



Somerset Collaborative Insights Hub

Introduction

Spark Somerset is leading a collaborative initiative with *All About The Place*, a specialist community informatics social enterprise, to develop the Somerset Collaborative VCFSE Insights Hub. This project is guided by a small steering group that includes the Community Council for Somerset and Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership—who originally proposed the idea—alongside Young Somerset and Somerset Community Foundation.

This document, along with the accompanying Microsoft Excel template, provides practical guidance and a standardised method for VCFSE organisations to share service output data. Submitted data will be processed and visualised through an interactive Microsoft Power BI dashboard to support shared insight and strategic learning.

Why We're Collecting Outcomes Data

Establishing a consistent approach to measuring outcomes is essential for demonstrating the tangible impact of the services delivered by Somerset's VCFSE sector. It enables organisations to clearly show how their resources are addressing community needs and delivering meaningful results, supporting accountability, learning, and continuous improvement.

What's in It for You

Adopting shared outcome measures offers clear benefits to individual organisations. It enhances transparency, builds trust with funders and partners, and boosts credibility with the public. It also supports internal reflection and learning, helping organisations better understand what works and why. Crucially, it provides strong, evidence-based narratives to underpin funding applications and strengthen partnership proposals.

By contributing your data to the Insights Hub, you also help lay the groundwork for developing shared impact and social value metrics. These can be used to showcase the broader value of your services and strengthen the case for future investment, commissioning opportunities, and long-term support.

Wider Strategic Benefit

By contributing to the central Insights Hub, local VCFSE organisations help build a collective evidence base that demonstrates the sector's overall impact. This shared intelligence supports stronger advocacy for funding, enables more joined-up responses to local needs, and fosters collaboration by identifying overlaps, gaps, and opportunities. It also helps organisations benchmark their work, show their value in context, and contribute to a more data-informed, community-driven approach to improving local wellbeing.

Sharing Your Output Data and Helping Build a Better Understanding of VCFSE Work in Somerset



Collecting and Sharing Output Data

*To begin with, please note that we are **not requesting any personal or identifiable information about individuals**. We are only seeking summary-level data drawn from your existing records.*

Included with this document is a **Microsoft Excel template** that outlines the suggested structure and scope of the required data. This format is designed to help measure the scale and nature of service activity across the VCFSE sector and to support a better understanding of its collective impact.

If your organisation already uses a system to collect and report on service activity. In that case encourage you to align your output reporting with this template where possible, enabling the generation of outcomes data suitable for sharing with the Insights Hub.

For organisations without an existing system, the Excel template can be used as a simple data capture tool. You are welcome to adapt it by adding additional columns for your internal needs. However, please note that when submitting data to the Insights Hub, only the data items specified in the original template will be required.

Submission of Data Files

The VCFSE Insights hub provides a facility for you to share your data files, details of which can be found via the following link.

[Activity Output Data Upload - Somerset Insights Hub](#)

Guidance:

- Ideally, we would like the data provided to be as granular as possible, i.e. one data row for each engagement, with a timestamp for when the engagement took place.
- We acknowledge that an engagement may be measured as a session, or a specific period, or perhaps as a total count of the number of persons engaged in an activity. All are acceptable measures.
- When it comes to time allocation to engagements, the data can be provided in decimal format, i.e. 0.80 for a fifty-minute session, 1.00 for an hour, or 1.50 for an hour and a half, etc.

Sharing Your Output Data and Helping Build a Better Understanding of VCFSE Work in Somerset



Activity Output Files Structure

Column	Title	Size (no. of characters)	Format	Mandatory (yes/optional)	Notes
1	Data_Type	50	Text	Yes	This should be one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and Young People • Everyone • Families • Females • LGBTQ+ • Lone Parents • Males • Older People • People From Minoritised Communities • People with Mental Health Difficulties • People with Multiple Disabilities • People with Physical Disabilities • Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Immigrants
2	Activity_Date		dd/mm/yyyy	Yes	Day of the engagement.
3	Organisation	50	Text	Yes	Registered Organisation Name.
4	Location	20	Text	Optional	County Name.
5	Sublocation	20	Text	Optional	Name of town, another locality or online. NO POSTCODES PLEASE!
6	Ethnicity	20	Text	Optional	Ethnicity of the recipient receiving the service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White • Mixed or Multi-Ethnic • Asian • Black • Other
7	Gender	15	Text	Optional	Preferred gender description of the recipient receiving the services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female • Male • Non-binary • Prefer to self-describe • Prefer not to say
8	Age	3	Number	Optional	Age of the recipient receiving the service.

Sharing Your Output Data and Helping Build a Better Understanding of VCFSE Work in Somerset



9	Referral_From	50	Text	Optional	Short description summarising how the client was introduced to the service
9	Primary_Presenting_Need	100	Text	If Possible	Short description or phrase i.e. Anxiety or ADHD, sensory processing difficulties, attachment needs.
10	Secondary_Presenting_Need	100	Text	If Possible	Short description or phrase i.e. Anxiety or ADHD, sensory processing difficulties, attachment needs.
11	Other_Presenting_Needs_Information	1000	Text	Optional	Additional useful information on presenting needs
12	Engagement	50	Text	Yes	Short description of the type of engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-Face support. • Online support. • Group Session. • Telephone Support.
13	Engagement_Duration		Numeric	Yes	Total no of hours of the engagement.
14	No_of_Participants		Numeric	Yes	How many clients participated in this engagement
15	Engagement_Description	500	Text	Optional	A short description of the service provided for the engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in Session. • Peer Support • Outreach Work • Workshops • Mentoring or Coaching. • Social Activities. • Advice and Information. • Residential Programme. • Self-Help Resources. • Blended Delivery. • Community Events and Engagement. • Advocacy and Representation.
16	Progression	100	Text	Optional	A summary of the engagement outcome.