CVS
North Herts
& Stevenage

IMPACT REPORT 2025-2026

STRENGTH & COLLABORATION

FOREWORD

2025/26 has been another significant year for North Herts & Stevenage CVS. We exist to strengthen our communities by supporting the charities, voluntary organisations and community groups that make them thrive. From providing practical support and advice, to connecting organisations with each other, championing volunteering and delivering services directly to local people, our work is about helping communities become healthier, stronger and more connected.

This year, we have supported organisations through challenging times, helped three vital organisations avoid closure, reached record referral levels through our Reach Out service, and expanded our contribution to health and wellbeing across Hertfordshire. We also launched the Hertfordshire VCFSE Social Value Calculator, helping organisations demonstrate the difference they make.

Looking ahead, change will bring challenges, but also opportunities. We are ready to bring people together, champion our sector and make a difference — collaboratively, compassionately and with our communities at the heart of everything we do.

Hannah Morgan-Gray, CEO

VALUES

- **CARING** - we are kind and compassionate
- **TRUST** - we are honest, truthful and can be relied on
- **RESPONSIVE** - we set clear expectations and deliver results quickly and effiently
- **CREATIVE** - we encourage innovation and we stretch boundaries

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I'm on board for
WEEK
JOIN IN!
I'm on board for
WEEK
JOIN IN!

OUR IMPACT STARTS HERE

MISSION

We believe strong communities are built when people, organisations and partners come together with a shared purpose.

Our mission is to champion local charities and voluntary organisations, empower volunteers, and strengthen communities across our region. From helping new community groups get started to supporting established organisations to grow, we provide the advice, connections and practical support needed to create lasting local impact. We're also behind the county's leading online volunteering platform, GoVolHerts.

We also deliver services that tackle isolation, improve wellbeing and help people access the support they need, such as Community Transport, Reach Out and Staying Connected.

Everything we do is rooted in collaboration. By connecting people with opportunities, organisations with expertise, and communities with the resources they need, we help ideas become action and action become lasting change.

Together, we're building stronger, more resilient communities where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

PURPOSE

Our purpose is to strengthen communities by supporting the people and organisations that make them thrive. We champion the voluntary and community sector, inspire volunteering, and work alongside partners to tackle local challenges. By connecting people, building capacity and delivering services that make a real difference, we help create healthier, more resilient communities where everyone has the opportunity to belong and flourish.

APPROXIMATELY 5,000 PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY OUR SERVICES, PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS IN HERTFORDSHIRE

2025/26 WINS

We strengthened local charities and community organisations

Working directly with groups, we helped them become stronger, more sustainable and better equipped. From funding advice and policy development to good governance, we provided practical, tailored support and helped turn ideas into action. To make our support more accessible, we popped up in Letchworth, Royston and Baldock, while our new CEO and Volunteer Manager Networks brought organisations together through events and conversations around shared challenges, including funding and volunteer recruitment.

We reduced isolation and connected people

Helping people feel less isolated and more connected, Reach Out volunteers delivered over 35,000 hours of support to people experiencing loneliness, and recieved 616 new referrals. Community Transport ensured 400 medical appointments were met and saw an 87% rise in social journeys, helping people stay connected to their communities. Through Staying Connected, 61 devices were distributed and 98 one-to-one sessions delivered, helping people at risk of digital exclusion access essential services, stay connected and avoid being left behind.

We helped more people get involved in their communities

Over 4,000 new people registered on GoVolHerts last year, in search of volunteering roles, and nearly 800 new volunteering opportunities were created. Our annual Hertfordshire Volunteer Fair in Hitchin, alongside taking part in other fairs in Watford and Stevenage alongside online events, gave local organisations a platform to showcase their work and connect with potential volunteers.

We gave the voluntary sector a stronger voice

By creating opportunities to hear directly from organisations, particularly smaller grassroots groups, we use our position on strategic partnerships and boards to bring their experiences, concerns, and ideas into conversations with councils, health partners, and other decision-makers. From Local Government Reorganisation and the Civil Society Covenant to health integration, volunteering, and social value, we have sought not simply to represent the sector, but to create opportunities for the sector to influence what happens next.

+4,520

Community Transport volunteer driver journeys

11,279

People registered as volunteers at GoVolHerts

Winners

Breakaway Awarded Early Years Team of the Year by Families First

97%

of Reach Out volunteers agreed they made a difference through volunteering

635

Organisations using GoVolHerts to find volunteers

+422

Additional hours of supported play provided for kids with SEND and their families

+31%

Rise in monthly bookings at Community Transport

CVS North Herts & Stevenage · GoVolHerts · Breakaway Playschemes · Community transport · Staying Connected · Reach Out Hertfordshire

SUPPORT

HELPING ORGANISATIONS DO MORE GOOD

“I’ve found the CEO Network meetings to be a useful sounding board and sharing space to find out what other organisations are doing, what challenges we share and how others are addressing them, and just generally as a safe space to discuss the ups and downs of life as a CEO. It can be a lonely place at times with a huge weight of responsibility and I’ve really valued these monthly opportunities to connect, offload, listen, and learn. Thank you”

- Vicky Wyer, Triangle Community Garden

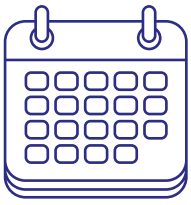
STRONGER ORGANISATIONS

CVS North Herts & Stevenage

STRONGER COMMUNITITES

We bring expertise, connections and opportunities to local charities and community organisations, helping them achieve more for their communities.

- Bringing local organisations together at regular events to build stronger relationships, share knowledge and work collectively for their communities.
- Nurturing targeted networking groups, consisting of organisations and people who are making a difference across our communities.
- Individual group developmental support, helping vital organisations stay strong and sustainable, preventing closure and protecting the services communities rely on.



20+
Events and training sessions

855
Email subscribers

105k
Facebook views

85%
Rise in social journeys

3
Local services prevented from closure

500+
Total event attendees

“I really appreciated the Volunteer Managers group in my role as Volunteer Coordinator. I particularly valued the information and ideas shared and the community that you have built." - Holly B

COMMUNITY CASE STUDY

CARING HERTS CIC

When funding challenges threatened the future of a much-loved wellbeing service, Jeanette Farrow (pictured) turned to North Herts & Stevenage CVS for support.

Rather than seeing 15 Wellbeing Hubs close, we worked alongside Jeanette to establish Caring Herts CIC - providing practical guidance, organisational development support and advice to help turn an idea into a sustainable organisation.

Our support didn't stop once the CIC was established. We continue to work alongside Caring Herts as it grows and develops, helping strengthen its long-term future.

Our support included:

- Guidance on setting up a Community Interest Company (CIC)
- Practical advice throughout the transition
- Ongoing organisational development
- Help to build a sustainable future for the organisation

Today, all 15 Wellbeing Hubs continue to provide vital opportunities for people to connect, stay active and feel part of their community.

Staff roles were retained where possible, volunteers continued to play a vital role, and local people rallied behind the service.

It's a powerful example of what can happen when a community idea is backed with the right support.

This case study reflects what we do every day: helping community organisations get started, grow with confidence, and continue making a difference long after they're established.

1,000

PEOPLE CONTINUING TO ACCESS **WELLBEING HUBS** EACH WEEK THANKS TO **CARING HERTS**

CONNECT
BRINGING PEOPLE AND
ORGANISATIONS TOGETHER

POWER OF VOLUNTEERING

FOR THE NHS & BEYOND

Hertfordshire was one of 15 regions across the country to be awarded the Volunteering for Health project, a national programme looking at how care can be transformed in both the NHS and in the wider community through volunteering.

In the first year partners and stakeholders were brought together to explore how these gaps could be bridged — creating better connections between hospitals and local voluntary services, improving referral pathways and making the experience more joined-up for patients.

The idea for a Volunteering Passport was also explored, with the steering group considering how a more streamlined approach to volunteer recruitment, training and checks could make it easier for peopel to move between opportunites and for organisations to make better use of their volunteers.

Katie Edwards
Programme Lead

"Year 1 has been about bringing the right people into the room and really listening - understanding the challenges, capturing ideas and exploring what might work in practice. I've been struck by how much knowledge and experience there is across our partners, and how much can be achieved when we create the space to bring it together. We've learnt a huge amount. Year 2 is about taking that learning and turning it into progress - testing ideas, developing solutions and continuing to bring people together to make change happen." - Katie Edwards

HERTFORDSHIRE'S HOME OF VOLUNTEERING

GoVolHerts

SO MUCH MORE THAN VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

The platform saw a significant increase in usage year on year. Enabling more people to volunteer, and more groups to find the support they need to continue their work.

As well as matching would-be volunteers to organisations who need their help, GoVolHerts is also a programme of support behind the opportunities.

In 2025/26, the team delivered:

- 9 workshops and support sessions for organisations
- 5 Volunteer Manager Action Learning programme sessions
- 4 volunteer fairs - including virtual events
- 1 Hertfordshire Trustees' Conference

GoVolHerts
We
Volunteers

GoVolHerts

Discover volunteering
rtunities in Hertfordshire

GoVolHerts
Volunteer

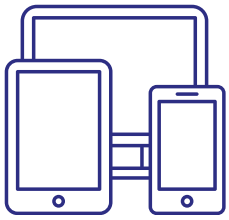
RENGTHENING YOUR COM
DELIVER
PUTTING COMMUNITY
NEED INTO ACTION

CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Staying Connected

Reducing digital isolaton across North Herts and Stevenage, volunteers ensure no one struggles to get online to access vital services, and connect with family and friends.

- Significant increase in impact year on year, helped by growth in volunteer recruitment and referrals
- More devices donated and distributed than ever before



61
Devices distributed

450
Residents supported

98
One to one training sessions

+133%
Rise in volunteer Digital Champions

387
Hours of volunteer support

+40%
More hub sessions delivered

"Your Digital Champion is a marvel and is so patient with me when I get things wrong. I have been shown how to save my photos in folders and do a WhatsApp video call so I can see my family in New Zealand for free. I've also had help understanding how to use my GP services online which is so helpful. You are angels without wings!" Elsie, Hitchin

NHCVS.ORG.UK/STAYING-CONNECTED

STAYINGCONNECTED@NHCVS.ORG.UK

TRANSPORT FOR CONNECTION

Community transport

A lifeline for residents who need help accessing healthcare, staying connected and remaining independent, volunteer drivers use their own cars in their free time to ensure medical and social appointments can be attended.

- Demand for the service continues to grow, for both health related trips and social travel
- Volunteer base growing to fulfill increase in demand
- Unfulfilled requests significantly reducing by 36%

328
New client registrations

64
Volunteer drivers

+31%
Increase in monthly bookings

85%
Rise in social journeys

+23%
Growth in volunteer drivers

95%
Rated as good or excellent

"I am 81 and I live alone, I am a non driver and have had two strokes. Community Transport is my lifeline to getting to the Lister Hospital, the GP or the Dentist. It is very well run and the drivers are superb. They help, are caring, supportive and friendly. It is a very real assurance to know that at difficult times I can rely on them." - John

Community
transport
Here to
Help

CVS
Breakaway
Playschemes
Reach Out

HELP AT HOME

Reach Out Hertfordshire

Companionship and practical support for people experiencing isolation and loneliness. Matching them with a volunteer in their neighbourhood who can offer support, companionship and friendship.

- Demand continues to grow with monthly referrals up 11% vs. last year
- Volunteers doing more, delivering 1200 more hours in support
- 100% of professionals surveyed agreed Reach Out reduced isolation for clients

616
New referrals

36,767
Hours of support

160
Volunteer inductions

501
Active volunteers

52
Avg. monthly referrals

93%
Felt more valued since becoming a volunteer

"Margaret is really enjoying Amy coming to visit. She is really lifting Margaret's mood and spirit - it's lovely to see. Amy is lovely; she has a positive attitude and is very chatty. We love seeing her every week, and having someone different to speak to. It also helps me have a bit of time too. It's a great match and we are grateful" - David & Margaret

REACHOUT-PROJECT.ORG.UK

REACHOUT@NHCVS.ORG.UK

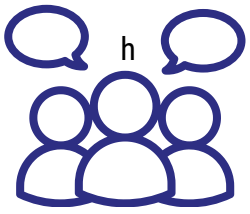
INSIGHT INTO ACTION

Age-Friendly Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire became an accredited Age Friendly Community in October 2024, joining a global World Health Organization initiative to make communities better places to grow older.

Over the past year, Age UK Hertfordshire and North Herts & Stevenage CVS have worked together with Public Health Hertfordshire to listen to older residents, understand the barriers they face and turn that insight into a county-wide action plan.

3000
Residents aged 55+ shared their experience



12
Focus groups held

4
Priorities now shape the action plan

FROM LISTENING TO ACTION

To create practical, lasting change with - not just for - older residents the project is now looking into the following areas:

- **Home** - Safe, accessible and affordable homes that help people remain independent for longer
- **Transport** - Reliable, affordable and age-inclusive transport that connects people to services, activities and communities.
- **Community, health & wellbeing** - Joined-up support, accessible spaces and services that enable people to stay active, healthy and connected.
- **Social Participation & Employment** - Opportunities to keep learning, volunteering, working and participating in community life for as long as people choose.

Breakaway Playschemes

PLAY, FRIENDSHIP AND BREATHING SPACE

It was a strong year for our Breakaway team, with demand for our inclusive playschemes continuing to grow. The team delivered 11% more Short Break Local Offer hours than the previous year, while welcoming 74 additional children and young people to the service.

- Our Holiday Club provision exceeded its allocated hours, delivering 103% of planned provision.
- 29 new members of staff joined the team to help meet increasing demand.
- Additional HAPpy funding enabled even more support to families during the school holidays.
- The team's hard work was recognised with the Families First Early Years Team of the Year Award, won in November 2025.

+74
More children and young people registering this year

4,254
Hours of support delivered

230
Children and young people registered in total

Behind the numbers is a growing need for safe, inclusive opportunities where children and young people with SEND can play, build friendships and enjoy themselves, while giving parents and carers valuable time to recharge. Breakaway continues to provide that vital space – helping more children to take part, have fun and feel that they belong.

"'In a world where services for children with complex needs are often overstretched or unsuitable, Breakaway shines as an example of what outstanding voluntary service looks like. They don't just provide care, they create community, build trust, and change lives." - Michelle Novelli

BREAKAWAYPLAYSCHEMES.ORG.UK

BREAKAWAYADMIN@NHCVS.ORG.UK

Welcome to Greenside

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are proud of what we have achieved this year - but we know that none of it belongs to us alone.

It is the result of many people and organisations working together: our amazing staff team, trustees, volunteers, community organisations, members, funders, partners and supporters.

Every conversation, connection, volunteer, grant, training session, community journey and act of support contributes to something bigger.

Thank you to everyone who has trusted us, challenged us, worked alongside us, supported us and helped us make a difference.

Our role is to connect people, strengthen organisations and create the conditions for communities to thrive.

Trustees
Adrienne Arthurs
Rosie Waters
Maddy Forster
Siobhan Brunwin
Adam Thapar
Christopher Nicholas
Alina Ahern

OUR IMPACT IS COLLECTIVE. THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO MAKES IT POSSIBLE