



COMMUNITIES
IN SYNC

Communities in Sync Membership Prospectus



Involve • Innovate • Deliver

Communities in Sync

What this prospectus will tell you

The primary purpose of this Membership Prospectus for Communities In Sync (CiS) is to explain:

1. Why the consortium was set up
2. How voluntary and community organisations can become members
3. The benefits of membership

For those considering membership, this Prospectus sets out the mission, vision, values and principles which defines CiS's day to day operation. It also provides a detailed eligibility criteria, which potential members must meet in order to apply for and secure membership of the consortium.



**A dynamic partnership
of quality health, social care
and well-being providers
working together to improve
the lives of people in the
local community**

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Executive Summary

Communities In Sync Limited is a Charitable Community Benefit Society that was set up as a result of a collaborative effort on the part of the Sandwell VCS Health & Social Care Forum and Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO).

Using its collective strength, the consortium endeavors to secure public sector contracts on behalf of its Members and in time co-create service development and delivery by proactively approaching sponsors and funders to address identified needs. CiS also operates in a democratic manner, utilising the 'One Member One Vote' principal.

CiS is a member led organisation which is supported by SCVO and at the request of the members, SCVO has the status of being a nominated director on the board. This decision was made after considerable debate and discussions at the formation stage with the stakeholders within the VCS Health & Social Care Forum members. There was a clear view that an independent body and a trusted partner such as SCVO would play an enabling role and impartially support and resolve issues that members may need support with.

CiS's vision is to deliver high quality health and wellbeing services through local organisations which are rooted in the community and focused on improving the lives of local people.

A primary objective for CiS is to win contracts and secure investment to enable local organisations to deliver high quality health and wellbeing services. It aims to achieve this by:

- Securing contracts for the delivery of health and wellbeing services
- Managing the ensuing revenue through CiS
- Managing quality and delivery
- Opening up new contracting opportunities, promoting joint working and encouraging organisational learning and development for its members
- Become a partner of choice for those offering contracts by inspiring confidence through consistent delivery by the members
- Proactively approach Government departments to co-create initiatives that focus on preventative work in the areas of both adult and children's services.

Why has Communities in Sync Been Set Up?

In 2015 the Sandwell VCS Health and Social Care Forum, which is hosted by SCVO, identified critical trends which were impacting negatively on local health & social care services and the provision of these services to those in need.

Examples of these concerning trends included the restriction of service provision to those that are only deemed a statutory responsibility and the tendency for larger contracts to be awarded, which may be a disadvantage to smaller organisations.

The impact of these trends was that needs increased within communities, especially for those who are vulnerable, gaps in service delivery were observed and the lack of early intervention created substantial pressures on other services.

In the past, such gaps would be filled by local small organisations who were able to support those that fell through the safety net of state provision. However, the trend towards awarding larger contracts as well as the reduction in grant funding for smaller organisations has meant that this safety net provision was being seriously threatened.

An initial indication of this concerning trend was the closure of some local organisations and the difficulties expressed even by medium-sized organisations to continue securing contracts under a grant funding or a Service Level Agreement (SLA) type arrangement.

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council has like many others across the country, faced challenges in prioritising its limited funding allocation. While it has sought to maintain and support organisations which support services linked to its own strategic objectives, it has been less able to maintain funding for the wider range of local voluntary sector organisations working in Sandwell.

It was becoming apparent that there were major changes looming and SCVO, as the key infrastructure support organisation for Sandwell's VCS, needed to respond together with its members. The initial reaction to the changing landscape was to initiate discussions about local third sector organisations working more closely together to enable them to jointly bid for larger contracts. Discussions with members of the Health & Social Care Forum in April 2015 suggested that the members were in favour of forming a consortium but not on their own, hence requesting that SCVO take a lead on this issue.

Why has Communities in Sync Been Set Up?

Continued:

A workshop for health and social care providers in July 2015 provided a review of models used nationwide and Hackney & City Together, a subsidiary of Hackney CVS, were able to share their thoughts about the journey they had made to their present existence as a 'Special Service Vehicle' which was actively bidding for contracts on behalf of the Community and Voluntary Sector in Hackney.

Following these discussions, an invitation was sent to the members of the Sandwell VCS Health and Social Care Forum and other organisations that were not part of the forum. The result of this initial expression of interest exercise was that over thirty organisations stated that they were interested in joining a consortium.

SCVO successfully secured funding from the Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG to help the consortium come to fruition. CiS was subsequently set up to:

1. Improve the quality of life of local people, especially those most in need, through the provision of high quality, responsive, generalist and specialist services in the field of health and wellbeing.
2. To address the issue of unmet needs and work in collaboration to address need among different client groups and ethnicities.
3. Bid for and secure contracts for delivering services in health and wellbeing, thus increasing the likelihood that small and/ or specialist providers are not wiped out from the supply chain.
4. Ensure diversity in the local supply chain which utilises and builds on the skills, knowledge and expertise of the local VCS.

The Local Context

Sandwell is a metropolitan borough with a **population of 316,700** (June 2014 estimates) and is one of the 7 conurbations making up the West Midlands County.

Sandwell comprises 6 towns- Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich. The numbers of dwellings as at March 2011 were 127,072 with 121,498 households. Levels of owner occupation is 56.9% with 12.9 % rent privately with the rest being social housing (27.5%).

Sandwell is an ethnically diverse borough. While White British population decreased, the White Other category (excluding Irish) has increased by 78% with migration predominantly from Eastern Europe.

The Asian groups including the Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese and Other Asian account for some 19.2% of the population.

Life expectancy (a good measure of health) for men is 76.8 years for men and 81.3 years for women compared to the national average of 79.2 years for men and 83.0 years for women for England as a whole.

Claim for job seeker allowance (a good indicator of economic wellbeing), stands at 3.2% of the local working population compared to 1.5% for England & Wales. It is also higher than the average for West Midlands (2.9%). Sandwell has 584 green spaces covering 2044 hectares of which 60% is accessible to the public.

When compared to deprivation levels across England, the deprivation levels for Sandwell wards show that all would lie in the most deprived 50 % of all Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) nationally.

The most deprived wards are Soho & Victoria and Princes End. The least deprived are Newton and Great Barr with Yew Tree, both located in the north east of the borough. All wards within Wednesbury fall within the worst 10-20% of scores nationally and all wards within Rowley Regis are within the worst 20-30% nationally.

Levels of mental ill health in Sandwell are at a rate of 0.53%, the same rate as England as a whole. The percentage of adults with a learning disability is 0.46%, higher than England as a whole. The percentage of 18 to 24 year olds who are NEET (not in Employment, Education or Training) is 6.69%, higher than the average for England, which is 6.29%.

The creation of CiS is primarily a strategic response to address the inequalities, observed within Sandwell.

Vision

CIS's vision is to improve people's health & wellbeing, quality of life and to address disadvantage, inequalities, isolation and vulnerability. CIS also wants to improve the lives of clients in the community by securing investment to enable local organisations to deliver high quality health and wellbeing services.



Aims

The consortium has a number of overarching aims. These are to:

1. Ensure that residents who live in Sandwell and surrounding areas have access to consistent, accessible, high-quality and well-resourced services.
2. Ensure that services are person-centred and that the user voice and need is at the heart of all provision.
3. Expand the service offer through increased delivery capacity and identifying and plugging identified gaps.
4. Secure funding and contracts to support Member organisations to become, or continue to be, sustainable.
5. Increase the capacity for Members to be more involved in the design and delivery of services and to be able to influence and shape public sector strategic policy.
6. Co-create services by proactively approaching central Government departments with creative solutions to local issues and unmet needs.
7. Develop new ways of joint working and pilot innovative approaches, including, where appropriate, joint referral systems.
8. Raise the profile of CiS and its Membership's competencies and achievements in so far as such activity enhances the profile of the consortium.

Underpinning Values & Business Principles

(A) Voluntary and Community Sector Focus

CiS is open for membership to the widest spectrum of organisations that meet the criteria. CiS has a clear commitment to personal and community benefit and the intention is to build on the value-driven approach of the not-for-profit, independent sector to deliver the shared vision.

(B) Objectivity and Impartiality

CiS will focus on the objective needs of all its Member organisations and their beneficiaries. It will not be dominated by the particular self-interests of any one particular organisation or individuals.

Members will be required at all times to be open, honest and transparent in their involvement in CiS related matters. All those involved in any aspect of work related to CiS will be required to operate with integrity and to work to enhance the collaborative effort of all concerned.

Where there are a number of member organisations that can demonstrate that they can provide activities/services in line with relevant commissioning criteria, any associated contract income secured will be subcontracted to those organisations on a transparent, fair and equitable basis.

Members have the right to put their organisation forward for any joint bid. Which Members to include in a bid as well as the allocation of funding within each consortium's bid will be the responsibility of the Directors. Directors will be guided in their decision to ensure that CiS achieves its objectives within the framework of its ethos while ensuring long term viability so that it is able to deliver its mission from a position of strength.

(C) Mechanism for Funding and Provision for Bidding

There may be occasions when Members prefer to bid separately as lead bodies or by themselves for contracts for which the CiS is also bidding. In such instances members bidding separately will be required to notify CiS of their intention to bid alone at the earliest possible opportunity and then withdraw from negotiations and discussions with the wider group.

It should be noted that CiS's structure will also be available as a conduit for existing commissioners/funders, if and when they decide that they want to exploit a single, local point of contracting to commission via single tender action.

(D) Open to Applications from Potential New Members

The consortium will not operate as a closed circle of Members but will be permanently open to the potential for new members to come on board, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria.

Members can be assured that CiS will:-

- Create an annual business plan
- Explore and take advantage of opportunities, drawing on the strategic position, influence and knowledge it has together with its Members and their sub-contractors
- Undertake long range forecasting
- Pursue contracting opportunities that are in the best interests of CiS and its Members and their sub-contractors
- Focus on outcomes and impact
- Improve and enhance the relevant skills of the staff within the Membership
- Review on a regular, systematic basis, existing areas of work for ongoing viability, as part of a continuous risk management strategy
- Maintain strong internal research and development capacity to underpin the analysis of the opportunities and threats within the business environment and to inform business development strategies

Eligibility Criteria for Membership

A) Type of Organisation

- (i) Any prospective Member must be a frontline health and wellbeing service provider in the not-for-profit sector and have clear and transparent charitable objectives.
- (ii) Health and wellbeing services should be the sole or main activity of the organisation, or might be an element of its wider portfolio of services.
- (iii) Any prospective Member will need to have clear social objectives and it is anticipated that in practice most will be Unincorporated Associations or Incorporated organisations such as Companies Limited by Guarantee, CICs, Cooperatives or Community Benefit Societies. Some may also be registered charities.
- (iv) It is expected that Member organisations will be able to generate considerable evidence of social added value in a wide variety of ways which will be identified as the consortium develops.

B) Geographical Area of Location and Operation

- (v) A Member organisation should be based in Sandwell or surrounding area and/or
- (vi) Provide services in Sandwell or surrounding area and be able to demonstrate a long-term commitment to Sandwell.

C) Information Management Capability

- (i) Member organisation must be able to provide regular information relating to client numbers, case details, financial performance etc.
- (ii) Information must be provided on time and in a form that is complete, clear and accurate. This requirement is fundamental to the entire operation.

D) Minimum Threshold for Quality Assurance

- (vii) A prospective Member organisation must be able to provide services to a minimum threshold of quality as required by standards that may be in force from time to time or
- (viii) Be able work under the umbrella of another organisation prepared to assure quality of provision under any sub-contracting arrangements.

E) Commitment to Collaborative Working Style

- (i) Commitment to participating in the collaborative development whilst adhering to the CiS's code of practice, ways of working and protocols.
- (ii) Commitment to sharing expertise, knowledge and experience with other Members

At this juncture CiS does not wish to be prescriptive about which quality systems should be adopted by organisations, as it recognises that use of quality assurance systems will vary according to the precise nature, size, remit and operating circumstances of providers. Instead, prospective Members will need to demonstrate how their chosen system safeguards standards of quality within the organisation.

It will also be seen as a proxy indicator that the organisation possesses a full range of policies (e.g. Equal Opportunities, Health and Safety, Staff Development and Supervision, Safeguarding etc.) that it systematically implements and regularly reviews.

Commitment to the continuous development and improvement of the organisation and its staff and volunteers will demonstrate willingness on the part of a prospective Member to learn and to move forward organisationally with a clear focus on the needs of the service users or beneficiaries. It will align with a commitment to appropriate standards of 'clinical governance'.

At the point of awarding sub-contracts CiS will undertake a thorough and rigorous process of due diligence that will involve assessing the Member organisation/potential sub-contractor against a comprehensive contract compliance framework.

If your organisation does not fulfil all the 5 criteria, joining the consortium as a Member at this stage would not be viable. Please contact SCVO to discuss sources of advice and support which can help prepare your organisation for membership.

Benefits of Membership

Becoming a member of CiS allows organisations to take part in joint tender applications for public sector contracts, and secure funding for service delivery which may be difficult to do as a sole applicant without such collaboration. There are numerous other advantages which include:

- Expanding the collective aims and aspirations of the Members throughout Sandwell and further afield
- The ability to gain greater negotiating and bargaining power through increased scale and capacity for service delivery
- A peer support network made up of staff within the Member organisations.
- Enhanced competitiveness within the external funding environment
- Creating a single, unified point of contracting, and in so doing increase attractiveness to contractors/funders
- Increased chances of winning tenders and securing funding, enabling member organisations to build on their existing funding bases
- Increased public profile as a part of a larger more visible organisation which would be able to network as a representative body
- Generating economies of scale and efficiency savings through the sharing of resources, knowledge and expertise
- Partner organisations having more time to focus on frontline delivery by transferring some of the administrative and associated requirements to a centralised support infrastructure

Operating Communities in Sync

CiS will have a CEO leading the organisation and being supported by the Board of Directors to whom they will be accountable. The CEO may have staff resources or access to freelance services to support other functions in operating CiS.

The CEO will proactively seek out and scan the horizon for new funding and business development opportunities on behalf of the members and ensure smooth and efficient contract management.

The CEO will lead on consortium-wide strategic and business planning processes which includes:

- Reviewing the operating environment
- Setting objectives and targets
- Coordinating joint bids on behalf of the Members
- Undertaking joint needs analysis
- Undertaking risk assessment
- Undertaking full cost analysis and determine unit prices
- Engaging and lead on dialogue with commissioners
- Working with members to submit

consortium tenders (including negotiating Pre-Qualification Questionnaire [PQQ] processes where applicable)

- Supporting Members to set up systems for awarding sub-contracts/spot purchasing arrangements
- Implementing measures together with member organisations to maintain and improve standards of delivery
- Providing financial management and reporting with Member organisation participation
- Raising the profile in order to develop brand awareness of CiS and secure business.

CiS will report its own financial performance at agreed intervals to and through the Board of Directors.

Operating Communities in Sync

Continued:

Model & Operating Structure of Communities in Sync

CiS consists of a Board of Directors who take the lead on making strategic and operational decisions with the support of the CEO. The CEO is accountable to the Board of Directors to achieve the objectives and targets that have been set.

The CEO may also manage other staff or service provider arrangements, as agreed with the delivery partners.

Members

Board of Directors

CEO

The consortium Members appoint the Directors and each Member has one vote, regardless of the size of their organisation.

Legal Structure & Governance Arrangements

CiS is registered with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) as a Charitable Community Benefit Society. Community Benefit Societies are referred to as 'Society' for short. The Society's registered number is 7460. CIS was registered on 1st December 2016 by the FCA. The Charity reference number provided by HMRC is EW61273.

The Board of Directors is made up of two categories of Director. The Board of Directors consist of Member Directors who are always in the majority on the board and nominated Directors from SCVO.

Appendix - Policy for Managing Conflict of Interest

This policy aims to avoid any conflict of interests arising within the CiS Membership and other entities.

Scope

This policy applies to the CiS members and any associated organisations of the Member.

Definitions

Confidential information: Any information about a person or legal entity, company, institution or client which is not publicly available.

Price-sensitive information: Concrete information which is not in the public domain and which concerns either directly or indirectly the person or legal entity, company or institution to which it relates.

Provisions

The staff of CiS should treat all contact with Members as contact with third parties where that contact concerns the communication of price-sensitive or confidential market information, with the exception of mandatory reports produced to statutory requirements or as otherwise required by law.

If it is necessary for staff to contact staff from another Member organisations in order to be able to carry out their work effectively, and this contact might involve the dissemination of price-sensitive or confidential market information, then the responsibility for ensuring confidentiality shall pass to the Member and CiS will specify that this information is confidential not to be shared outside with any other party.

At least once a year, the Directors of CiS will check whether the policy and the procedures concerning Conflict of Interest Policy are still up to date. The policy will be reassessed by the Directors of CiS in the event of organisational changes and the introduction of new services.

If the practice to avoid conflict of interest is breached, staff should be encouraged to report this event without fear of sanction so that remedial steps are taken immediately to put all parties on an even footing and examine any damage to interests and relationships of parties concerned. Continual breaches will be grounds for invoking disciplinary procedures in accordance with employment rights and legal provisions within the employment acts.

If a material breach in practice occurs which compromises the conflict of interest policy, the matter can be referred to the Board of Directors so that lessons can be learned and appropriate action can be taken to mitigate future occurrence.

Communities in Sync

Membership

Application Form

Please read and complete the sections below

All members of Communities In Sync (CIS) have a shared Vision and Mission Statement. Please read through the Vision and Mission Statements below and tick the box if you agree with them.

Agreed Vision Statement: To improve people's health, well-being and quality of life, and address social disadvantage, isolation and vulnerability, by bringing together the diversity and expertise of the voluntary and community sector.

☐

Agreed Mission Statement: To create and maintain a sustainable network of responsive, high quality health, social care and well-being providers in the voluntary and community sector focusing on the health, social care and well-being of the local population.

☐

There are five key eligibility criteria to join CIS. Please read through each of the sections below and tick the box if you feel that you meet the criteria.

(1) Type of organisation

- (i) Any prospective member must be a frontline health and wellbeing service provider in the not-for-profit sector and have clear and transparent social/charitable objectives. ☐
- (ii) Health and wellbeing services are the primary activity of the organisation, or might be an element of its wider portfolio of services. ☐
- (iii) Any prospective member will be formally constituted as an Unincorporated Association or an Incorporated Organisation such as Companies Limited by Guarantee, CICs, Cooperatives or Community Benefit Societies. Some may also be a registered charity. ☐
- (iv) It is expected that member organisations will be able to generate considerable evidence of social added value. ☐

(2) Geographical area of location and operation

- (i) A member organisation is based in Sandwell or surrounding areas. ☐
- (ii) A member organisation provides services in Sandwell or surrounding areas and is able to demonstrate a long-term commitment to Sandwell. ☐

(3) Information management capability

- (i) Member organisation must be able to provide regular information relating to client numbers, case details, financial performance etc. ☐
- (ii) Information must be provided on time and in a form that is complete, clear and accurate. ☐

(4) Commitment to collaborative working style

- (i) Commitment to participating in the collaborative development whilst adhering to the Communities In Sync code of practice, ways of working and protocols. ☐
- (ii) Commitment to sharing expertise, knowledge and experience with other members ☐
- (ii) Commitment to supporting the Vision, Values and Mission of CIS Ltd ☐

(5) Minimum threshold for quality assurance

- (i) A prospective member organisation must be able to provide services to a minimum threshold of quality as required by standards that may be in force from time to time or;
- (ii) Be able work under the umbrella of another organisation prepared to assure quality of provision under any sub-contracting arrangements

At this juncture CIS does not wish to be prescriptive about which quality systems should be adopted by organisations, as it recognises that use of quality assurance systems will vary according to the precise nature, size, remit and operating circumstances of providers.

Instead, prospective members will need to demonstrate how their chosen system safeguards standards of quality within the organization. An externally validated quality assurance system will be viewed as a clear indicator that a member organisation has good processes and procedures in place to ensure that it effectively meets the needs of service users and beneficiaries.

It will also be seen as a proxy indicator that the organisation possesses a full range of policies (e.g. Equal Opportunities, Health and Safety, Staff Development and Supervision, Safeguarding etc.) that it systematically implements and regularly reviews.

At the point of bidding for contracts, being included as part of CIS bid, and awarding sub-contracts, CIS will undertake a thorough and rigorous process of due diligence that will involve assessing the member organisation/potential sub-contractor against a comprehensive contract compliance framework.

Communities in Sync Membership Application Form

Please complete the sections below:

Name of the organisation	
Full postal address of the organisation	
Authorised e-mail address for contact	
Name of main representative from organisation	
Authorised e-mail address for representative	
Authorised telephone contact number for representative	
What is the legal form of the organisation (CLG etc.)	
Registration No (if Charity & Company-please provide both)	
Is your organisation a member of any other consortium, group or association. If so please state the name	
What services(s) does the organisation provide	
Geographical area where services are provided	
Your annual turnover for the last financial year	
What quality system do you use to manage the quality of service provided	

Describe the organisation structure in terms of reporting relationships and teams	
How many members of staff do you have	
Of this how many are frontline staff providing services	
What do the rest do (please briefly describe their roles)	
How do you measure staff performance?	

Does your organisation produce the following? - please tick Yes or No below:

Quarterly accounts	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Unit Cost Information about each of your services	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Outcome measures for your clients groups	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Annual Internal inspection/monitoring reports	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Externally audited report carried out by a monitoring body?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Membership Fee

The membership fee to join CIS is a one off payment which is capped as shown in the table below.
Please tick the box which applies to your organisation.

£500 for organisations with annual turnover of under £100k	<input type="checkbox"/>
£750 for organisations with annual turnover of under £250k	<input type="checkbox"/>
£1000 for organisations with annual turnover of under £500k	<input type="checkbox"/>
£1500 for organisations with annual turnover of under £1 million	<input type="checkbox"/>
£1750 for organisations with annual turnover of under £2 million	<input type="checkbox"/>
£2000 for organisations with annual turnover over £2 million	<input type="checkbox"/>
£2500 for organisations with annual turnover over £5 million	<input type="checkbox"/>

Payment Information

Please enclose a cheque of the appropriate amount payable to Communities In Sync
or

Pay by BAC to:

Communities In Sync

Sort Code 40-52-40

Account No 00030376

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Contact Details

Address:

Communities In Sync
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West Bromwich
West Midlands
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Email: nav.rai@communitiesinsync.info

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COMMUNITIES IN SYNC

Involve • Innovate • Deliver

