infrastructure body we can be.

Working with a growing membership of local infrastructure organisations, covering every local authority area in England, NAVCA will continue to advocate for investment in local VCS support and development – because engaged and supported social action is a crucial element of resilient communities.





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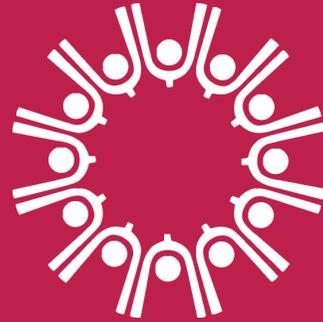
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Sheffield
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Also supported by NHS England
and NHS Improvement



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We would like to thank our funders, members and colleagues for the ongoing support that we experienced throughout 2020 and into 2021. We are so grateful for all the help provided to us and our network and have been overwhelmed with the community spirit we have witnessed across the voluntary and community sector throughout the year of Covid-19.