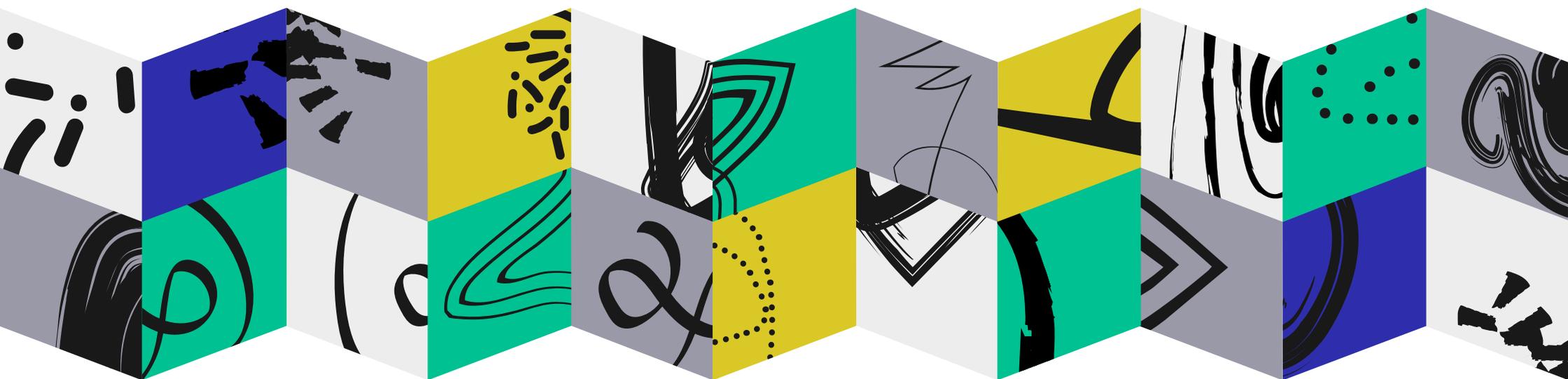


CollectiveVoice

Strategy

2022/23 – 2024/25



The National Alliance of Drug and Alcohol
Treatment and Recovery Charities

collectivevoice.org.uk

Vision & mission

OUR VISION

A thriving treatment and recovery field — and voluntary sector — enabling anyone in England to access evidence-based and person-centred support.

OUR MISSION

Advocating for evidence-based and person-centred treatment and recovery systems by influencing policy and championing the role of the voluntary sector.

Building the field by informing, connecting and innovating.

Strengthening our collective voice by renewing our governance, diversifying the work of the alliance, and leading through collaboration.

Introduction

The next three years could prove to be a transformational time for the drug and alcohol treatment and recovery field. But recent history has not been easy. A decade of disinvestment and the system-shock of Covid-19 have provided the backdrop to some troubling trends in drug and alcohol use and appalling increases in deaths.

Things can and should be better. As a field we have an established evidence base to guide us, and innovation to provide glimpses of the future. We have a highly committed workforce ready to work across the many challenges posed by drug and alcohol use and the silos into which services are organised.

And in Dame Carol Black's seminal Review, and the Drug Strategy and investment it has provoked, we have the political and policy environment to enable greater ambition in delivery and a deeper collaboration between voluntary sector and NHS providers, local government commissioners, national government departments, and people with lived experience.

It is our collective duty to seize this opportunity and renew our ambitions to reduce harm and nurture recovery. The pandemic has reinforced our belief that only by working together can we hope to tackle the challenges posed by the complex issues of addiction and recovery, rooted as they are in poverty, trauma and social exclusion.

This strategy outlines Collective Voice's role as advocate, convener and collaborator in working on these complex issues.

We will continue to advocate for the importance of evidence-based and person-centred support — and the vital role charities play in delivering it. We will help to build the field by sharing information, supporting connection and fostering innovation. And we will strengthen our own voice by appointing new independent trustees, diversifying our work as an alliance and leading through collaboration.

We remain grateful to our alliance members for their continued support of Collective Voice and to the many partners who have been part of our journey since 2015. We are proud and excited to be taking on the challenges outlined in our new strategy and to be building new partnerships alongside you.

MAY 2022

1

Advocating for evidence-based and person-centred treatment and recovery systems

- 1.1 WE WILL INFLUENCE POLICY AT A NATIONAL LEVEL
- 1.2 WE WILL CHAMPION TREATMENT AND RECOVERY, AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR'S ROLE IN DELIVERING IT

2

Building the field

- 2.1 WE WILL SHARE OUR FIELD'S INFORMATION AND EXPERTISE
- 2.2 WE WILL FORGE STRONG AND LASTING CONNECTIONS
- 2.3 WE WILL FOSTER A CULTURE OF INNOVATION

3

Strengthening our collective voice

- 3.1 WE WILL RENEW OUR GOVERNANCE
- 3.2 WE WILL DIVERSIFY THE WORK OF THE ALLIANCE
- 3.3 WE WILL LEAD THROUGH COLLABORATION



1

Advocating for evidence-based and person-centred treatment and recovery systems

1.1 WE WILL INFLUENCE POLICY AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

Many decisions that shape treatment and recovery services are taken in Westminster and Whitehall, a long way from the experiences of frontline services. Wider societal stigma means that people with drug and alcohol problems don't receive the positive political attention their needs merit, and the wider determinants of addiction are rarely recognised. National policy has been rearticulated by the publication of *'From Harm to Hope'* and an accompanying major boost of funding. In this hopeful context, Collective Voice will bridge the gap between decision-makers and the frontline, shaping policy and funding frameworks, and helping person-centred, evidence-based services to flourish.

How Collective Voice will achieve this aim

Change starts with the right conversations. We will develop high-quality relationships with stakeholders in government and allied organisations, through regular meetings with appropriate ministers and senior civil servants. We will champion treatment and recovery, as we advocate for the needs of those with drug and alcohol problems.

We'll make clear why better support is needed, what it looks like and its wide range of benefits.

We will act as a critical friend to government, providing a constructive and expert policy voice whilst challenging policy-making and political decisions that fail to deliver — or risk stigmatising the people we serve. We will articulate how drug and alcohol problems often exist alongside, and as a result of, a range of social and health issues.

We will harness the wisdom of the whole system to inform our influencing work. We will convene spaces where the voluntary sector, NHS, local government commissioners, families and those with lived experience are all represented.

1.2 WE WILL CHAMPION TREATMENT AND RECOVERY, AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR'S ROLE IN DELIVERING IT

Treatment and recovery have a transformative power on people, their families and communities.

They also bring many societal benefits by reducing crime, easing pressure on other public services, and saving the state vital funding and resource.

Over many decades, the voluntary sector has developed to meet the challenges posed by drug and alcohol use. Evolving from the early days of recovery communities to a modern era of provision, charities have provided high-quality clinical, psycho-social and recovery services to help marginalised people in the here and now — often in close partnership with colleagues in the NHS.

Charities have also campaigned for systemic change, both to reduce harms for people using drugs and alcohol, and protecting future generations from those harms.

The transformative power of treatment and recovery — and the voluntary sector's role in delivering it — is worth shouting about.

How Collective Voice will achieve this aim

We will effectively promote the positive contribution of treatment and recovery to policymakers, the media and our allies across the domains of multiple disadvantage.

Our member organisations — and wider charity allies — have substantial heritage and expertise. We will draw on this to champion the diverse, high-quality, life-changing support delivered by the voluntary sector in the community, the prison estate and through detox and residential rehab.



2

Building the field

2.1 WE WILL SHARE OUR FIELD'S INFORMATION AND EXPERTISE

Our field is committed and skilled but supporting people with drug and alcohol problems is not easy. Practitioners must excel in both keyworking and navigating complex support systems. Commissioners must stitch services and organisations together to meet a demanding array of support needs. Managers and leaders must balance a host of competing priorities, shaped by political decision-making, as well as local support needs and social conditions.

As a national alliance Collective Voice has the reach and ability to convene across the system. We can explain the intended impacts of political decisions to those on the frontline, translate real-world learning from local systems into the language of central government, and bridge the worlds of treatment provision, commissioning and lived experience.

How Collective Voice will achieve this aim

We will respond agilely to political and policy announcements, analysing and explaining issues in accessible ways via blogs, bulletins and social media.

We will ensure this flow of information is two-way by using the learning from our groups and regular contact with the frontline to inform and animate our advocacy work.

We will support engagement and learning across the field, by bringing together experts of all kinds to discuss and debate, online and in person.



2.2 WE WILL FORGE STRONG AND LASTING CONNECTIONS

The past decade has been tough. Disinvestment and reform created a sense of fragmentation, leaving practitioners, service managers and leaders feeling isolated at times. But times are changing, and fresh challenges will be posed by workforce development, commissioning practices and new measurement and accountability mechanisms. Collective Voice can use its convening power to connect people as experts, peers and learners, share the benefit of collective wisdom, and celebrate the commitment and skill of the field.

How Collective Voice will achieve this aim

We will run regular group meetings for Collective Voice member organisations, enabling key role holders to share practice, develop collective knowledge and benefit from peer support.

We will support the field to self-organise. And by convening cross-sector groups on specific topics and bridging connections, we'll help the system 'see itself', share good practice, and engage colleagues in government on policy or practice development.

2.3 WE WILL FOSTER A CULTURE OF INNOVATION

New conversations and fresh thinking are needed to tackle difficult issues such as the drug deaths crisis, improving alcohol detox pathways or harms arising from new patterns of drug use. This is how our field has always identified good practice and made progress together.

Collective Voice can play an important role in fostering a culture of innovation, by convening cross-sector interaction that explores complexity and develops new thinking and practice. But our independence also allows us to push for shared improvement.

How Collective Voice will achieve this aim

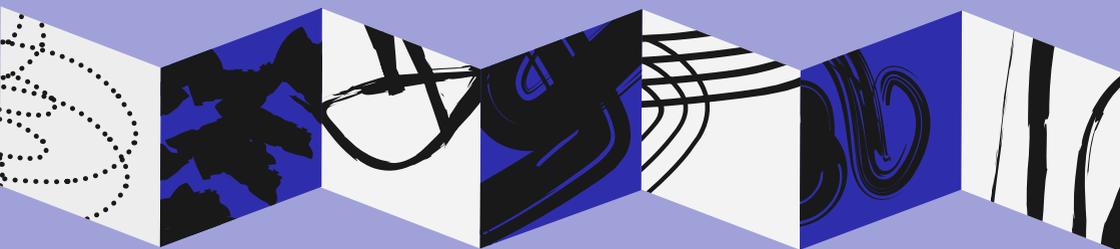
We will challenge the field to improve, horizon scan for opportunities for developing skills and knowledge, bring together good practice task-and-finish groups and share our learning through blogs and events.

We will engage colleagues in government, feeding our work into wider system priorities.



3

Strengthening our collective voice



3.1 WE WILL RENEW OUR GOVERNANCE

Collective Voice was founded in 2015 by voluntary sector providers in England with a shared wish to advocate for treatment and recovery at a time of austerity and a lack of political leadership. In its first chapter, the organisation focused on a small set of priorities, guided by senior leaders of the founding organisations. In its second, Collective Voice became constituted as a charity and those leaders were appointed as Trustees. In 2021, an Independent Chair was appointed to drive change and lead the organisation forward.

Collective Voice will continue to evolve to better deliver its vision and mission. Its third chapter will see it become ever more representative of the field, more resilient and better able to develop the increased capacity needed to deliver its core work in a changing world.

How Collective Voice will achieve this aim

We will develop our governance model, adding fresh skills, expertise and perspectives.

We will welcome a broader and more representative range of trustees, including those with lived experience.

3.2 WE WILL DIVERSIFY THE WORK OF THE ALLIANCE

Our strength comes from being an alliance. Harnessing the reach and insight of more organisations and perspectives will enhance our ability to speak authoritatively to government, funders and other partners — and help us foster a sense of shared purpose across our field.

How Collective Voice will achieve this aim

From the first year of the strategy we'll create a shared voluntary sector leadership space to work with and learn from small and medium sized drug and alcohol charities.

We will work with lived experience-led organisations to ensure their perspectives inform our work.

3.3 WE WILL LEAD THROUGH COLLABORATION

The issues our field strives to resolve are complex. Drug and alcohol problems are driven by challenges starting in childhood and decisions made in lives constrained by structural inequalities, poverty and social exclusion. Many people face an interlinked web of challenges caused by mental ill health, involvement in the criminal justice system, lack of housing and poverty in addition to their drug and alcohol use.

Solutions are likewise often complex, spanning multiple organisations. Collective Voice operates within a wider ecosystem of interdependent people and organisations. Shared success will always be dependent on the efforts of others.

How Collective Voice will achieve this aim

We will continue to develop our 'system leadership' approach, which has brought together Collective Voice with other alliances and representative groups with shared aims.

We will continue to be a proud member of the Making Every Adult Matter Coalition (MEAM) with our Director sitting on its Programme Board.



CollectiveVoice

The National Alliance of Drug and Alcohol
Treatment and Recovery Charities

collectivevoice.org.uk
[@collect_voice](https://www.instagram.com/collect_voice)