

## WAVOCC Chair's Report 01/04/2008 – 31/03/2009.

In keeping with my previous reports, I'd like to start by thanking my fellow Trustees for their support and commitment during this year – we are a small band but I believe we have worked extremely well together and achieved some significant results for both WAVOCC and for the sector. So my thanks to *Keith, Philip T, Philip G, Fred, Jenny, Liz, Peter & to Magda* who we co-opted on to the Executive following her retirement last year!! I'd also want to thank *John Taylor* for his continued support and commitment as an advisor to the Trustees. We would welcome more members as Trustees – the role isn't onerous but is very important if WAVOCC is to continue to develop its role as a voice for the Health and Social Care aspect of the VCS. In actual fact, our meetings are very informative and provide an excellent opportunity for information sharing, for networking and for looking at joint working opportunities so we'd be delighted to discuss co-option opportunities with any member either to-day or in the future.

In many ways this has been quite a difficult, even frustrating year, with the continuing 'gloom' about the economy which has had a 'knock-on' effect for many organisations in the voluntary sector. This has meant that many groups have had to think seriously about their role and their activity and adjust this to the funding available. WAVOCC has not escaped these issues both directly for ourselves and indirectly for our members. Whilst I'd like to think that the worst will soon be over, I am sceptical that this is so, and believe that the next few years could be quite difficult for both the VCS and our statutory partners.

Before I move on to discuss the work of WAVOCC during 2008 / 2009, there are a couple more Thanks I'd like to pass on. The first is to *Jim (Smith)* our very dedicated development worker who has worked tirelessly to increase both the perception and the role of WAVOCC. Although Jim's role is also linked to the work of WIC, Jim has worked to make sure that WAVOCC is still a vital organisation within Health & Social Care – more about some of his work later. I'd also like to take this opportunity to Thank *Liz Meloni* – our amazing Admin Worker who has provided WAVOCC with absolutely excellent admin support for many years. Unfortunately Liz has stated that she wishes to retire by the end of April 2009 so we have recently begun the process for recruiting a new member of staff whose role will have a slightly wider remit to include Membership Development. However we hope to maintain close contact with Liz and I hope she knows that she'll always be welcome to call into the office for a chat!! My most sincere thanks to Liz for everything she has accomplished for WAVOCC and we will definitely miss her comments during our executive meetings!!

So on with a quick review of our activity during 2008 / 2009:

Firstly the Executive have continued with their programme of 4 meetings per year and have maintained a 'watching brief' on many aspects of the Health & Social Care agenda. An additional meeting this year was our Away Day in December where Trustees, with the help of an external facilitator, looked at how we could develop and refocus the aims and role of WAVOCC whilst

looking to develop a 3 year Business plan. This remains an on-going piece of work which we hope to further develop in 2009/2010. My thanks to *Philip Talbot* who has worked closely with Jim to move this process forward.

In addition there have been regular Members Newsletters and email bulletins which have provided members with up to date information on a wide range of Health & Social Care issues. These have included funding opportunities (including the Health Improvement Fund and the County Council Grants programme), training, COMPACT development, Consultation updates and news and information from and about members. For additional information, there is also the WAVOCC website which we are developing as a resource for a range of information items/surveys etc - so if you haven't had a look recently, do go to [www.wavocc.org.uk](http://www.wavocc.org.uk) and see the work being developed. This also has a web-members area giving members the opportunity to raise points of concern and share knowledge. Also if you have any ideas about items for our website, do have a chat with Jim as he'd be delighted to look at areas of potential development.

As I mentioned last year, WAVOCC is an active member of the Worcestershire Infrastructure Consortium (WIC) particularly in relation to the work of both the Voices Hub and the Marketing, Accountability & Communication (MAC) group. This has been the first year activity has been linked to the Worcestershire County Council Strategic Grant and inevitably all organisations within WIC have had to adapt their work in one way or another. I'd wish to record my thanks to *Suzy James* (the Voluntary Sector Support Unit Co-ordinator at Worcestershire County Council) for her support and keen interest in the work of all WIC members as we've moved into this slightly different way of working.

For WAVOCC in particular, this has meant some alteration in our activity as Jim, our Development worker, is actually funded by / through WIC to develop the Engagement & Representation activity of WIC, and of the sector. To this end, Jim has completed a mapping exercise of all the VCS representatives on District & County LSP's, Theme, and in some cases, Task groups – a huge undertaking especially as people can move around quite a lot!! My Thanks to everyone who takes on the role of VCS Rep / Voice – not necessarily an onerous task but nonetheless vital and one that we will continue to promote in the coming year. Clear processes for electing / nominating VCS reps are being developed and training and support offered to individuals who are VCS reps.

I'd like to take this opportunity to promote the importance of having a wide cross section of VCS reps involved in this work, as WAVOCC / WIC is increasingly being asked to find / source VCS reps for a huge range of Panels / Boards / Theme / Task groups etc. It is therefore vital that we have an ever growing number of organisations / individuals willing to become involved in this work. Anyone interested, or considering getting involved, is very welcome to have a chat with Jim or me, as we'd be delighted to assist in getting more people involved. As more and more work is undertaken in a Partnership arena and funding channelled through the LAA to support the National Indicators

which Worcestershire has adopted, having VCS reps 'round the table' making sure that all Partners are aware of the work of the VCS – and how this can help to achieve the targets - becomes ever more important. In addition, we are also developing a 'Short Term Representative' Bank for anyone who would be interested in undertaking a representative role but, at first, can only take on a short term commitment.

So where have WAVOCC reps. been busy? Well there are 2 main areas of work – Health & Social Care for Adults and Children & Young People. WAVOCC has 2 places on the Health & Social Care Partnership Board as well as representatives on the 5 Consultation groups (whose role is to bring forward proposals for service development), a place on the Health & Well Being LAA Steering group and 1 seat on the Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership – the second seat on this Partnership is allocated to WCVYS who I'd wish to Thank for the enormous amount of work they undertake in promoting and supporting representation within Children's Services. I don't propose to go into any detail about the topics discussed at these meetings as we try to ensure, through our feedback forms, that this information is circulated in our newsletters and placed on our website.

Through our involvement with the CYPSP, WAVOCC – through Jim and me, were asked to support the development of an Intergenerational Strategy for Worcestershire. Working with *Pete Sugg and Gail Kemp* (WCC) we have successfully completed this work and the Strategy has been 'signed off' by the Partnership. This has, in turn, led to the establishment of an Intergenerational Steering Group which is hoping to 'drive' this work forward – a case of 'watch this space!!'

WAVOCC reps. also attend VCS Forum meetings where, once a quarter, we have the opportunity to discuss some of the over-arching issues affecting the sector with the Director of ACS. Additionally, we have had discussions with H & W Fire & Rescue Service as they look to develop their Signposting service in Worcestershire

During this year we have also sought to re-develop our links with the PCT and I'd like to Thank *Paul Bates* and *Lola Abudu* for their support with this work. We did manage to arrange a couple of meetings with Lola before she moved to work for the SHA and since then we have recently had our first – but hopefully not our last - meeting with *Mick O'Donnell* (my apologies – not sure of his 'title'!!). We have encouraged members to respond to the PCT's 5 year strategy and it was good to see the responses we received. This is another example where WAVOCC has an important role informing health & social care organisations when their views are needed and being sought.

Continuing on a health 'theme', my Thanks to *Mark Jackson* who is the WAVOCC representative on the Worcestershire PCT Patient & Public Involvement Committee – Mark's reports are always informative and a useful resource and again are included in our newsletters and on our website.

Also as a follow-up, both the Acute Trust and the Mental Health Trust have moved forward in their applications for Foundation Trust status (the former more so than the latter at present) and WAVOCC responded to the consultations of both organisations. Subsequently WAVOCC has been invited to send a representative to both Governing Body Boards so as to ensure that a VCS Voice is included in discussions.

One major issue / change which has the potential to affect all health & social care providers is the Personalisation agenda – a national initiative which will have a significant impact for all service providers. WAVOCC has recognised the importance of this work and has taken a lead in ensuring that the sector is kept as up to date as is possible in a changing environment. Our website has a specific Choice & Control (WCC's name for the delivery of the Personalisation agenda) area, our Spring Newsletter had a special 'focus' on Choice & Control (Thanks to *Adam Russell* for his assistance) and our AGM will also focus on this issue. We have also had discussions with *Andrew Morley* regarding the development of the Shared Knowledge database – an interesting piece of work which will be further developed in 2009 / 2010. So as we move into 2009 / 2010, WAVOCC will continue to ensure that the sector is kept informed about this work and that members have the opportunity to question, influence and comment as the programme develops.

In my report last year, I mentioned a number of areas of work which I felt we would need to address during 2008 / 2009. Briefly these were:

- a) Funding
- b) Engagement & Representation processes
- c) Membership and communication
- d) Links to the PCT
- e) Choice and Control
- f) Foundation Trust status

Whilst from the above report, members can see that we have tried to address all of the above, not surprisingly all remain as on-going issues for 2009 / 2010.

In addition for 2009 / 2010, I think we need to include the following:

- a) Links to other groups / networks such as OPVSSN, Older People's Forums / LINKS
- b) Links to the Joint Commissioning Unit
- c) WAVOCC'S Business Plan
- d) Working with WIC – this links to the above point as well!!

So I hope this shows that much has been achieved during this year but there's still lots more to do – a recurring theme for the VCS I feel!!

I'd just like to close by saying Thank you to everyone / every organisation who is a member of WAVOCC – your support is much appreciated and vital in helping WAVOCC achieve its aims. It has been really good to see the increase in membership recently and to know that nearly every organisation has renewed its membership for this year. However if there is anyone here today whose organisation is not yet a member of WAVOCC, then please don't

hesitate to see Jim, Kate or me at lunch time – we'd be more than happy to answer any questions you may have and to provide you with the relevant paperwork to become a member.

Thank you all for listening – I hope I haven't missed out anything that WAVOCC has been involved with during the year and I'll happily take any questions either now, at the end of the session or even at lunch!!