

Resident Impact Assessment

Title of policy, procedure, function, service activity or financial decision: VCS Partnership Grants Programme.

Service Area: PPC: VCS Development Team.

1. What are the intended outcomes of this policy, function etc?

Introduction

In November 2015 the VCS Committee ratified the Council's VCS Strategy, "***Towards a Fairer Islington: Voluntary & Sector Strategy 2016 – 2020***". The VCS Strategy recognises the considerable contribution that the voluntary and community sector makes to supporting local residents and articulates a new approach to the Council's work with the sector, one based on much closer collaboration and partnership working with organisations, whether they receive grant funding or not. Towards a Fairer Islington re-emphasised the Council's ongoing commitment to providing core grant funding to VCS organisations to deliver a range of activities and services that improve outcomes for local residents; and that can help build resilience and capacity across the sector.

The VCS Strategy identifies four ways in which the Council will continue to support the sector and its work in meeting the needs of residents:

- **Funding:** including partnership grants and small grants programmes, a bespoke training and capacity building fund, and discretionary rate relief.
- **Commissioning and procurement:** Commissioning organisations to deliver services, and ensuring social value is included in our approach to commissioning.
- **Premises:** developing a borough-wide premises strategy that maximises the use of our buildings, and enables organisations to share premises, reduce costs and maximise income generation.
- **Working strategically with key partners:** to build the capacity of the sector, promote volunteering, support fundraising, establish networks, maximise our collective impact in neighbourhoods, and ensure a coordinated whole-Council approach to the VCS

The VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2016-2020

At its meeting in January 2016, Islington's VCS Committee agreed recommendations to provide funding for VCS organisations through the VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2016-2020. The programme was a key commitment within the Council's VCS Strategy.

The grants programme aims to support organisations that can deliver the strategic priorities set out in the VCS Strategy over the next four years by:

- **Addressing and preventing deeper complex social issues and long-term challenges that affect our residents**
-

- **Supporting residents to be independent and resilient**
- **Promoting community cohesion and championing equality**
- **Supporting neighbourhoods and communities to grow**
- **Providing or sign-posting residents to appropriate, high quality advice and guidance**

The VCS Partnership Grants Programme fundamentally aims to address the challenges faced by residents disadvantaged by structural inequalities. The grants programme aims to support organisations that can deliver the strategic priorities set out in the VCS Strategy. Funding will be provided to successful organisations on a two plus two year basis, across the following strands:

- 1) Strategic Partners – Borough-wide Infrastructure
- 2) Strategic Partners – Neighbourhood
- 3) Delivery Partners
- 4) Strategic Partner – Volunteering; and
- 5) Strategic Partners – Advice

On January 15th 2016, the Council's VCS Development Team published the five corresponding VCS Partnership Grant Strand Prospectus which outlined in more detail the key outcomes that the funding programme seeks to achieve for residents. The deadline for applications was 4th March 2016. 97 applications were received from 81 individual organisations and one consortium, requesting a total of £4,506,774.99 (see Table 1).

Table 1: Number of Applications Received and Total Requested by Grants Strand

Strand	No. of Applications	Total Requested	Available
Borough-wide	11	£438,725.38	£170,000 - £210,000
Delivery	53	£959,318.63	£320,000 - £400,000
Neighbourhood	14	£814,000	£475,000 - £525,000
Volunteering	2	£80,000	£30,000 - £40,000
Advice	17 (8 orgs & 1 consortium)	£2,248,730.98	£1,406,000
Strand 1 - Access & Outreach)	2	£250,000	£200,000
Strand 2 - Primary Access Channel)	4	£132,812	£50,000
Strand 3 - Triage)	4	£185,000	£100,000
Strand 4 - Generalist)	3	£742,134	£350,000
Strand 5 - Targeted Specialist)	3	£388,784.98	£250,000
Strand 6 - Specialist)	1	£550,000	£550,000
Total Applications	97	£4,560,774.99	

Assessment Process

The assessment process for the VCS Partnership Grants Programme was run in two stages. At each stage in the process, officers assessed recommendations in line with the Council's equalities objectives and the need to establish a balanced and diverse portfolio working with different sections of the community and across the borough's wards.

Stage One Assessment

In the first stage, applicants were invited to submit a written application in response to the published prospectuses and application forms. All applications were independently assessed by a minimum of three Council officers. Assessments were made against the minimum criteria outlined in the prospectuses and in line with six scoring matrices established for each grant strand (under the headings 'Finance', 'Proposal', 'Beneficiaries and Equalities', 'Our Priorities', 'Risks, Monitoring and Evaluation', and 'Past Performance and Operations'). Applicants' responses to each of the criteria within the scoring matrix were rated on a scale of 1 to 5.

Across all of the grants strands, answers to each section of the application form were weighted as follows:

- **Finance:** Up to 10% of overall score (including the organisation's ability to attract resources, levels of reserves held, plans to diversify income)
- **Proposal:** Up to 25% of overall score (the outcomes, activities, vision and rationale outlined by the applicant)
- **Beneficiaries and Equalities:** Up to 25% of overall score (the target group identified by the organisation and responsiveness of the organisation's services to the needs of the community served)
- **Our Priorities:** Up to 25% of overall score (the way in which the organisation responded to the priorities identified in the prospectuses and Council's VCS Strategy – as outlined above)
- **Risks, Monitoring and Evaluation:** Up to 5% (the organisations proposals to manage and mitigate risks, and its proposals for monitoring and evaluation)
- **Past Performance and Operations:** Up to 10% of overall score

Moderation meetings were held with assessors for each strand. All of the scores of individual officers were aggregated to identify an overall average score for each application. The applications under each strand were then ranked in order to establish a shortlist of organisations to progress to the second stage of assessment. All organisations were contacted on 9th May to notify them of the outcome of the first stage of assessment. All organisations that were not shortlisted, and that requested feedback on their application, were offered a face-to-face or telephone meeting.

Stage Two Assessment

In the second stage of the assessment, officers met with shortlisted applicants between 12th May and 31st May. These meetings, in the majority held at the organisations offices, provided the assessment officers with the opportunity to discuss applications in more detail and highlight any areas that need further development or clarification before funding recommendations were established.

Organisations were encouraged to provide any additional information or points of clarification within one working week in order to support their application for funding and enable officers to make final recommendations for funding.

Prior to final recommendations being proposed, a full Resident Impact Assessment was undertaken by officers.

2. Resident Profile

Who is going to be impacted by this change i.e. residents/service users/tenants? Please complete data for your service users. If your data does not fit into the categories in this table, please copy and paste your own table in the space below. Please refer to section 3.3 of the guidance for more information.

The VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2016-2020 will provide grant funding for a minimum of 44 organisations in the borough. These organisations deliver an extensive range of services and activities for Islington residents at key geographical locations - with a focus on those areas of the borough that have high levels of multiple deprivation; that have reach across the whole borough, and that are primarily focussed on supporting residents facing structural and socio-economic disadvantage.

Due to the way in which organisations currently collect and analyse data it is not possible to aggregate their individual equalities monitoring data in a way that would be statistically valid. The VCS team will establish a consistent approach to recording and analysing equalities monitoring data across the proposed portfolio as part of new grant monitoring arrangements.

However, examination of the profile of beneficiaries that applicants have identified in their

respective submissions, the services funded, disproportionately represent those communities in Islington that are disadvantaged as a result of their gender, age, disabilities, sexual orientation, race and religion/belief.

The VCS Grants Programme 2016-2020 will impact on all organisations that submit applications, i.e. 81 VCS organisations in the borough. Of these, 40 organisations currently receive funding.

3. Equality impacts

With reference to the [guidance](#), please describe what are the equality and socio-economic impacts for residents and what are the opportunities to challenge prejudice or promote understanding?

A key aim of the VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2016-2020 is to provide core funding to voluntary and community sector organisations working across Islington's diverse communities. The fund seeks, not only to pay due regard to the aims of the equality duty, but to actively support a portfolio of organisations that can pro-actively address structural inequalities within the borough.

As a competitive process, the grants programme has resulted in some organisations that currently receive funding, no longer being recommended for funding. The proposed portfolio however sees new organisations funded through the programme that will address some gaps in current provision and strengthen other areas of work.

Positive Impacts

An equalities assessment that involved an analysis of the equalities information provided by applicants and a mapping of organisations recommended to funding across equalities strands, has highlighted the following positive impacts of the proposed portfolio:

- The proposed funding arrangements will see an increase in the total funding being provided to organisations working directly with some of Islington's most vulnerable residents (Strands 2-5) from 88% to 93%. Alongside this a 10% increase in funding (£91,800) will be provided to organisations working directly with residents in local community settings through the Delivery Partner's and Neighbourhood Partner's strands. This is anticipated to increase the direct impact that the portfolio of VCS funded organisations has on some of Islington's most marginalised residents.
- **Gender:** 29% (6 organisations) recommended for funding in the Delivery Partner's strand work primarily to improve outcomes for women, including those affected by domestic violence. This is twice as many organisations that were funded for this work under the previous VCS Grants Fund. All of the proposed funded organisations demonstrate high levels of beneficiaries are women.
- **Age:** Services for younger and older residents are commissioned in the main through Children's Services and Housing & Adult Social Services. However, in line with the borough's demographics, 33% of the organisations (7 organisations) recommended for funding in the Delivery Partner's strand describe work with children and young people as a part of their core purpose; four of these organisations have not previously received grant funding. Similarly, 20% of the organisations funded in the Delivery Partner's strand describe work with elders as a core purpose of the organisation. As a result, the portfolio of organisations is assessed as being better placed to support residents that may experience exclusion as a result of their age.
- **Disabilities:** 24% of the organisations (5 organisations) recommended for funding within the Delivery Partner's Strand of the programme work specifically with residents with disabilities, compared to one organisation in the current VCS Grants Fund. None of these organisations were previously funded and as a result the portfolio of Delivery Partners will better respond to the needs of Islington residents with disabilities.
- **Sexual Orientation:** One organisation funded within the Delivery Partner's Strand and one organisation funded through the Borough-wide strand will work specifically to improve

outcomes for LGBT residents. In the past no funding was provided for organisations working with this section of the community.

- **Ethnicity:** Within the delivery strand 62% of the organisations recommended for funding have a core purpose associated with improving outcomes for BAMER residents. In the Borough-wide Partner's strand two of the six organisations recommended for funding, work with the specific aim of improving outcomes for BAMER communities. Within the Advice Partner's strand one consortium of BAMER organisation is recommended for funding, this is the first time that these organisations will have formally received funding specifically for their advice work and funding through this strand will provide an opportunity for community based BAMER organisations to better influence the overall development of Islington's advice offer. Across the entire portfolio, 89% of all organisations recommended for funding state that their work is targeted towards resident from BAMER backgrounds.
- **Faith:** One organisation working with Muslim residents is recommended for funding under the Neighbourhood Partner strand. This organisation was previously funded under the cohesion strand of the VCS Grants Fund.

In addition, the Advice funding strand (which will deliver the advice model developed in partnership with a range of VCS organisations) sees 49% of funding allocated to specialist legal advice targeting residents who are structurally disadvantaged e.g. residents who are disabled, are experiencing mental health etc. The re-profiling of the advice service funding which sees a greater percentage of funding allocated to generalist support will enable more residents to be responded to more efficiently and speedily. The Advice strand also provides funding for BAMER organisations to ensure that the needs of BAMER residents are addressed in strategic planning, development and delivery of advice services funded by the council.

Areas to Address

In addition to these positive developments, the same equalities impact assessments have identified a number of gaps in provision in geographical and thematic areas. This is in part because applications were either not received that responded to key areas, or those that were received, did not meet the minimum shortlisting criteria. The VCS Development Team will work in partnership with other corporate departments, key partners and the wider VCS to address the following areas for further development:

- **Disabilities:** Although the proposed grant allocations to organisations across the delivery, neighbourhood and advice strands provides funding for organisations that directly deliver services and activities for people with disabilities (as highlighted above), there remains a gap in the portfolio for organisations that provide strategic borough-wide leadership and voice for residents with disabilities.
- **Elders:** Although the proposed grant allocations to organisations across the delivery, neighbourhood and advice strands provides funding for organisations that directly deliver services and activities for elders (as highlighted above), there is a risk that the proposed portfolio would result in a gap for an organisation that provides strategic borough-wide leadership and voice for elders.
- **Interfaith work and Tackling Hate Crime:** An analysis of the proposed portfolio indicates that there is a significant gap at a strategic borough wide level in terms of leadership of inter-faith work. Given the rising levels of faith based hate crimes in the borough there is a clear need to support a leadership function which can facilitate and support work at a local level to promote community cohesion and develop collective responses to tackle rising levels of faith based hate crime.
- **Caledonian Ward:** Given the high levels of deprivation in the Caledonian ward, the VCS strategy identifies the area as a focus for support. However the area does not currently have the same levels of VCS infrastructure at both a strategic neighbourhood or delivery partner level as other parts of the borough. As a result a bespoke intervention, co-produced with corporate and community partners is recommended in Caledonian Ward.

4. Safeguarding and Human Rights impacts

a) Safeguarding risks and Human Rights breaches

Please describe any safeguarding risks for children or vulnerable adults AND any potential human rights breaches that may occur as a result of the proposal? Please refer to **section 4.8** of the [guidance](#) for more information.

If potential safeguarding and human rights risks are identified then please contact equalities@islington.gov.uk to discuss further:

No safeguarding risks for children or vulnerable adults and any potential human rights breaches have been identified that may occur as a result of the proposal. All funded organisations were required to have safeguarding policies in place as a minimum standard and formed part of the assessment process. This requirement will also be a part of all future grant agreements and will be monitored on a regular basis.

Funding for advice agencies ensures that individual residents can receive advice on human rights issues and have their cases taken up through the legal system if necessary.

5. Action

How will you respond to the impacts that you have identified in sections 3 and 4, or address any gaps in data or information? For more information on identifying actions that will limit the negative impact of the policy for protected groups see the [guidance](#).

In order to mitigate the risks identified in section 3 of this RIA, the following actions are recommended:

- £140,000 of funding should be retained in order to support and facilitate work in the areas identified in section 3.
- Officers within the VCS Team will work with colleagues in Housing, Adult Social Services, and Community Safety in order to develop specifications, and to explore co-financing arrangements for grant funding in the four areas identified above.
- Islington’s VCS Development Team will continue the commitment to work with VCS organisations that do not receive grant funding in order to provide technical support and to identify and support applications to alternative sources of grant funding.
- Islington’s VCS Development Team will work with grant funded organisations to establish a consistent and coherent approach to gathering, monitoring and analysing equalities monitoring data as part of the new grants agreement protocols

Please send the completed RIA to equalities@islington.gov.uk and also make it publicly available online along with the relevant policy or service change.

This Resident Impact Assessment has been completed in accordance with the guidance and using appropriate evidence.

Staff member completing this form:

Signed: _____

Date: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

Head of Service or higher:

Signed: _____

Date: [Click here to enter a date.](#)