



This is me

Dom Wood, VCSE sector advocate on the Children and Families Partnership Board

Dom is Chief Executive at 1625 Independent People, which helps 16- to 25-year-olds to reboot their lives. 1625 has a number of projects in the areas of housing, life skills, confidence-building, education, training, and jobs.

What propelled you to become a VCSE sector advocate?

In my first senior role in the voluntary sector, Voscur really helped me understand the sector and what was needed from me. In later years, I saw that there was not only a chance to influence future strategy for the better, but also to help others who were also new to senior roles understand what was going on in the strategic world.

What would make the biggest difference to improving equality in society?

If supporting people was valued as much as making money. I see amazing staff out there in various types of support role, throughout the city, working as hard as anyone can, with clear values and beliefs about their work. We do not value this type of work enough, either in conversation or in salary.

What do you think is the secret to being influential?

You need to make sure that you are respected for your knowledge and skills. This means having read all the papers, having an evidence-based opinion and being able

to support and challenge at the same time. Often VCS can come across as presenting the challenge without the support alongside – it is important to be able to do both.

If you could pick one example of seeing, with your own eyes, lives changed by the voluntary sector in Bristol, what would it be?

We recently had a staff conference and I was reduced to tears by the presentations from young people who have been through the system and are now volunteering, and seeing their passion and the effect they have on others is indescribable.

What is your favourite spot in Bristol and why?

The river between Crew's Hole and Hanham Mills – I kayak it with a quick stop at Beese's Tea Rooms and the Lock and Weir and it is like being in the country with the beautiful surroundings, the peace and the pint of orange and soda. Other modes of transport are available: walking or cycling it is great, but nothing beats being on the water.

What was the best piece of

advice you have ever been given?

It is better to regret something you have done than regret something you haven't done – this can have a negative connotation, but I take the positive one – take a few measured risks in life.

What makes you happy?

So many things. In work it would be seeing young people's successes; nothing beats that. Young people deserve so much and are often given so little and have had the hope taken away from them. Seeing that come back is priceless.

Tell us one thing about you that people would never guess.

I am related to the late Les Ames who was, perhaps, the greatest wicketkeeper batsman of all time and played in the bodyline tour (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Les_Ames) and I hate cricket.

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