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Friday 13 December 2024

Dear Cllr Revans

Many thanks for your recent correspondence in which you provided an update on the Council's position and confirmed your continued commitment to the VCFSE sector in Somerset.

There are clearly real challenges for us all at present, so the commitment to true collaboration and strong partnership working is needed more than ever. As a sector, we are dedicated to further developing our links with the local authority, at both a strategic and operational level, so that we can provide the best possible support for our local communities.

As highlighted, a significant amount of positive work is already underway, and we are looking forward to further strengthening these relationships. The VCFSE is a large, diverse and dynamic sector, comprising several thousand organisations, big and small, so we are also keen to ensure we have a shared understanding of the absolutely vital role our sector plays – and would welcome the Council's support in highlighting this.

The recent State of the Sector report highlights a range of opportunities for the Somerset VCFSE, which will be explored in more detail at an open event in January, and we hope Council members and colleagues will attend. Some immediate actions relating to our relationship with Somerset Council have also been identified. These include:

- the development of agreed principles to address the challenges of the current commissioning landscape
- discussion with adults and children's teams to find a solution to the challenge of referrals being made to VCFSE organisations that are unfunded or lack capacity

Once again, thank you for your continued support. We look forward to working together to build on the positive work so far and to making progress on some of the challenges identified.

All good wishes for a restful Christmas and Happy New Year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K Nolan".

Katherine Nolan
Chief Executive, Spark Somerset

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Liz Simmons".

Liz Simmons
Independent Chair, Somerset VCFSE
Collaborative