

Strengthening the Swindon Community



Annual Review 2021-22

Trustees, Staff & Volunteers October 2022

Trustees

Bob Barrett (Chair), Stephen Henderson (Vice-Chair), John Markey (Treasurer), David Bell, Ram Thiagarajah, Mark Flay, Sue Frawley, Sophie Peart, Stanislava Adamcova

Our valued regular volunteers

Linda West, JB Gurung, Charmaine Fisher, Shabbir Ahmad, Chris Hills.

Staff

Pam Webb, CEO, Jol Rose, Equality and Collaboration, Carol Willis, Funding and Governance, Rachel Hobbs, MarComs and Administration Lead, Samantha Jones (March 2022– July 2022) and Katie Linstead (July 2022– present) Veteran Support Worker (Seniz Mutlu, Business Development, Shaz Qaddus, Finance (no photo), James Moss, Property, Office and Shopmobility, Chris Hills, Maintenance, Mesut Mutlu and Jonathan Harris, Shopmobility, Karen Edmunds, Café Mobility Team Leader (no photo) Shabbir Ahmad, Café Mobility Assistant (no photo)



Pam Webb



Jol Rose



Carol Willis



Seniz Mutlu



Rachel Hobbs



James Moss



Katie Linstead



Samantha Jones



Chris Hills



Mesut Mutlu



Jonathan Harris

Chair's Report Bob Barrett

It doesn't seem like a year since we were collating our last annual report and I

was taking over the Chair baton from our previous chair, how quickly that year has gone!

It's been another busy year for the VAS team ensuring that the vital work of the Voluntary and Community Sector has been supported and profiled. A huge focus this year has



been the voice of the sector in the developing Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) Integrated Care System and Swindon Integrated Care Alliance.

We've also seen an increase in the number of enquiries from the sector looking for help with funding and governance issues as well as introductions to both sector and statutory services. We have continued to pro-actively signpost funding opportunities as the sector continues to recover from the impact of the COVID pandemic, particularly the impact that continued during the year due to necessary infection controls that had an impact on fundraising opportunities.

Our important collaboration role has continued to grow with the voluntary community and social enterprise (VCSE) Leadership Alliance, our VAS Live online networking sessions; our Trustee and other networks and our first virtual online expo running over 5 days and showcasing 40 local voluntary organisations. We've also continued our important work championing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Swindon and across the sector.

As the local Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) we also have an important role as the voice of the sector on key forums where it's not practical to invite the whole sector. We have continued to champion the voice and the work of the sector at Health and Wellbeing Boards and the Swindon Safeguarding Partnership amongst others.

Chair's Report Bob Barrett

We're proud to manage Sanford House as an important community hub and were pleased to welcome the Swindon borough council (SBC) Live Well team in late 2021 as tenants



and to manage the main reception area. This year has been one of hybrid working with teams continuing to manage infection risk by limiting the number of staff in the office at any one time and maximising the efficiencies of remote working where this is appropriate.

Finally, we've seen the customer base of Shopmobility grow by 20% and have enhanced our service to include the servicing of mobility scooters and the launch of Café Mobility in the spring of 2022 to raise vital funds to sustain this important service for those with mobility issues in Swindon.

I'd like to thank Pam and all of the VAS team and volunteers for their hard work and dedication through what has been another challenging year but one in which the vital role of the sector has yet again been showcased.



Strengthening the Swindon Community

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Chief Executive Officer's Report Pam Webb

As I'm writing this and reflecting back on our last annual report, I'm reminded what a treat it is to be sitting at a desk, not wearing a face mask and fully vaccinated against COVID-19! What a difference a year can make coupled with the incredible determination, hard work and efforts of humankind.



I wrote last year that in November 2020 we recruited Rachel Hobbs as a business administration level 3 apprentice, working in partnership with Swindon Borough Council to access their apprenticeship levy. Having successfully completed her 2 year apprenticeship and having helped VAS to be recognised with two apprenticeship awards from the South West Apprenticeship Ambassador Network (SWAAN) and having come third place in the Wiltshire Life awards as Apprenticeship of the Year (take a breath) and thanks to a three year capacity grant from the National Lottery, this annual report is being written by our new Marketing, Communications and Administration lead – aka Rachel Hobbs – apprenticeships rock!

Whist I've had the privilege to lead the wonderful VAS team in focusing on providing a brilliant service to the sector; helping with funding and governance; championing diversity and inclusion; building and growing networks; giving the sector a voice on forums; signposting through our newsletter, website and social media; helping with Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks; developing joined up support for veterans in Swindon; efficiently managing the John Street and Sanford House buildings; growing the Shopmobility service and launching a new Café ... I've also been spending a lot of my time this year representing the sector as part of the developing BSW Integrated Care System and Swindon Integrated Care Alliance.

Chief Executive Officer's Report Pam Webb

Whilst sometimes, it has felt like NHS acronym city and I now know my ICB's from my ICS's and ICA's – it's been an equal privilege to get to know, or get to know better, colleagues from across the system at Great Western Hospital; in the Local Authority, in Secondary and Primary care and of course the new BSW Integrate Care Board.

This is a huge change both systematically and culturally, but wow is it needed and the right thing to do. Kudos to NHS England for driving this agenda and hats off to them too for not only recognising the vital role the Voluntary and Community Sector plays in the broader health care system, particularly, but not restricted to, the preventative end of health care, but for mandating the sectors involvement in this transformational change as a key partner.

Suddenly there is a huge learning curve for our statutory and health colleagues

on the role of the sector but an equally huge learning curve for us on the diversity of roles across the system striving to keep people healthy and well.



I'm often asked "is this just another NHS 5 year programme, will this one last" the answer is I don't know – but what I do know is that the relationships being built trying, the barriers already being broken down, the growing respect from one stakeholder group to another and the patient pathways already being improved for the better is simply awesome. A very good friend of mine used to regularly say "teamwork makes the dream work" and if the dream here is a health and care system that is sustainable, efficient, joined up and helping people live longer – then I'm very proud to be on the team.

ICB-Integrated care board ICS-Integrated care system ICA-integrated care alliance

The aim is to affect a 'Left shift of care' over time, meaning a greater investment in preventative health services leading to a reduction in the Investment need in crisis and acute health services – which as we all know are more expensive. I really do believe that the Voluntary Sector has an important role to play in this change and look forward to working with you all to support this.



Back in July 2021 I was proud to sign the Swindon Borough Council Armed Forces Covenant for Swindon – VAS has also signed its own. I'm really pleased Carol was able to access funding from the Veterans Foundation to enable us to employ a Veteran Support worker. There are lots of veterans that settle in Swindon due to the close proximity of bases in Wiltshire and more attractive house prices – but the lack of join up in services to help them is a huge gap and one that VAS is keen to bridge.

I'll close with how I didn't anticipate setting up a café when I took over leadership of VAS back in late 2019 – but that's the voluntary sector isn't it – creative solutions to funding challenges – and if I may say so – really nice 'Change Please Coffee '– if you haven't had the pleasure yet!

Until next year Pam



Collaboration and Sector Voice



Swindon VX - VAS delivered the first Swindon VX online expo - a forum running over five days where 40 local voluntary organisations presented their services and referral pathways to an audience composed of SBC commissioners, frontline workers and community organisations. Over 140 people registered for the event and many more accessed presentations and information provided via the specially created VX online directory.

VAS-LIVE—Our occasional online networking event, VAS-LIVE, reached over 40 organisations and 240 people over the course of 2021/22. Topics discussed included lottery funding; business skills for charities; cooperatives for community action; development priorities for Swindon town centre; mental health and support; PR and effective use of the media.

Swindon Wellbeing—a network of organisations plus people with lived experience, passionate about raising awareness of mental health and wellbeing. VAS continued to coordinate and provide administrative support, including keeping the network's online presence up to date and organising regular networking.

We coordinated and helped deliver a successful Time to Talk Day event in Swindon's new community Hub, involving 14 organisations from the voluntary sector and local authority. VAS also linked the network with the ongoing developments of Swindon's new Mental Health Community Services Framework.



Pride of Swindon Awards—We were pleased to help launch these important awards at the Civic dinner on 5th November 2021; to administer all of the award nominations and chair the judging panel in April this year. Swindon has a vibrant community spirit epitomised by all of this years awards winners.

Collaboration and Sector Voice

Supporting diversity - VAS acted as liaison point to connect VCSE organisations interested in providing activities to asylum seekers as well as preparing a welcome for new arrivals. We linked up Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, the Harbour Project and Wiltshire Women's Empowerment to provide a half-day outing for people from Swindon's diverse communities who are experiencing mental health issues.

Health, help & therapy network - VAS reached out to some 12 local groups and organisations that provide support and help to people with long-term conditions and disability. The first online meeting of the new network was a big success, with ideas, experiences and support shared and valued.

Swindon Food Alliance—VAS was pleased to continue to support the Swindon Food Alliance, first brought together during the peak of the COVID pandemic. An independent report on food insecurity researched and written by consultants Rose Generation as part of the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership Work, highlighted the Swindon Food Alliance as best practice in the South West, particularly because of the strong partnership working between the sector and the local authority. We are delighted that this alliance has continued to grow into the Swindon Food Partnership led now by a new Food Partnership Officer recruited by the Swindon Borough Council Live Well Hub at the end of 2021.

Swindon VCSE Leadership Alliance—This VAS led alliance of Swindon sector leaders has continued to meet virtually to hear updates on key developments in the Integrated Care System and other key initiatives and to share learning and knowledge across the sector.

Town Fund – Community Engagement Panel.—VAS has been delighted to co-ordinate this panel of community champions to share views and input to the developing business cases this year for the seven projects making up the Towns Fund regeneration work in Swindon and we look forward to seeing these important projects come to fruition for the benefit of Swindon residents.

Shopmobility

We continued to deliver the Swindon Shopmobility scheme which is available for anyone with limited mobility and provides a selection of manually propelled and battery powered wheelchairs and scooters. These are provided to help people with mobility difficulties when using the facilities in Swindon's town center.

Available equipment includes:

- Mobility scooters
- Power chairs
- Manual wheelchairs
- Fold up scooter for weekly hire



We have launched a new service which is available to all Shopmobility customers and members of the public which provides low cost scooter and powerchair servicing. This service was launched in September 2021 and is also used to maintain our own fleet of equipment.

Headline stats for the year:

- 425 members
- 74 new members
- 51 people accessed the service as temporary day member
- The service was accessed 2331 times during the year
- 54 people used the service for long term hire of our fold up mobility scooter or manual wheelchair, an increase of 42 from last year
- 48 Scooters serviced during the year

In addition to our usual day to day service delivery we were pleased to be able to help support the local COVID-19 quarantine hotel by providing them with a manual wheelchair to help transport guests checking in with mobility issues around the hotel.

Sanford House

In an effort to make the service more sustainable, following the end of our funding from Swindon Borough Council in 2021, we decided to launch a café where all profits will be reinvested towards the Swindon Shopmobility service.



The café is fully accessible for those in mobility scooters and wheelchairs, with outdoor seating also available to all customers. During the colder months we will have outdoor heaters to ensure the café is comfortable all year around for customers. We encourage all Swindon residents to use

the Café to help sustain the vital Shopmobility service in Swindon.

The aim of the café is to be as environmentally friendly and ethical as possible. We are delighted to be offering "Change Please" coffee at Café Mobility. Change Please is a social enterprise who invest 100% of their profits into giving people experiencing homelessness, a living wage job, housing, training, onwards opportunities — and a fresh shot at a life. You can find out more about Change Please on their website https://changeplease.org/

We would like to thank Nationwide, National Lottery and Masonic Lodge Of Remembrance as well as doners to a crowd funding page for the support they provided to help us open the café through donations and funding.







Sanford House

We continue to proudly manage Sanford House, Swindon's Community Hub, home to 10 of Swindon's support, advocacy, and advice charities and from this year, the Livewell team.



Following COVID restrictions lifting we saw an increase in the number of people returning to work in the building. This resulted in us taking the decision to not only continue with but to increase the safety measures which were in place to help reduce the risk infection to anyone entering the building.

In August 2021 the SBC Live Well Team moved in to the building as a new tenant. In addition to the delivery of their usual services they are now managing the main reception for the building, which reopened to the public in January 2022.

We are proud to be able to support the NHS to reduce it's waiting times for Paediatric support services for children across the town by hosting clinics within the Sanford House building on a Thursday.

At the start of the year we, with IT support from Swindon Borough Council, were proud to be able to deliver a Census 2021

Census 2021

Support Centre within the Sanford House building, providing vital support to those who would struggle to complete the census themselves. Through training 11 volunteers ,this service provided translation services in 6 different languages. We dealt with 100 queries and helped complete 40 forms during the 9 week period.

COVID Support at Sanford House

We were pleased to support the roll out of the COVID vaccinations by providing a town center venue which could be used for drop in vaccination clinics where appointments were not needed.

In addition to the vaccination clinics we also became a distributor of lateral flow tests for the voluntary sector to ensure access to the tests was available to all those who needed them. In total over 2,000 boxes of lateral flow tests were given out to staff and volunteers across the sector.

We were also pleased to be able to coordinate the distribution of a large quantity of personal protective equipment (PPE) free of charge to the

voluntary sector across Swindon. PPE distributed included:

- 10,800 bottles of hand sanitizer
- 27,890 surgical face masks
- 5,520 plastic face masks
- 800 face shields
- 1,000 bottles of antibacterial soap



The above PPE was distributed to a total of 84 charities and voluntary groups across the town. A wide range of organisations were supported with these donations including faith groups, mental health support organisations, homeless charities, counselling services, youth groups and advocacy services to name a few.

We thank First City and Business In The Community for the donation of PPE which enabled us to support the wider voluntary sector in Swindon.

Equality & inclusion



The Swindon Equality Coalition (SEC) remained the focus of much of our work around equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and VAS continued to coordinate and provide administrative support for the coalition's core group.

Over the year, VAS engaged with diverse communities across Swindon, building bridges and helping other organisations develop their connections. Communities we worked with included: Hindu, Goan, South Asian, West African, LGBTQ+, older people, young people, people with disabilities, and more - several of which provided representatives to join the SEC core group.

VAS has helped set up two new peer-support groups - one for people affected by disability, another for people from Swindon's LGBTQ+ communities.



Breaking Barriers - VAS organised this online event to bring together community groups and voluntary organisations to focus on promoting equality and Inclusion in Swindon. Some 40 groups presented their 'equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) journeys' and there were lively discussions about how best to break down barriers. A document summarising the key points from the event is available on request.

Equality & inclusion

Young people and the Youth Voice project - VAS facilitated meetings of all Swindon's providers of youth services - from voluntary sector and local authority. We worked with young people to develop the Speak Out Swindon survey, which asked young people for their views on what was needed.



Young people as well as the organisations that provide services for them felt there was a gap: the need for a forum for young people to gain ongoing support, to develop confidence, to facilitate engagement with communities and service providers - to support the youth voice in Swindon.

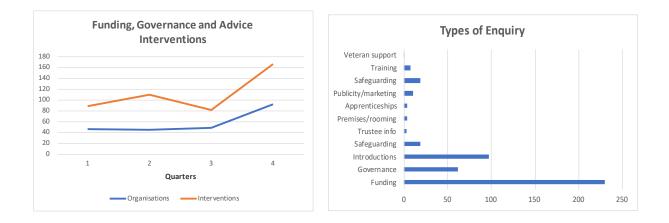
VAS has led a partnership of 5 organisations to submit a bit to the National Lottery for 4 years' funding to set up the Swindon Youth Voice project. The proposal has passed the first round, and the detailed project plan is now awaiting a final decision.



Consultancy, training and support - VAS supported organisations wishing to become more inclusive, providing advice and information on policies, good practice, research and outreach. We ran 6 training session over the year, covering the basics of EDI for voluntary organisations and community groups these training sessions can be run as bespoke sessions for an individual organisation and are also available as open courses, free to anyone from the sector in Swindon.

Funding and Governance and Sector Support

VAS supported a total of 231 organisations during the period March 2021 – March 2022, with a total of 443 funding, governance and advice interventions.



These charts indicate the number of organisations we support and the number of interventions per quarter, which continue to rise. We have invested in a new CRM data base (customer relationship management) 'Insightly' which enables us to track our interventions more accurately within the sector. We can also mark organisations as 'actively looking for funding' and proactively send funding information.

Funding, continued to be the most frequent request, with COVID impacting on this, introductions came second with organisations wishing to connect and collaborate with contacts at Swindon Borough Council, the ICS (Integrated Care System) and other contacts within the voluntary and community sector. Governance advice was the third area of support requested.

We carried out a second COVID-19 Impact Report during Q1, following on from our original report, and discovered that the biggest challenge reported was the struggle to find funding, with 87% continuing to look for sustainable funding.

We also provide more intensive work to local organisations when required, including support with setting up, introduction to appropriate funders, assistance with writing their first bid and general governance queries.

Funding and Governance and Sector Support

Trustee Network:

The Trustee Network was re-launched on 19th May, and included a COVID update from Steve Maddern, Director of Public Health. We have held a virtual Trustee Network meeting each quarter, covering topics including:

- Safeguarding
- Diversity
- Prevent/Counter Terrorism
- Diversity
- Fraud Protection
- Applying for Grant
- DBS



Community Outbreak Management Fund (COMF):

COMF funding was made available from Swindon Borough Council specifically to help reduce inequalities affecting COVID safety and infection management in Swindon and encourage safe behaviours and take up of the COVID vaccine.

During Spring 2021, we successfully led a grant programme awarding £205k to 32 organisations. We invited local organisations to apply for funding from £250 to £20k. We also provided additional support and advice to organisations, enabling them to complete funding applications ensuring the funding was accessible to all local voluntary and community organisations. Due diligence flagged that some organisations needed to improve on submitted policies. We continue to provide on-going support, including improvement safeguarding policies and link up with Swindon Safeguarding Partnership training where appropriate. Following this process we submitted a report to Swindon Borough Council with outcomes and impact of the funding on the local community.



Other Sector Support

Safer Streets Survey:

During Q4 and following Swindon Borough Council's successful bid to Safer Street Round 3, VAS was funded



to carry out two surveys – one aimed at adults in general and one focused around feedback from young people. The surveys were to find out how safe girls and women felt out and about in Swindon. We made visits to both college sites in Swindon at North Star and Queens Drive. We gathered feedback from 602 adults and 82 young people, with conversational feedback from college students. We carried out the data analysis and produced two reports of our feedback and recommendations.

Veteran Support Work:

- We attended and signed the Armed Forces Covenant at Swindon Borough Council during Q2 (we have also signed our own separate Armed Covenant).
- We successfully secured funding from the Veteran's Foundation to support the employment of a Veteran Support Worker.
- Our Veteran Support Worker started with us in Q1 and started mapping the service within Swindon and identifying gaps in provision. This resulted in the Veteran Support Worker having to provide some direct support to veterans who have not been able to access the services and get the support they need.
- We have applied to the Veterans Foundation for a second year of funding.



Training courses at VAS



First Aid at Work

Make sure you are able to respond confidently to a range of first aid incidents and emergencies. This course will teach you the skills and knowledge to give emergency first aid in a lowrisk work environment.

We also offer EDI training



Fire Safety

Learn essential knowledge about fire safety, including carry out a fire safety risk assessment, implement appropriate fire precautionary and protection measures and maintain a fire management plan.

Health & Safety

All employers are required to have the correct systems in place to ensure a healthy and safe working environment for employees and any other people who may be affected by their business activities.



Manual Handling

Manual handling injuries are the main cause of lost working days in the UK. This training will look at how to prevent back injuries.



Life Support (basic)

Rapid response to emergency situations can save lives.

This course will provide basic life support training.



Food Safety

This course reinforces the importance of food safety and provides learners with an understanding of how to identify and control food safety hazards

Other Services at VAS

Our key support to the local sector and community



Funding & Governance Advice

Carol is here to help you with funding sources, bid critique and governance advice.

Carol@vas-swindon.org



Equality & Collaboration

Jol is here to help you raise any equality issues and to encourage sector collaboration.

Jol@vas-swindon.org



Shopmobility

Enabling independence in Swindon town centre. Mobility Scooters and Power and manual wheelchairs for hire.

07379 689128



DBS Checks

VAS is registered umbrella body for standard and enhanced DBS checks.

info@vas-swindon.org



Room Hire

A range of conference and other rooms available for hire from £15 an hour.

info@vas-swindon.org



Printing and Copying

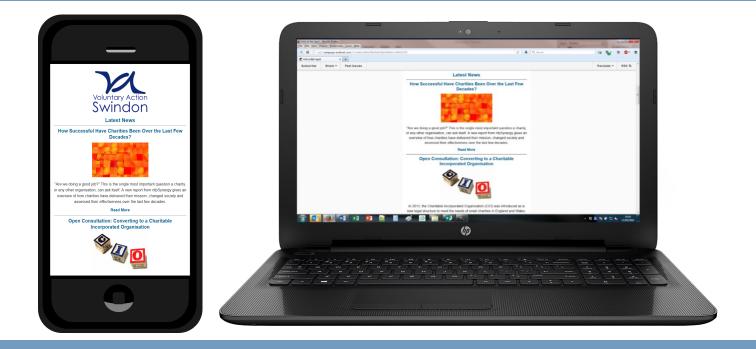
Charity leaflets, newsletters, posters and all your copying needs at preferential rates.

info@vas-swindon.org

VAS ID

VAS id (information digest) is our weekly ebulletin, helping to keep you up to date with voluntary and community sector news. Sign up to receive national and local news, upcoming community events, training courses, funding opportunities, voluntary and community sector vacancies, charity law updates, and advice on fundraising and governance.

> During the last year we: Sent 52 editions of VAS id 540 news items included 175 job vacancies advertised Over 60 funding opportunities advertised 9 trustee vacancies advertised



Sign up here: http://vas-swindon.org/subscribe

Social Media



VAS Social media feeds across Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn regularly share information for the sector and cross promote activities within the sector.

This regularly includes information about local support services being provided by the VCSE in Swindon. During the year our posts included:

- A call out for volunteers for the NHS vaccination clinics
- How low income people could get additional support during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Information about COVID-19 testing sites locally
- The promotion of Census 2021
- Information about new Shopmobility services
- Vacancies in the sector
- Information on voluntary sector events
- Information on training courses
- Vaccination dates, times and venues locally
- Details about Pride of Swindon Awards
- Details about the Swindon Safer Streets Survey
- Good news stories from around the Voluntary Sector organisations
- Christmas opening hours for Voluntary Sector organisations

We continued to see an increase in followers across all of our social media feeds last year.

Finance Report Summary

This summary financial information is taken from the trustees' annual report and statutory financial statements, which has been approved by the trustees before the AGM. The statutory financial statements, have been externally audited by Monahan's.

This summary information may not contain sufficient information to give a complete understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. The full Trustees' report, statutory financial statements and independent examiner's report may be downloaded from the VAS website or the Charity Commission website - http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk

			VAS ACCOUNTS SUMMARY: YEAR TO		
VAS ACCOUNTS SUMMARY: YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2022			31 MARCH 2022		
	2021-2022	2020-2021		2021-2022	2020-2021
	£,000	£,000	°	£,000	£,000
INCOME			EXPENDITURE		
Rent	59	36	Staff Costs	-224	-206
Printing	1	1	Other Costs (4) Audit Fees	-187	-132
Training	0	0	Total Expenditure	-417	-339
Interest	0	2	Net Deficit/Surplus	101	1
Other (1)	42	12			
PROJECTS/FUNDING			BALANCE SHEET		
SBC - Community Sector Support (2)	99	81		2021-2022	2020-2021
SBC - Sanford House	120	113		£,000	£,000
The Veterans Foundation	20	0	Fixed Assets	101	91
Wiltshire Community Foundation	0	12	Bank Accounts	285	276
National Lottery	95	57	Other Assets	79	0
Other Income (3)	82	26	Total Liabilities	465	367 -38
Total income	518	340	Net Funds	430	

(1)Other includes income from our DBS service, donations and charges for advertising in VAS ID.

(2)Includes SBC Community Sector Support and Shopmobility Service.

(3) Various grants for Covid-19, projects and participation grants.

(4)Other Costs includes reinvestment of £22,507 Sanford House restricted funds, admin and management staff, premises expenses, community print and publications, governance costs and training costs.

How to Find Us



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https://www.facebook.com/VoluntaryActionSwindon https://twitter.com/vaswindon

We are based in the town centre, 5 minutes walk from the Fleming Way bus station. You can reach us by turning onto Fleet Street and following the road to John Street. Our building is on the left. The cheapest car parks near to us are the Whalebridge (Islington Street, SN1 1TN) and Spring Gardens (SN1 2BF) car parks.





Special thanks to our funders:



NHS

Swindon and Wiltshire

Integrated Care Board



