

# Islington Volunteering and Capacity Building Review

The last year has been unprecedented due to Covid-19 and its impact on communities. The voluntary and community sector has been vital in responding to the crisis and ensuring that residents are supported in their communities. Locality was commissioned by the London Borough of Islington to review and understand the current volunteering and capacity-building needs of voluntary and community organisations in Islington. This research will inform the development and next stage of the capacity building and volunteering strands of the VCS partnership grant programme (2021-24).

This report is divided into three sections: methodology, findings, and recommendations (ideas to feed into the prospectus).

## 1. Methodology

A mixed methods approach was taken to gather data and insights for this review. This involved four workshops with semi-structured questioning and a survey. The survey combined closed questions (to provide quantitative insights on VCS needs) with open questions, which enabled organisations to share their experiences in their own words.

In total the research drew on insights from 52 voluntary and community organisations in Islington

### 1.1 Workshops with VCS organisations x 3

Locality facilitated three online workshops with local voluntary sector organisations and local funders. The aim of these sessions was to discuss the present and future provision of capacity building and volunteering support in Islington and to help the Council develop a new funding prospectus.

Each workshop had a different audience:

- Workshop 1 (23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021) focused on organisations that formed part of the Capacity Building Support Partnership. As such, these organisations were able to reflect on their experiences accessing support and providing support to other organisations.
- Workshop 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021) focused on BAME-led organisations.
- Workshop 3 (10<sup>th</sup> March 2021) had a broader focus and encompassed an array of different types of VCS organisations.

For each workshop, the discussion focused on four areas:

- Challenges for the VCS Sector over the last year.
- What organisations had found most and least useful from the current Islington capacity building and volunteering support offer (since 2016).
- Priorities for organisations going forward.
- What was needed from the Islington capacity building and volunteering support offer for organisations to achieve their priorities.

Workshops were hosted on zoom and the discussions were captured on Jamboard, a shared whiteboard tool. Overall, there were 26 workshop participants.

### ***1.2 Workshops with current provider***

On the 10th of March, Locality conducted a focussed discussion with key staff and trustees at the main provider for the volunteering and capacity-building strands of the grants programme (2016-2020). This workshop explored the provider's experience of its delivery (since 2016, with a particular focus on the challenges in the last year), key learning insights (including delivery systems), relationships with other key stakeholders and reflections on the support the VCS sector needed going forward. Locality also interviewed one other key support provider.

### ***1.3 Survey of voluntary and community sector organisations***

Voluntary and community sector organisations were also invited to contribute to an online survey. Questions focused on:

- Challenges that VCS organisations faced in the near future.
- Immediate support needs (from now to 6 months).
- Longer-term support needs (from 6 months – 2 years).
- Preferred methods for accessing support.
- Volunteering and capacity building support accessed in the recent past & the impact of this support.
- Factors preventing organisations from accessing support.

The survey was live from the 25th of February until 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021. There were 23 responses to the survey.

### ***1.4 Synthesis and reporting***

We combined the insights from our research methods to produce this report, highlighting key findings, considerations and recommendations, working in collaboration with Islington Council.

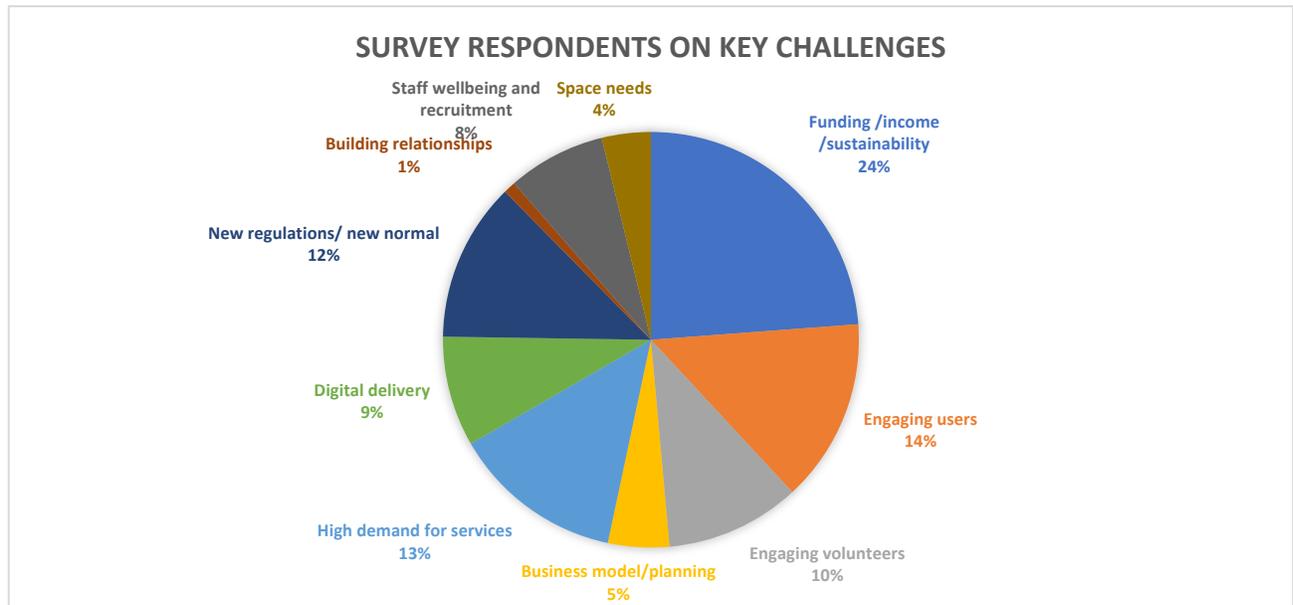
## 2. Findings

### 2.1 Biggest challenges

Unsurprisingly, when asked about their biggest challenges, VCS organisations cited many issues relating to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The key issues highlighted included:

- Funding challenges and organisation sustainability.
- Setting up new digital services & digital inclusion for service users.
- Managing changes & fluctuations in volunteer demographics.
- Managing volunteer well-being & training.
- Increase in demand for VCS services as increasing numbers face difficult economic circumstances, prioritising in light of this.
- Resuming face to face services with new regulations and “the new normal”.
- Re-engaging residents/users after lockdown.
- Difficulty in finding time for strategic planning and developing new business models when coping with day to day.
- Ensuring representativeness of service users and not losing sight of pre-existing problems.
- Accessing new groups & benefits of dual offering (online & face to face).

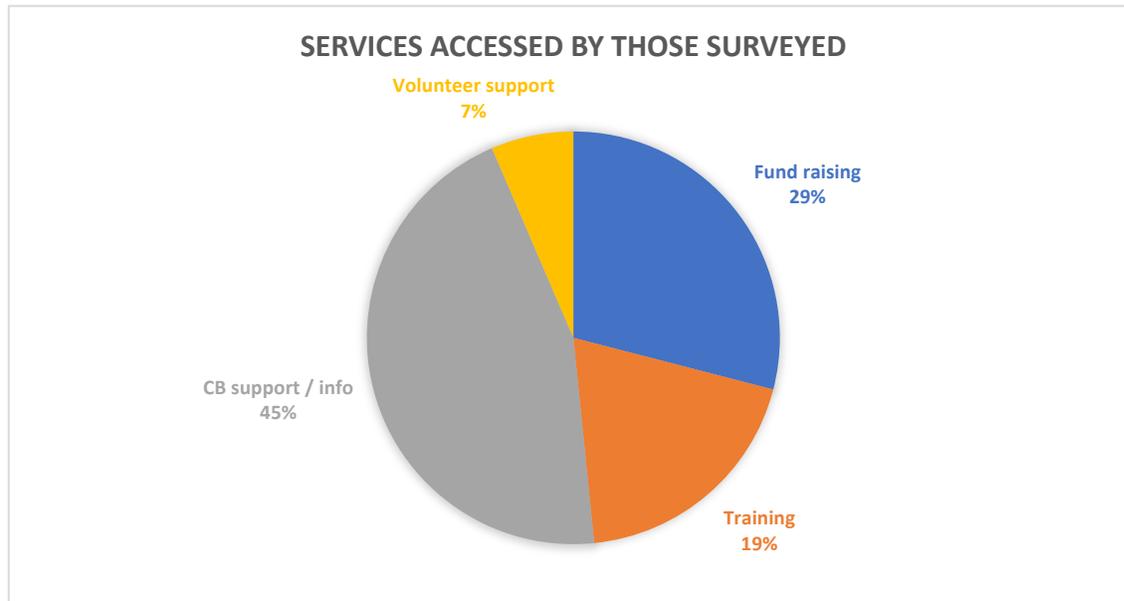
The chart below – based on survey respondents, gives an indication of the regularity of how each of these challenges were cited.



The challenges mentioned in the survey and workshops were to some extent consistent with the three top concerns listed by organisations at the most recent VIA conference (dated collected by VIA 2020). These were: funding, poverty and volunteering.

## 2.2 Current capacity building and volunteering support offer

Through the research, VCS organisations were asked about their experience of the current capacity building and support offer. The survey highlighted the parts of this offer that was most accessed – with capacity building and funding support appearing the most drawn upon (see chart below).



Our research with trustees and staff from the current main provider also reflected on their most common areas of support requested by VCS organisations. They were:

- Fundraising support/bid writing, providing evidence of need and help developing partnerships and joint bids.
- Management committee/trustee governance support – e.g. recruiting management committee/board members, and effective governance.
- Financial Management (particularly problematic for the sector) - preparing budgets and accounts, setting up and maintaining financial systems including book-keeping.
- Planning - project, business and strategic planning tools
- IT/digital capacity building support - IT and tech support such as access to computers/tech; digital training and developing digital strategies; help with online newsletters/website; promoting digital inclusion.
- Policies & procedures, regulations and compliance (particularly during COVID-19).
- Legal Structures - Support around start up, charity and company registration.
- Measuring impact (particularly problematic for the sector).
- Networking and training support.

## 2.3 Helpful and less helpful aspects of current provision

In the workshops, VCS organisations were asked about the aspects of the service that were most and least helpful. These were identified to be as follows:

### 2.3.1 Helpful

- Co-ordination of resident offer (*We are Islington* central point of access)
- Opportunity to collaborate – particularly during the past year.
- Support to access funding (e.g., for digital equipment - COVID-19 grants)
- Volunteer support on recruitment and DBS checks
- Training portal has been valuable.
- Main provider – recognised hub and conduit for support
- Capacity building course helpful (though at an elementary level)
- Fundraising portal has been helpful for many.
- Good links to other partner provider support (Council, Big Alliance, Octopus)

### 2.3.2 Less helpful aspects of current provision

- Volunteer portal - not that helpful for some organisations who found it easier to do themselves.
- Some duplication across providers (e.g., volunteer brokerage)
- Capacity building training too homogenous – not tailored at where different organisations are in terms of knowledge and capacity.
- Capacity building too basic for more advanced organisations in the sector

### 2.3.3 How the support helped organisations/had impact

The survey respondents highlighted how the supported provided had helped/impact on their respective organisations – the table below highlights some of these insights, which are varied.

<i>It was brilliant and ensured that we know about the legal requirements for recruiting volunteers, recruitment methods and designing volunteer task descriptions.</i>
<i>The mutual aid volunteers were so important in getting our emergency food hub off the ground and reaching those most in need of this support.</i>
<i>All of them contribute to promoting the valuable input volunteers provide us with in so many ways, whether corporates or individuals, sharing knowledge and skills, or enabling us to maintain aspects of our centre that would otherwise be unmanageable - the garden!</i>
<i>It provided legalities of recruiting volunteers, creating task descriptions and advertising for volunteers.</i>
<i>It has fed into a revamp of our website, which will enhance their accessibility and content, which will indirectly enhance our fundraising, campaigning, comms and volunteer recruitment.</i>
<i>It helped to shape our response to the pandemic. Helped to identify needs of the local community and thus, helped to inform our strategy and development of services.</i>
<i>It was very useful in those particular areas, notably safeguarding related. Trustees evidently found it useful to be involved with other trustees from other organisations in the borough.</i>

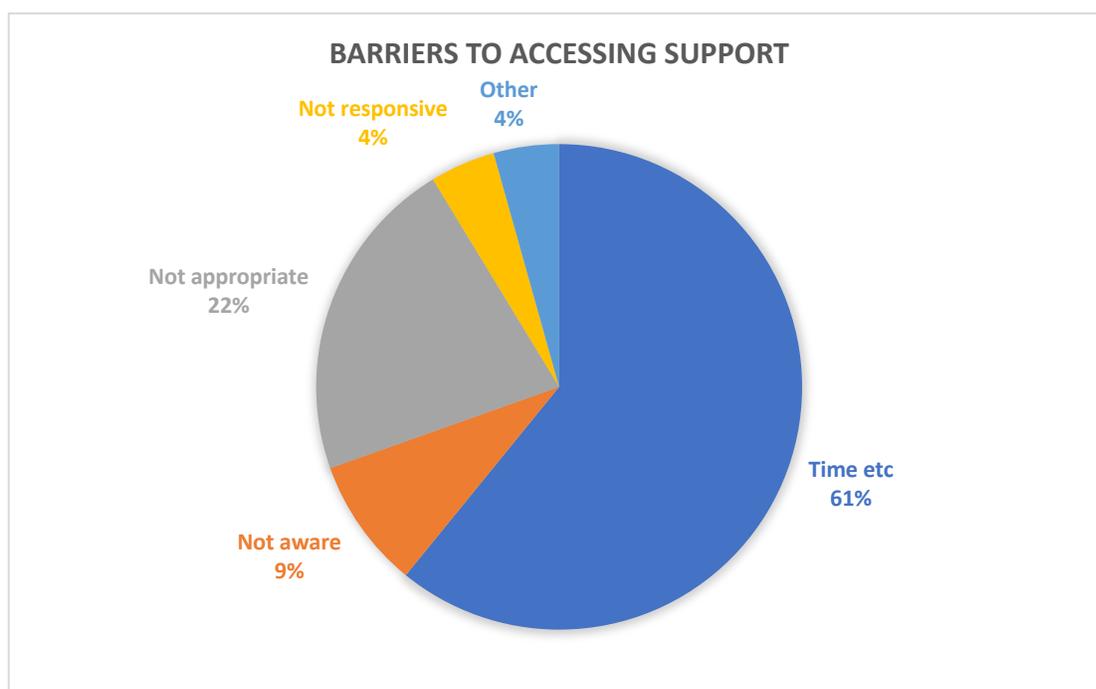
*It helped us to get access to or knowledge of useful resources which either helped us to improve our working practices or work in collaboration better. Sharing experiences via network meetings for example has been very helpful.*

*The support means we were able to attract new volunteers and that we are better informed, more skilled and better networked.*

## 2.4 Preferred methods and perceived barriers

VCS organisations were asked, in the survey, about their preferred methods for accessing support the most popular were training (cited by 14) and working one-to-one with a specialist advisor (13). Other popular methods included online support (11) and peer-to-peer support (9).

Organisations were also asked in the survey about perceived barriers to accessing support (what prevented them from accessing support). In their responses, many highlighted time pressures (14), while five also said that the support was not appropriate to their needs. See chart below.



## 2.5 Priorities of VCS organisations going forward

Across both the survey and three workshops delivered, VCS organisations were asked about what they thought were their main priorities going forward. The key responses to this included:

- Meeting increased demand and prioritising residents in light of this (or growing staff/volunteers).
- Providing holistic support recognised the increased complexity of people’s situations.
- Tackling growing mental health problems exacerbated by the pandemic.
- Widening digital inclusion.
- To continue to work more in a multi-agency/collaborative way.

- To improve data sharing across the borough.
- To source new funding and/or income.
- To improve how they represent and engage with the local community.
- To recruit and retain more volunteers and improve volunteering management.
- To work more across boroughs boundaries (particularly for orgs serving specific communities e.g., BAME or disability focused organisations)

## 2.6 Support needed

Across the three workshops and in the survey, VCS organisations highlighted the following in terms of their on-going organisational support needs:

- Support in accessing new funding and income to support sustainability.
- Help in finding and managing more permanent premises and buildings.
- Continued support to maintain the networking that has taken place over the COVID-19 period.
- Facilitation on joint funding bids.
- Maintaining the existing strength of the sector in the borough.
- Raising visibility to residents and strategic partners to boost standing and understand role (particularly highlighting the essential role during the pandemic).
- Steps to address the new challenges COVID-19 has brought or accelerated (mental health, digital divide, poverty, unemployment).
- Making better use of corporate volunteers (e.g., law professionals).
- Improving recognition for volunteers and their contribution.
- Providing more tailored capacity building support – based on an understanding of where organisations are starting from and the diversity in the sector.
- Support for trustees to understand and best utilise their role.

In the survey, the top four most **immediate support needs** cited were:

- Fundraising – raising or diversifying income (mentioned by 70% respondents).
- Opportunities to develop better links with the statutory sector (mentioned by 44% respondents).
- Measuring and demonstrating impact (mentioned by 44% respondents).
- Support to set up or improve IT systems (mentioned by 35% respondents).

It is worth noting that Voluntary Action Islington asked organisations about their specific IT support needs at their recent conference. Support areas mentioned included access to computers, support to develop a digital strategy and training for staff and volunteers. Organisations also mentioned the need for more volunteering opportunities procured online.

The survey also asked VCS organisations about their **medium-term needs**. Those most cited included:

- Fundraising – raising or diversifying income (mentioned by 83% respondents).
- Support to bid for contracts and commissioning (mentioned by 52% respondents).
- Opportunities to develop better links with statutory sector (mentioned by 44% respondents).
- Support to develop new services (mentioned by 40% respondents).
- Support with business planning (mentioned by 30% respondents).

## 3. Moving forward – ideas to feed into the prospectus

### 3.1 Volunteering Support

- **Pro-active work to retain the new cohort of volunteers engaged through the pandemic** - this could involve the development of more flexible, ad hoc volunteering or opportunities to volunteer online.
- **Draw on the learning of mutual aid volunteering to improve engaging and procuring volunteering** – use of simple tech tools (like WhatsApp) to help engage and triage volunteering.
- **Continue to provide central support to administering volunteer placements** – many (particularly smaller) organisations valued the central support on DBS checking and referencing volunteers as part of the COVID-19 vaccine clinics. This has been of great help to VCS organisations and elements of this have the potential to be replicated in other contexts.
- **Development of a ‘gold standard’ of volunteering practice** - a clearly defined standard that VCS organisations could work towards, and support to achieve this. It would both support organisations to think about how to improve their volunteering practice and help to promote some of the excellence that is already in the sector.
- **Increase recognition of the value of/celebration of volunteering**– the borough has a vibrant VCS sector and there is need for more recognition of excellence and visibility to residents. Perhaps this could take the form of a one stop shop, featuring volunteering opportunities (including ad hoc opportunities) and stories. It is also important to recognise the contribution of businesses in terms of time, vehicles, and property. In this research, it was suggested that the volunteering awards could be improved with more visibility.
- **Establish a core volunteer training offer** - this could include a mandatory training package for volunteers (e.g. H&S, E&D, make every contact count, Mental Health First Aid which is delivered centrally).
- **Peer Learning** - create more opportunities for peer support so that organisations can discuss topics such as creative volunteer recruitment, their approach to supporting volunteers, and share best practice.
- **Core volunteering management training** - delivered alongside good practice toolkits.

### 3.2 Capacity Building Support

- **Further in-depth mapping** - is needed, both of the organisations that make up the sector and their support needs. Working towards a method of adding to this knowledge and insight in ‘real time’ will help ensure support is agile and responsive to the sector over time (e.g. use of ‘my maps’ google to continuously map organisations).
- **Focus on efficient training delivery and build on multi-partner offers of capacity building and training** - the sector is asking for a wide range of support, with priorities centring on financial support, governance and digital, measuring impact and service user journeys. This diversity of support needs is best provided through a diverse supply chain - therefore, a core offer needs to be combined with signposting to resources and training available from other organisations, both within Islington and beyond.
- **Tailored capacity building support** - some organisations need more than the basics and it would be helpful if the level of training was communicated (for example, an introduction/ intermediate level of training) and advice on where to go for more advanced

sessions. The support offer needs to be tailored to a diverse set of organisations. A basic needs analysis tool could support organisations to assess what level of support they need and then triage them to the best support. Support from corporate volunteers, is one avenue through which it is possible for organisations to access more bespoke and higher-level advice.

- **New support to help organisations to develop hybrid delivery** – the wider contextual challenges to the sector are likely to make partnership working both attractive and necessary (as mergers potentially become more prevalent).
- **Tailored one to one support to enable organisations to develop an evidence-based service and to demonstrate impact** - this might involve tools around community representation and mapping. Organisations need support to help them identify and respond to new needs around mental health, unemployment and the digital divide and the tool to enable them to demonstrate they are tackling these issues.
- **Support to find and manage premises and buildings** - some organisations need physical spaces to hire in all areas of the community to facilitate a face-to-face presence and proximity. Several organisations have been working out of temporary spaces and are now looking to secure something more permanent. The potential availability of more temporary spaces (e.g. via closed retail or office space) means that a more effective brokerage of meanwhile/temporary space may serve some organisations well.
- **Maintaining online networking that has taken place over the COVID-19 period** - increase opportunities for peer learning through roundtable sessions on topics such as maintaining volunteers following Covid, delivering a hybrid service model etc.
- **Peer learning can be utilised more** – the research highlighted the vast knowledge, experience and skills within the sector that can be unlocked and shared in a more horizontal (many to many) rather than vertical (one to many) ways.

### 3.3 Funding

- Maintain the **fundraising portal** as this was considered very helpful by organisations in the sector.
- Create a **database of local fundraisers** who can take on piece work for small organisations who do not have the skills or capacity to put in the required time for business development.
- **Funder Plus Model** - funders need to be both flexible and offer more capacity support as part of their funding packages (e.g. financial management and focus on organisational sustainability as well as project funding). Funders also need to recognise the extra work that is sometimes needed to deliver services online and make allowance for this.
- **Accessible funding for small organisations** - there have been a number of emergency grants that have been very accessible for small organisations without lots of experience applying for funding. Attention needs to be paid to how to maintain this type of funding accessibility going forward.
- **Facilitation of partnership working and joint funding bids** - organisations said they would like guidance from a central team on what other organisations are focusing on and their priorities and matching up. This could potentially be facilitated through a partnership app or notice board where organisations could be matched with other organisations with similar goals.

## APPENDIX

### Appendix A: *Insights from workshops with voluntary and community sector organisation*

#### A1. Overview

This Appendix set out in more detail the findings from the 3 workshops with VCS organisations.

The aim of these sessions was to hear from a range of different VCS organisations to highlight key areas to help the Council develop a new prospectus for support programme for the VCS sector. Each workshop had a distinct VCS sector audience:

- Workshop 1 (23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021) focused on organisations that formed part of the Capacity Building Support Partnership. As such, these organisations were able to reflect on their experiences accessing support and providing support to other organisations.
- Workshop 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021) focused on BAME-led organisations.
- Workshop 3 (10<sup>th</sup> March 2021) had a broader focus and encompassed an array of different types of VCS organisations.

For each workshop, the discussion focused on key four areas of discussion:

- Challenges for the VCS Sector over the last year
- What organisations had found most and least useful from the current (since 2016) Islington capacity building and volunteering support offer.
- Priorities for organisations going forward.
- (Based on the latter) what was likely to be needed from the Islington capacity building and volunteering support offer for organisations to achieve their priorities.

Workshops were hosted on zoom and the discussions were captured on Jamboard, a shared whiteboard tool. Overall, there were 26 workshop participants (the organisations represented are listed below).

The raw feedback from these exercises is presented below:

## A2. Biggest challenges for the VCS sector in Islington over the past year:



### 1) Setting up new digital services & digital inclusion for service users

Many organisations talked about the challenge they had faced in adapting their services and moving activities online. This was a challenge because staff lacked expertise in running services remotely and many service users lacked quality equipment and the IT skills needed to access services online.

One organisation described that it felt like 'setting up a whole new service from scratch'. Another commented how the amount of work they had managed to do on digital inclusion was 'a drop in the ocean' compared to the amount of work which was needed to get people online. Online services also posed difficulties around confidentiality (finding spaces where confidentiality could be maintained) and GDPR – specifically around sharing and accessing client documents.

Whilst funding had been available to buy IT equipment, funding did not cover the cost of maintaining and insuring digital equipment and this was an additional cost for some organisation. Reaching vulnerable groups such as stroke survivors, and individuals with low levels of English was very difficult.

Volunteers and staff also had difficulty with home internet issues, and this impacted on meetings, induction and volunteer training. One organisation, and local funder, mentioned that the cost to the VCS sector of delivering services online is not captured well and that there is an idea that 'it is cheaper online' whereas, supporting clients and volunteers in this way had taken up more staff capacity.

## *2) Managing changes & fluctuations in volunteer demographics*

Several organisations mentioned the fluctuations they had seen in volunteer demographics over the past year and how it was challenging to manage the peaks and troughs. Volunteering peaking in early lockdown but has dropped since, as people return to work. There was concern from organisations that many of these new volunteers, who brought valuable new skills and experience, will drop out and an appetite to think about how to maintain the involvement and enthusiasm of new cohorts of volunteers in the future. Organisations, such as those who rely on parent volunteers, had faced a particular challenge because of reduced parent capacity and home schooling.

Related to changes in the profile of volunteers also created several challenges around managing volunteer expectations and matching supply and demand. Whilst there were lots of people coming forward to volunteer, organisations did not always have the capacity to take them on in a hurry and this led to some drop-out. Some volunteers were not very comfortable with IT and needed extra support. Corporate volunteers were identified as particularly helpful with digital upskilling. A couple of organisations mentioned because of the potential safeguarding risk with taking on large numbers of new volunteers, they had decided to only work with existing, well-known volunteers. Some volunteers also only wanted to volunteer face to face. Social distancing meant that some volunteering activities could not take place, for example putting together care packages in small venues.

## *3) Managing volunteer well-being & training*

Supporting and managing volunteers online also posed several difficulties; several organisations build in additional zooms to ensure volunteers did not feel isolated, but this put an additional strain on staff. Communicating online meant that it was not as easy to see how volunteers were really doing and many volunteers missed the face-to-face engagement that was usually part of their role. Online communication also impacted on training and required staff to devote time to think about how to translate training to online settings.

## *4) Increase in demand for VCS services as increasing numbers face difficult economic circumstances, prioritising in light of this.*

Challenging social and economic circumstances have meant that organisations are facing more demand than ever before. This was a theme that emerged particularly strongly in the second workshop, with BaME led organisations, who described the impact of lockdown on overcrowded housing, the increase in domestic abuse and the shame of not being able to help children with their schoolwork at home.

Organisations are currently trying to work out how to respond to an increased complexity in community needs, and to give priority to the most vulnerable. It was felt that the extra work of accessing hard to reach with public health messages had not been matched with extra budgets and that organisations that had been on the front-line of supporting people in the pandemic – in terms of messaging about lockdown, benefits, vaccinations, had not been recognised or funded for their work in this area. This had meant in some cases, that staff and volunteers were having to use their own services and were effectively subsidising services.

5) *Resuming face to face services*

The challenge around resuming face to face services was also mentioned, in terms of knowing when and how to start up again and the need for a smooth transition period to avoid overwhelming residents and staff.

6) *Difficulty in finding time for strategic planning when coping with day to day.*

Because of the amount of energy and focus needed to respond to the day to day, several organisations mentioned that they had struggled to find time for strategic planning over the last year. It was also mentioned how difficult it was to plan ahead when external circumstances were rapidly changing.

7) *Funding challenges*

Two key funding challenges were identified; firstly, that many organisations rely on unrestricted funding, such as room hire and losing such sources of income in the pandemic had put them in a difficult situation. Secondly, it was mentioned by several organisations that because all grant funding was currently COVID-19 focused, it meant that organisations couldn't apply for staffing on existing projects that were still running. This funding picture was focusing efforts on short term emergency timescales and organisations said they needed more sustainable funding.

8) *Ensuring representativeness of service users and not losing sight of pre-existing problems*

Several organisations mentioned the need to ensure that pre-existing need and problems in communities, before the pandemic, were not lost. Reference was also made to the importance of ensuring that VCS organisations are representing everyone in their communities and how organisations were re-thinking this, in response to Black Lives Matter.

9) *Accessing new groups & benefits of dual offering (online & face to face)*

Finally, organisations felt it was important to recognise the benefits that online or hybrid delivery had brought. For some groups, such as carers, individuals experiencing domestic violence and migrant women at home with children, it was easier to access services online and this had enabled some VCS organisation to reach new individuals and groups. Several organisations anticipated that their future offering would be a hybrid of online and offline provision.

### A3. What organisations have found to be the most and least useful elements of the current capacity building and volunteering support offer:

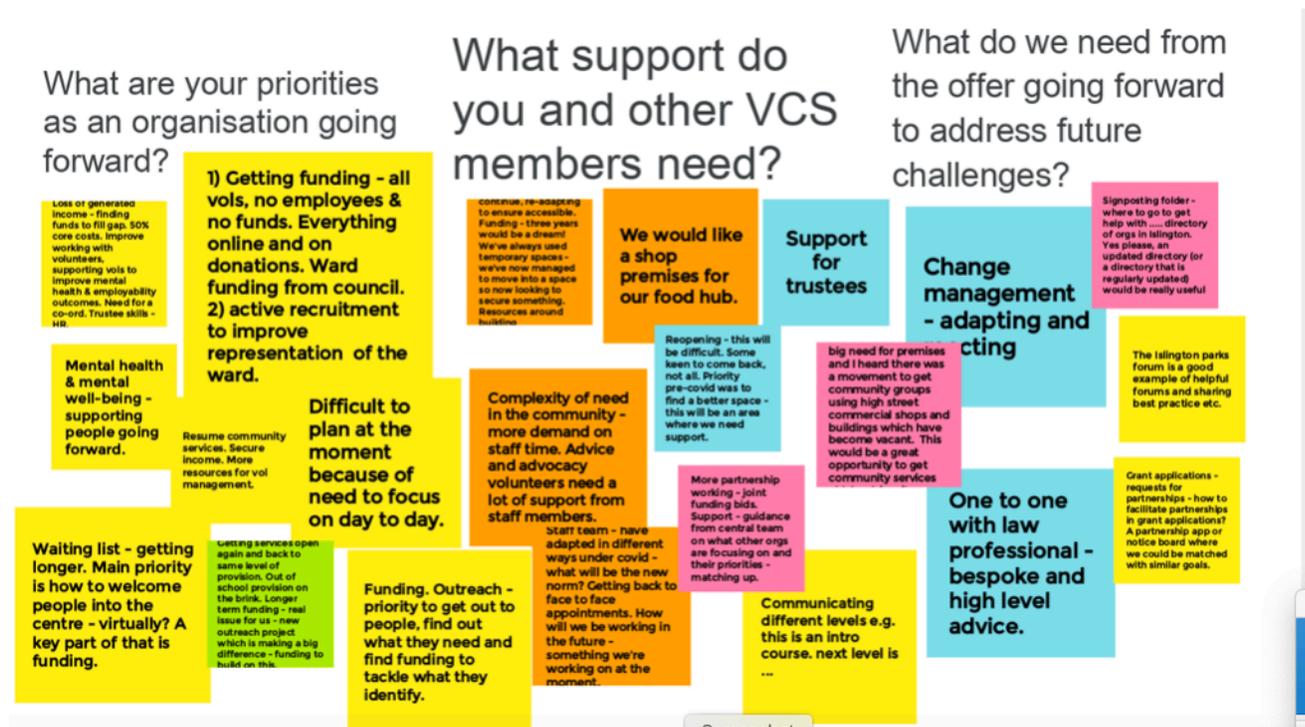
What do you think has been most useful from the current (Islington) capacity building and volunteering support offer?  
Is there anything that has not been helpful?



- **We are Islington central point of access for residents** something we want to keep in the future. Really important.
- Meeting other infrastructure organisations online - opportunities to join up more because of online networking. **Synchronising services across borough** and the offer for residents.
- **Funding for equipment** - COVID-19 grants - additional laptops and phones
- **Volunteer support** for COVID-19 vaccine clinic - VIA as recruiting body for volunteers. They now interview, reference and DBS. Volunteer coordinators do training and ongoing support. Fantastic. This could work in other contexts and save work for VCS orgs.
- The **training portal has been valuable** and needs maintaining.
- **Volunteer portal - not that helpful.** Volunteering managed in-house.
- The **offer has possibly been a little homogenous** and needs tailoring to a diverse sector. Organisations are very different and so need different types of support. Voluntary Action Islington has been helpful and a good conduit for network support.
- VIA Capacity building course - parts excellent (covered all the bases), some areas which were repeating things for us. **Beginner level/ introductory.**
- **Fundraising - the online portal** is good. Council officers available have been very helpful - strategy & specific applications.
- VAI offers support, **advice and resources on fundraising** but can't do it on your behalf. Many orgs don't have the skills / capacity to put in the required time. Database of local fundraisers who can take on piece work (e.g., me)?
- Fundraising document helpful. This past year very hard to look at capacity building. **There hasn't been time to draw on all support.** Support from big alliance - volunteers from 2 law firms. That was brilliant - requires work but very tailored support. Council VCS officer very helpful.
- **Volunteer hub doesn't have much on it**, support with Theory of Change work was good, but we saw early on that we already knew more about how to go about it than anybody at VAI!

- VIA training courses - **capacity building courses**. Petered out. Haven't got volunteers from VIA but do refer there. Work with Big alliance & Employee Volunteering. Octopus have offered very practical support on developing programmes and opportunities across network. Help on your doorstep.
- **No volunteers from VIA** - did participate in speed dating exercise where we found some vols. At the beginning, a lot of vols without structure or support. Difficulty around GDPR, delivering personal docs etc.
- We haven't used volunteers in the way we usually would - no functioning office. So much time on zoom already, haven't taken advantage of online courses necessarily, also busy. **What is very useful is specific training on areas** e.g., advanced safeguarding training. We wouldn't be able to access this as an organisation ourselves (mid-sized org).
- **Lots of volunteer applications following furlough** - 500 applications! Grocery deliveries etc. Work with octopus - working together to manage volunteer demand. MG couldn't use everyone - signposting to others.
- VAI – used to have a **fantastic capacity building programme** – supporting orgs with governance, policies etc. Combination of training and a volunteer management manual worked very well & meant there was something concrete that could be passed on through the organisation. It would be great to look at having something similar again.
- A few years ago, there were several organisations providing support with volunteer recruitment. Some people still went direct to organisations. There was a lot of effort & duplication. Project undertaken to look at how can we **join up volunteer brokerage** – when the funding came to an end, this collaboration disappeared.

#### A4. Priorities of VCS organisations going forward:



- To **serve the whole borough/ as many residents as possible/ meet increased demand**. This will require training new volunteers to meet increased need, working out how to prioritise residents in light of increased demand, more resources to employ staff to meet growth in community need.
- To **support people in a holistic fashion** – considered all needs (housing, language barriers etc) and recognising the increased complexity of people’s situations. An important part of this is supporting people with their mental health needs/ mental well-being.
- To **widen digital inclusion** in the borough.
- To **work in a multi-agency way**.
- To improve **data sharing across the borough**.
- To **source funding**: this was to meet a variety of organisation's needs, such as loss of generated income/ meeting a funding gap, start-up funding for new organisations and securing long-term funding.
- To **improve how they represent the local community**.
- To **recruit more volunteers and improve volunteering management**; this included finding innovative solutions to recruiting volunteers; allocating more resources for volunteer management and working with volunteers to improve their mental health & employability outcomes.
- To **grow into other boroughs**; one BAME focused organisations mentioned that they have services relevant to populations in neighbouring boroughs, but funding does not promote this opportunity.

#### A5. To achieve this, VCS organisations in Islington need:

- Support to **find and manage premises and buildings**: some organisations need physical spaces to hire in all areas of the community to facilitate a face-to-face presence and proximity. Several organisations have been working out of temporary spaces and are now looking to secure something more permanent.
- To **maintain the networking** that has taken place over the COVID-19 period. Online networking has made it much easier to attend. Organisations also said they would like an updated directory of organisations and services in the borough.
- More **partnership working, especially support to work on joint funding bids**. Organisations said they would like guidance from a central team on what other organisations are focusing on and their priorities and matching up. The Islington parks forum as mentioned as a good example of helpful forums and sharing best practice. A partnership app or notice board where we could be matched with similar goals. Supporting organisation to use slack to communicate with each other - the team worked hard to get people to use it. It has been a good space for collaboration.
- Support to **maintain the existing strength of the sector**. Islington VCS is strong and this needs to be maintained. Islington has a vibrant VCS sector and there is need for more recognition of excellence & visibility to residents. Perhaps this could take the form of a one stop shop, featuring volunteering opportunities (including ad hoc opportunities) and stories. It is also important to recognise the contribution of businesses in terms of time, vehicles, and property. The volunteering awards are currently not very visible.
- Steps to **address the new challenges** COVID-19 has brought; specifically increase in mental health problems, new awareness of the digital divide and increasing levels of complexity of need in the community.
- Support from **corporate volunteers**, for example one to one with law professional. This is bespoke and high-level advice.

- **Tailored capacity building support:** some organisations need more than the basics and it would be helpful if the level of training was communicated (for example, an introduction/ intermediate level of training) and advice on where to go for more advanced sessions. The support offer needs to be tailored to a diverse set of organisations.
- **Support for trustees**
- A '**gold standard**' of **volunteering practice** that CVS organisations can work towards, and support to achieve this. This could include a mandatory training package for volunteers e.g., H&S, E&D, make every contact count, Mental Health First Aid which is delivered centrally.
- **Funding:**
  - The **capacity building grant** has facilitated several health and wellbeing organisations and we need more of this.
  - **Funders need to be both flexible and offer more capacity support** as part of funding e.g., financial management. They need to work in a constructive way if grantees do not get everything right first time. They need to be thinking about organisational sustainability as well as project funding.
  - There have been a number of emergency grants that have been very accessible for small organisations without lots of experience applying for funding. We need to think about how to maintain **funding accessibility** going forward and support for small organisations more generally – coming out of COVID, funding will change – how will we support small grassroots organisations with this transition?
  - Help to **keep on top of knowing available funding and accessing it.**

**BAME groups** mentioned several further specific areas of support, including:

- The need to focus more **support on organisations with the lived experience.**
- Support to develop an **evidence-based service and to demonstrate impact** (organisations mentioned that it doesn't seem like there is follow on support/training about how it helped and that this is needed).
- Help to enable organisations to offer services in **community languages.**
- Work to **link CVS organisations to strategic partners** like the LA, NHS, public health. There was a recognition of how **other sectors have become dependent on the VCS** such as NHS, CCG as a link to the community (without payment or recognition).
- **Opportunities for peer-to-peer support.**
- Help to **invest in staff and volunteers** – help us upskill and retain human resources.
- Help to maintain the numbers that have been achieved by **running a digital service and to offer a hybrid service.**

## **A6. List of organisations represented at the 3 workshops**

23 February session:

- Manor Gardens
- CAB
- Age UK
- BIG Alliance
- Cloudesley
- TNL Community Fund

2 March BAME session:

- Maa Shanti
- One True Voice Women Organisation OTVWO
- Finsbury Park Mosque
- Community Language Support Services
- Evelyn Oldfield Unit

10 March open session:

- The Parent House
- The Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants
- Light Project Pro International
- Manor Gardens Welfare Trust
- Manor Gardens Welfare Trust
- Healthy Generations
- Jewish In Islington
- Holloway Safer Neighbourhood Panel
- Holloway Neighbourhood Group
- Global Generations
- Stuart Low Trust
- Hornsey Lane
- Islington People's Rights
- Holloway Safer Neighbourhood Panel & Caledonian Park Friends Group
- Somali Welfare Centre
- Disability Action in Islington

## Appendix B: Insights from workshop conducted with staff and trustees with current main provider

### B1. Overview

On the 10th of March, Locality conducted a focussed discussion with key staff at the main current funded organisation for the volunteering and capacity-building strands of the grants programme (2016-2020) to explore the experience of its delivery, key learning insights (including delivery systems), relationships with other key stakeholders and its impact and evidence for this. We also interviewed another key support provider.

The raw feedback from this exercise is presented below:

### B2. What impact has the pandemic had on the organisation?

- **Increased demand for services** - strain on services, squeezed.
- **Overwhelming in terms of challenge** at the beginning
- **Influx of volunteers** in furlough
- Strong **co-ordination with Council, Cripplegate, other funders**
- **Income has been more limited** - e.g., resource centre rental income (prime source of income)
- **Staff impact** - working from home, Covid cases etc.
- **No CEO in post at the time** - Covid impacted on recruitment.
- **Resource centre** - loss of income during lockdowns and making it Covid compliant, restricted its use.
- **Adapting ways of working**: suddenly new focus and demand - before 900 volunteers registered a year, increased to 2,300 in pandemic. Also demand from organisations who needed support with move to digital.
- **Capacity building** - moving everything online, needed to reduce capacity building offer for 5 months. During this time, some groups dormant, others partial delivery, some moved to digital delivery.
- Kept on and **increased flow of newsletters** - these were opened up to the whole sector (not just members).
- **Lost volunteers** support volunteer centre, plus staff on furlough - trying to deliver more with less resource.
- When we came back, **huge demand for support**. Working with a skeleton staff & having to pivot.
- **Working closely with statutory sector and large community orgs** such as HOYD. Manor Gardens and Age UK in response to covid - huge increase in demand for volunteers registered.
- **Core issues** coming from the sector: support with ICT, managing volunteers, partnerships e.g., Voluntary Action Camden.
- **Working to promote courses** delivered by other providers when not able to directly deliver e.g., working with young people remotely.
- Capacity building - a month to **reconfigure offer and adapt to services online**. 2 staff members furloughed. Reduced capacity building service for five months.
- **300 volunteers recruited for vaccination sites**.
- Supporting new **mutual aid groups** to think about their org structure.

- **Volunteering forums delivered online** and one to one sessions with organisations (not at moment because of volunteers for vaccination programme). One to one sessions very popular.

#### B4. Achievements/support provided

- **Increased membership** - people contacting us all the time for support - e.g., fundraising toolkit has been helpful.
- Opportunities - **consortia bids** - reflect that many orgs/groups are small.
- **Governance support**
- **Website seems to work well** in attracting orgs/groups.
- **Good strategic partnership** - thematic - e.g., community safety
- **Only NCVO accredited centre** in the borough
- **Supporting people on managing their volunteers**
- **Training and conferences** proved very useful for groups - in partnership with London Met Uni
- **Volunteer recognition schemes:** Islington Volunteer of the Year Awards, Volunteers Week, Value You.
- **Supporting organisation to use slack to communicate with each other** - the team worked hard to get people to use it. It has been a good space for collaboration.
- **Capacity building essentials** - developing organisations as a project and providing advice to groups outside of project. Over 100 groups in a year
- **Strengthening volunteering work** with 18 groups: how to recruit and train volunteers. Succession planning around volunteering.
- **Building awareness of volunteering database**, strengthening volunteering project
- **Volunteer fairs** run in partnership with Camden (quarterly).
- **Outreach to raise awareness about volunteering** at local VCS groups events, council premises and colleges & universities.,.
- **Drop-in volunteering sessions** to support and engage residents
- **Partnership with BIG Alliance** re corporate volunteers.

#### B4. What has worked less well?

- **Islington Community Network** - has phased out over time - lost the secretariat support from Council.
- **Network** didn't work as well after funding/ council support lost. Now not functioning.
- **Policy work** - after staff member left, this has been inconsistent.
- **Offer paid for training** - proved impossible (not affordable)
- **Funding, IT, volunteering** - standard areas, but had to prioritise this - some other areas got neglected.
- Would've liked the time to **build up stronger relationships** - other more core services took over from this.

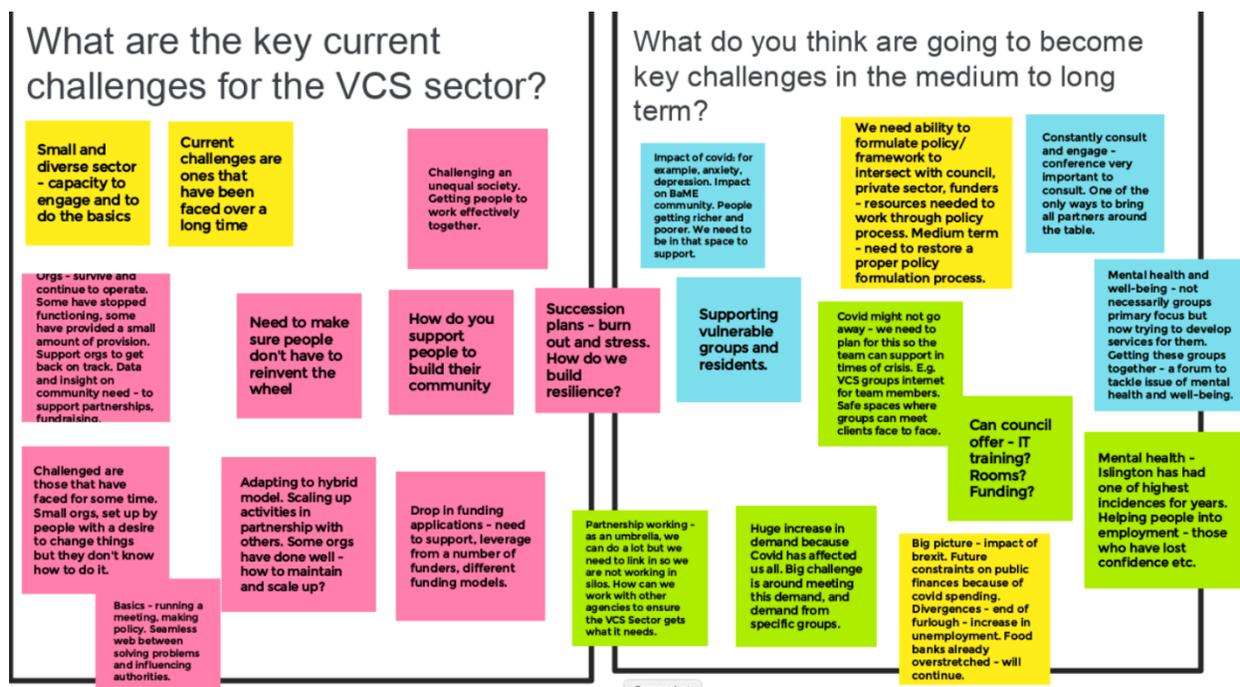
#### B5. What have you learnt through delivery to improve the service? What further changes would you make if you continued these services 2021-24?

- Earlier interventions needed.
- Move to digital delivery (predates Covid)

- We need to think about how to streamline communications - there is so much information being thrown at people (generally).
- Mapping needed of VCS - how many micro-orgs for example. Mapping need across different types of orgs.
- How do we make sure groups are getting information in the right way/ what they need?
- The sector is asking for a whole range of support: top three are financial support, governance and digital. Also demand for measuring impact & service user journeys. We need to think about how we can work in savvy way to meet this need.
- There has been a loss of independent training outside of projects e.g., financial management, training courses etc.
- New need to support organisations with hybrid delivery in the future.
- Challenges around balancing direct support and wider advocacy role - how to balance these.
- VAI is looked to, to provide strategic leadership. Part of this is a presence on partnership boards. Expectation to represent, contribute, advocate. Overall, we need systems to achieve voice and representation of the sector in Islington.
- VAI has an important role as a 'cog' in the volunteering machine - recruiting, checking, not just sign-posting. Very important part of the volunteering ecosystem.

## B6. What are the key current challenges for the VCS sector?

What do you think are going to become key challenges in the medium to long term?



- Small and diverse sector - **capacity to engage** and to do the basics.
- Current challenges are **ones that have been faced over a long time**.
- Organisations survive and continue to operate – they **tend to be more resilient than we think**. Some have stopped functioning; some have provided a small amount of provision. Support orgs to get back on track.
- **Data and insight on community need** - to support partnerships, fundraising.
- Small orgs, **set up by people with a desire to change things** but they don't know how to do it and need help.

- **Need support on the basics** - running a meeting, making policy. Seamless web between solving problems and influencing authorities.
- Need to make sure people **don't have to reinvent the wheel**.
- **Adapting to hybrid model** - calling up activities in partnership with others. Some orgs have done well - how to maintain and scale up?
- **Challenging an unequal society** - getting people to work effectively together.
- **Support people to build their community**.
- Succession plans - burn out and stress. We need to **build resilience**
- **Support on funding applications** - need to support, leverage from a number of funders, different funding models.
- **Impact of covid**: for example, anxiety, depression. Impact on BaME community. People getting richer and poorer. We need to be in that space to support.
- **Supporting vulnerable groups and residents**.
- **Partnership working** - as an umbrella, we can do a lot but we need to link in so we are not working in silos. How can we work with other agencies to ensure the VCS Sector gets what it needs?
- We need ability to **formulate policy/ framework to intersect with council, private sector, funders** - resources needed to work through policy process. Medium term - need to restore a proper policy formulation process.
- **Covid might not go away** - we need to plan for this so the team can support in times of crisis. E.g., VCS groups internet for team members. Safe spaces where groups can meet clients face to face.
- **Leveraging the Council offer** - IT training? Rooms? Funding?
- Big picture - **impact of Brexit and others shocks to the system**. Future constraints on public finances because of covid spending. Divergences - end of furlough - increase in unemployment. Food banks already overstretched - will continue.
- **Constantly consult and engage** - conferences very important to consult. One of the only ways to bring all partners around the table.
- **Mental health and well-being** - not necessarily groups primary focus but now trying to develop services for them. Getting these groups together - a forum to tackle issue of mental health and well-being. Islington has had one of highest incidences for years. Helping people into employment - those who have lost confidence etc.

**B7. How should the volunteering and capacity building offer be configured to help meet these challenges: What should there be more of? What should there be less of? What new services are needed?**

- **More training** - skills gap - essential training for people to run their organisations properly. Training has been focused on fundraising etc. We need a programme on organisation development.
- Raise **awareness of volunteering** opportunities and improve access.
- Volunteer Centre to develop a stronger relationship with iWork and Job Centres.
- **Support young people and their confidence into/back into work** through more inclusive and diverse volunteering opportunities.
- **We need more of everything!** But we can't. Need to continue to talk to people about what they need.
- **More online volunteering opportunities**. Sector crying out for more volunteering management training, good practice toolkits.

- **Money - VAI overstretched and other orgs.** Raising cash - ourselves and other organisations.
- **Community accountancy project in Islington.** Smaller orgs really need this.
- **LESS duplication** - how can we work better together in partnership.
- **Good governance and safeguarding** - VAI well-positioned to offer subject to funding.
- Councillors sometimes find themselves as an interface. **Need for single points of contact.** Things better than they were but still a view from the grassroots.
- **VCS sector too has a lot on offer** - how do we work together to streamline?
- **Different parts of the council talking to each other** - better communication.
- Really important that **people feel in their own locality** that they are in control of things - external bodies from outside can disenfranchise. Local self-government.
- **How do we track this long term?** Next year - we've covered these points - how do we manage success long term? Not losing what's been discussed today.
- We need to be mindful of **charity closures and repercussions.**

#### **B8. Additional comments on future provision, provided post-workshop:**

- **Time-based capacity building projects** that are aimed at strengthening organisations.
- Better **co-ordination of the opportunities** on offer to the sector as a whole and better signposting to specialist agencies so that organisations are well-informed.
- Specific pieces of work to **help organisations get back on track** after a year of covid.
- Tailored support in **capacity building and volunteering for BAMER organisations** and working in partnership with existing BAMER organisations
- The development and **support for smaller networks** and helping them to feed into current initiatives.
- **Communications:** Providing information platforms for smaller, BAMER & disability groups to get their publicity and information out in the community so that they have a wider reach.
- Providing more of VAI's services out in the community and local community centres wherever possible, thus **bringing our services to local groups.**
- More help for VSC organisation regarding **accessing digital/online services** and training especially for smaller groups.

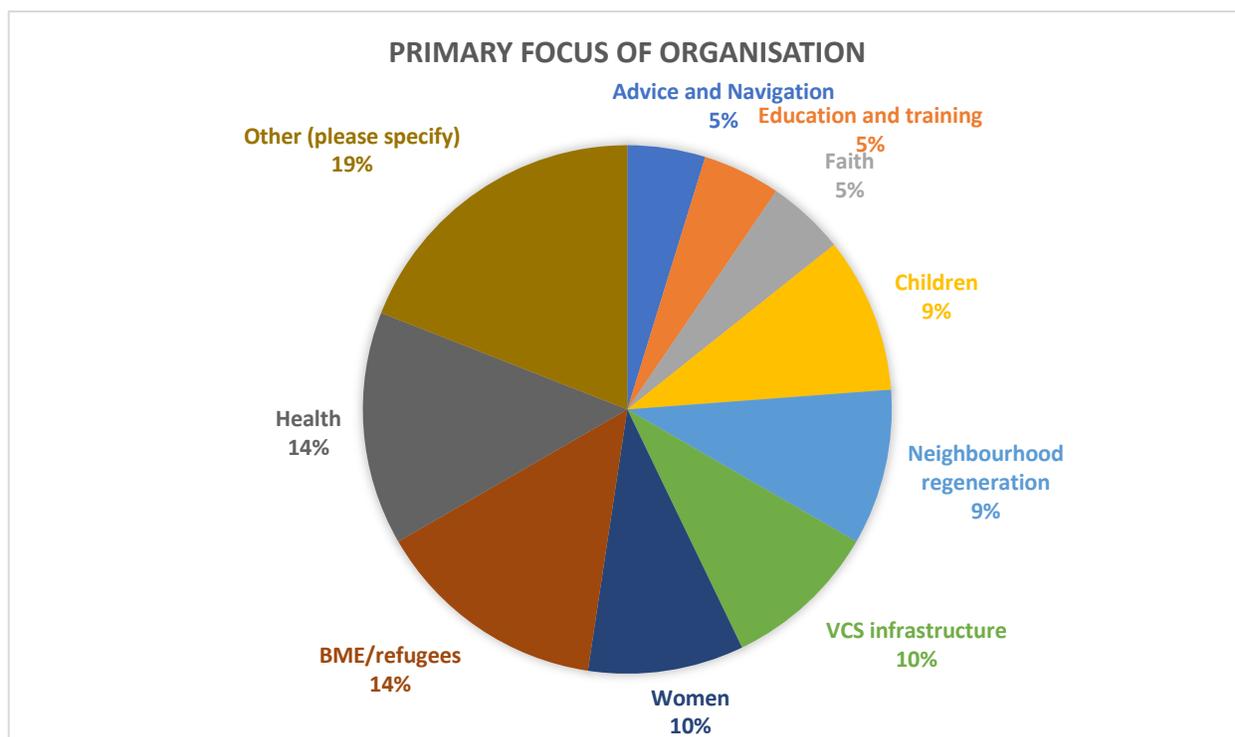
## Appendix C: Raw survey data from survey of voluntary and community sector organisations

### C1. Overview

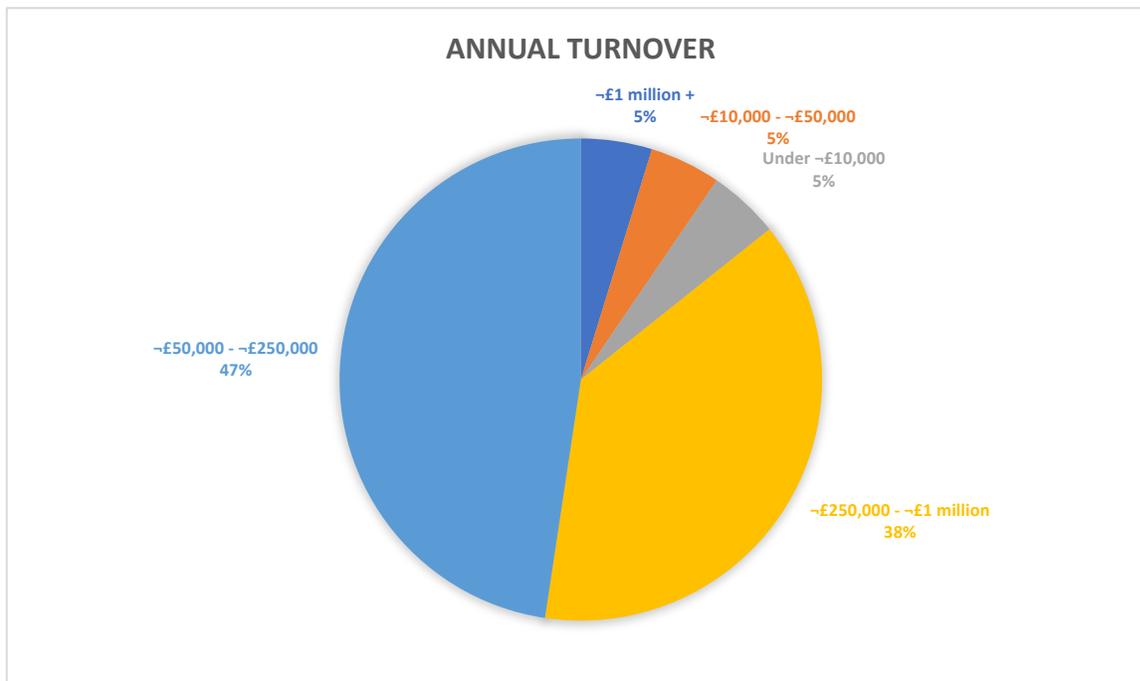
Voluntary and community sector organisations were also invited to contribute to an online survey. Questions focused on:

- Challenges that VCS organisations faced in the near future.
- Immediate support needs (from now to 6 months).
- Longer-term support needs (from 6 months – 2 years).
- Preferred methods for accessing support.
- Volunteering and capacity building support accessed in the recent past & the impact of this support.
- Factors preventing organisations from accessing support.

The survey was live from the 25th of February until 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021. There were 23 responses to the survey. Of the 23, 8 were from women-led organisations and 9 were from BaME led organisations. In terms of organisational focus, the responding organisations representing a variety of themes with BAME/refugees (14%) and Health (14%) particularly prominent (see chart below).



In terms of annual turnover, the survey respondent sample was skewed to slightly larger organisations in the sector, with 38% with a turnover between £250k to £1 million. However, the largest proportion came from organisations with a turnover between £50k to £250k (47%).



The raw data from the survey is presented below:

## C2. Current Challenges

- Re engaging with people in the area, especially youth, following the series of lockdowns.
- The closing of our facilities and social distancing measure when we were/can open.
- Financial pressures due to loss of regular funding, income and support.
- Re-engaging volunteers when we are able to re-open.
- Longer term funding for projects between 3 and 5 years.
- An increased demand for services and support with fewer resources.
- Recovery of traditional services post Covid-19
- Sustainability and funding of the projects
- Online services provision and mental health support for young and older people due current difficulty and challenging times.
- Loss in income, which is usually generated through hall and facilities hire, play project fees.
- We had secured financial viability and strong governance over the past 2 years - this could now be eroded as resources are drained and capacity for dealing with increased fundraising and support services becomes overwhelming
- Fund-raising and developing/diversifying income streams to enable us to provide stability of services and to maintain and refurbish our premises.
- Keeping abreast of changes in regulations and legislation around the pandemic to safeguard our staff and clients.
- Building stronger relationships with various stakeholder council departments in order to increase communication and information, promoting greater productivity and efficiency.
- Business Planning in an uncertain environment
- Securing long-term grant funding

- Finding ways of recovering the income we generate from room and office hire.
- Our IT systems, staff wellbeing and getting parents involved as volunteers if schools are closed
- Volunteers
- Communications and marketing
- Support to engage community members
- Funding
- Meeting local needs
- Space to develop some of our activities
- Longer term funding
- Post lockdown operation
- Supporting the wellbeing and positive mental health of our residents
- Rising demand for support
- Finding exceptional staff
- Sustaining volunteer engagement
- Getting services up and running again
- Getting services financed
- Responding to ever-growing needs of the local community within current resources.
- Readjusting to the new norm of the Post-Covid working environment, which will hopefully emerge over coming months. (In the past our services were delivered primarily through face to face appointments, but recently through telephone and online means.)
- Securing sufficient funding to deliver the services required for 2021/22 and beyond. (We were rather successful in terms of securing additional Covid-related funding during 2020/21 but this actually puts us in an odd situation of potentially reducing services after the 31st March 2021, in spite of high demand.
- Funding, building up our engagement programmes, IT
- Securing Funding. Returning to 'normal' activities.
- Staff returning to 'normal' activities.
- Gradual return to the centre reopening with covid-19 regulations in place i.e., encouraging users to follow procedures.
- Outreach programme of activities if reopening is delayed and or restrictions reapplied/applied, whereby face to face work is restricted.
- Online activities albeit a great way to interact with local residents.
- The concern around not reaching those in our communities who are not/do not want to be digitally inclusive.
- Couldn't paying our rent premises
- Utility bills
- Fear lose our lease
- Keeping up with monitoring requirements
- Ensuring that we are up to date and in compliance with rules and regulations
- Ensuring that we are able to cope with demand for our services (especially support work with vulnerable people)
- Being able to keep up with demand, increased workload and having our clients' experiences heard at all levels.
- Re-establishing Room Hire income
- Re-engaging volunteers and service users in COVID-secure in-person activities
- Medium/long-term planning in an uncertain environment.
- Volunteer training/recruitment

- Isolated clients not feeling confident in using services due to the pandemic and suitable location to deliver services.

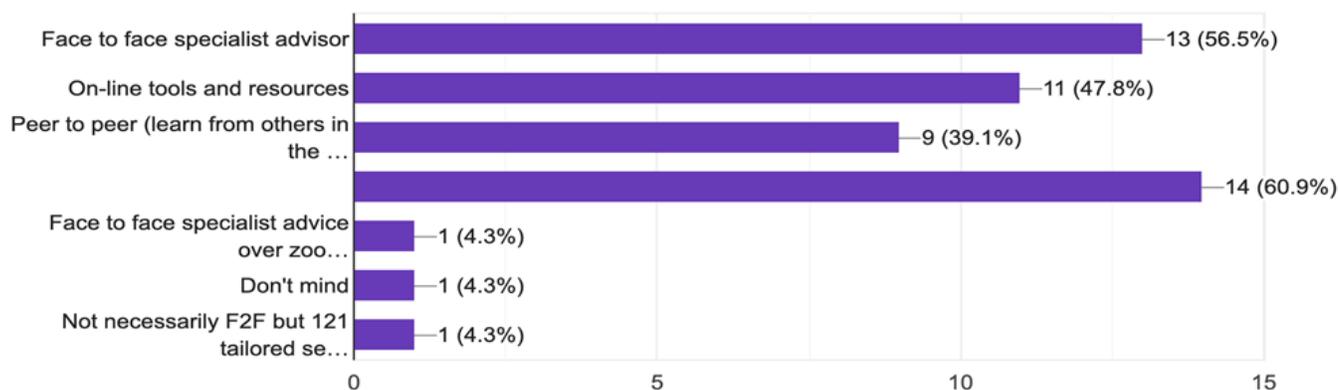
**C3. Other support needs (beyond immediate and longer term support needs mentioned on P7) :**

- School age children need sustainable support with education. Such need is now greater than ever. Many families worried that their children will fall behind if they do not get sustainable tuition. More financial support with MTSS.
- We have applied for Wave 5 Recovery and renewal Funds of 44,900 - if we get this then we will be able to budget for 2021-22 - if we dont, then we will need support in financial management, HR and support with applying for other funding streams (and making sure they are successful!)
- Help understanding the new environment around office hire as a form of income generation.
- Advertising/promotion of services
- Policies, we are struggling to keep up to date with these.
- Reaching local residents who are 'hard to reach' and probably most in need of support.
- Support around safeguarding and related issues.  
Support around GDPR compliance and other data protection related matters.  
One issue for the organisation is that staff and volunteers vary in terms of their levels of IT competence, and some would evidently benefit from additional IT training/support to develop their skills, but it would need to be quite "bespoke".
- HR
- We need urgent support to make our centre safe.
- Increasing capacity around our growth as an organisation, organisational structure and workloads.
- Keeping abreast of changes in policy and service structures (e.g., restructuring of NHS services, developments in social prescribing, future of Personal Health Budgets)

**C4. Preferred methods for accessing support:**

**5. What are your preferred methods for accessing support?**

23 responses



## C5. Capacity support accessed:

- We have looked at the fund-raising support information
- Business planning and Volunteer recruitment VAI - Pearls of Wisdom one to one support Action Planning, Locality meetings re Covid-19 and Small Charities Coalition support and funding opportunities.
- We have accessed different training and information sessions from Islington Council, Voluntary Action Islington, Healthwatch Islington, Islington People's Rights
- VAI - Head of Centre was on Capacity Building programme with them but halted due to COVID.  
Employee Volunteering - as well as providing volunteers for activity days at the centre, they also providing business planning support in Jan 2020
- We commissioned the services of a solicitor to review a lease. We commissioned the services of a surveyor to help us negotiate a rent increase. We used a facilitator at our last Annual planning day. We commissioned a consultant to lead on the review of our policies and procedures. Our team have attended various online training sessions.
- Jugjit Samra has been helping with fundraising by proof reading some of my submissions and has kindly offered help with finding tenants (when that is possible!).
- Core Programme through Big Alliance
- Website - voluntary organisation
- In 2019, the charity was part of the Big Alliance's CoRe programme
- VAI Capacity Building and Volunteering
- Through the Big Alliance - website user feedback survey through digital marketing agency
- How to respond to the Pandemic - we did this through the Local Authority and the Octopus Community Network (OCN).
- How to identify needs of the local community - we did this through the consultant Social Engine and through the Local Authority (through local insight).
- Advanced and standard safeguarding training for the Chief Executive and organisation staff, and volunteers, provided through Islington Council.  
Governance and trustee support through Voluntary Action Islington
- Core Programme Big Alliance
- Slaughter & May via The Big Alliance
- Fundraising support - Adam Wilson via Development Officer (LBI): Neil Coulson via Social Investment Business
- Fundraising/ Yvette/ Islington Voluntary Action
- We have received support via the CoRE programme (Run by Big Alliance)

Capacity building support received was delivered by:

- VAI (8)
- Big Alliance (6)
- Islington Council (5)
- Octopus (2)
- Other (2) (Locality, Healthwatch, small charities coalition)

## C6. Volunteering support accessed:

- Volunteer recruitment training from VAI
- We asked some Pro Bono services but accessed yet.
- VAI - volunteer awards always good  
Employee Volunteering and The Big Alliance have been great with teams coming in for specific tasks  
Hillside Clubhouse have promoted our services to their users who have become volunteers at our centre (gardening and Food Hub)  
VCS support through training for trustees has been promoted  
The St Georges Mutual Aid group - we have been working with them throughout the pandemic and want to support them to develop their network going forward
- We use VAI and Do-it portals to advertise and fill volunteer vacancies. Octopus Community Network help us to find suitable volunteers.
- Octopus network, mutual aid volunteer group
- Core Programme through Big Alliance
- We know about VAI but were able to engage with many local volunteers in recent months and create a large pool of volunteers to support our activities.
- Volunteer recruitment training with VAI
- We are recruiting younger and older people into our networks on an ongoing basis
- Advertised for Volunteers through social media, local cafe, newsletter etc
- Some support through Voluntary Action Islington. Also in effect "peer support" from key partner organisations, within the Islington Advice Alliance, meaning Citizens Advice Islington, Islington Law Centre, and Help on your Doorstep (HOYD)
- Core Programme Big Alliance
- Time to Spare and VAI
- BIG Alliance - Tom Browne. Voluntary Action Islington; Julian Thomas. Octopus: Primrose Christie. Mutual aid: Ashar Smith
- We have sourced volunteer via Boardmatch. Mostly we are approached directly by volunteers.
- We have tended to recruit volunteers who are clients or ex-clients so have not referred to VAI or the VCS team for support on this.
- Octopus Community Network and VAI help us to recruit volunteers by advertising our vacancies. Since lockdown, we have used Islington Council's DBS service.

### Volunteering support delivered by:

- VAI (9)
- Islington Council (1)
- Octopus (3)
- Big Alliance (3)
- Other (2)

## C7. Impact of support/ how support helped:

- Too early to evaluate in this present situation
- It was brilliant and ensured that we know about the legal requirements for recruiting volunteers, recruitment methods and designing volunteer task descriptions.
- we are still waiting to get that support.

- All of them contribute to promoting the valuable input volunteers provide us with in so many ways, whether corporates or individuals, sharing knowledge and skills, or enabling us to maintain aspects of our centre that would otherwise be unmanageable - the garden!

The mutual aid volunteers were so important in getting our emergency food hub off the ground and reaching those most in need of this support

- Helps us to recruit volunteers
- provided volunteers & drivers to help with our foodbank
- Support around Quality Assurance
- Working with MacQuarie and Slaughter & May employees, we improved internal and external communications
- Provided legalities of recruiting volunteers, creating task descriptions and advertising for volunteers
- Q6 - has fed into a revamp of our website, which will enhance their accessibility and content, which will indirectly enhance our fundraising, campaigning, comms and volunteer recruitment.
- Helped to shape our response to the pandemic (LA & OCN - Q6). Helped to identify needs of the local community and thus, helped to inform our strategy and development of services. (Social Engine - Q6) Gave us lots of volunteers (through local adverts etc - Q7).
- It was very useful in those particular areas, notably safeguarding related. Trustees evidently found it useful to be involved with other trustees from other organisations in the borough.
- Support with Quality Assurance
- Getting to grips with GDPR. More robust approach to volunteer support.
- We did not take up the offer of support as was afforded access to more robust support for a fundraiser from our community development officer.  
We were also unable to take up the offer for a social media coordinator due to being unable to find a volunteer with the necessary required skills and experience.  
We were however able take up the offer of a volunteer for Gardening and the food bank,
- We depend on volunteers at all levels of our organisation.
- It helped us to get access to or knowledge of useful resources which either helped us to improve our working practices or work in collaboration better. Sharing experiences via network meetings for example has been very helpful.
- The support means we were able to attract new volunteers and that we are better informed, more skilled and better networked.

#### **C8. Barriers to accessing support:**

- Time/ capacity (15)
- Not aware (2)
- Not appropriate (5)
- Not responsive (1)