Hounslow Voluntary Sector Effectiveness and Efficiency Survey

**Introduction**

Funders are increasingly looking for evidence of efficient delivery of VCS services, many VCS groups are facing financial pressures and looking to save costs

Within VCS groups it is common for operating models to have been built up over time in a less than structured fashion, as groups grow and add services to their portfolio. In addition, VCS groups may be reluctant to invest in new technologies, which means that at times their use of digital and other technology could be significantly improved.

Many VCS groups are acknowledging that a clear understanding of how they operate in practice (as opposed to what people’s job descriptions say!) is also important

Therefore improvements could be made in both VCS efficiency and effectiveness.

In order to get an idea as to how Hounslow groups are addressing these issues Hounslow Voluntary Sector Support Service (HVSSS) and Hounslow Council Community Partnerships Unit (CPU) have carried out a joint Hounslow Voluntary Sector Efficiency and Effectiveness Survey

66 groups replied to the Survey, a response rate of 10%. There was a good mix of large and small groups. A list of groups responding is attached at **Appendix 1**

**Highlight Findings from Hounslow VCS Groups**

* 65% of groups employ staff, but many VCS staff are only part time
* 19% of groups expect staff numbers to increase over the next 12 months and 10% to decrease
* Only 11% of groups share staff with other groups
* 93% of groups do not currently share other costs - however 25% plan to do so over the next 12 months
* 52% of groups would like more information and advice from HVSSS on how to share staff and other costs
* 83% of groups already use regular volunteers but 35% would like additional advice from Volunteer Hounslow on how they can recruit more volunteers
* Only 25% of groups currently make use of national cost discount schemes
* Only 27% of groups have benchmarked their costs against other similar groups
* 76% of groups have had some form of funding from Hounslow Council
* 51% of groups charge for some of their services, most groups who do not charge would be willing to consider this in future
* 56% of group have already taken steps to increase efficiencies and reduce costs over the last two years and 33% plan to make further efficiencies and savings over the next 12 months
* Local VCS groups secure substantial funding from a wide range other funders- see **Appendix 2**. The 63 groups in our Survey reported over £5,830,000 in external funding. Scaled up to all 600 groups in Hounslow, and recognising our Survey included some groups with large grants and some grants were over several years, this would suggest Hounslow VCS groups attract total external funding per year of around £25m
* Local VCS groups are also good at wider income generation in addition to external funding, via charges, membership fees, fundraising events, donations, charity shops and business sponsorship. The 63 groups in our Survey reported over £820,000 in additional income generation, see **Appendix 3**. (Note this income figure does not include around £450,000 in box office and other income by a large VCS arts organisation). Scaled up to all 600 groups in Hounslow this would suggest local VCS groups raise additional income of around £6m per year
* VCS services are pretty cost effective, unit costs vary a lot due the nature of the service but for the VCS groups in our Survey average unit costs were £10-£20 per service user

**Survey Responses**

The graphs below illustrate responses by survey question

**YES, please provide details below and what action you took as a result (please specify):**

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| * Our national parent organisation has a wide network of information to enable cost comparisons -
 |
| we seem to run for less than average !* Salary bench marking exercise undertaken in 2016
 |
| * We work closely with one charity in particular, and we benchmark many of our overheads against theirs - we have changed a couple of our purchasing choices as a result, e.g. our health and safety consultant.
 |
| * We are operating more productively in terms of ROCE and standard employee productivity ratios
 |
| * We are too small to do benchmarking and have direct connections to all our spending
 |
| * Regular benchmark monitoring is done with other similar local organisations and ad hoc against other wider organisations
 |
| * We carried out a salary review and used benchmarking with others for subsequent recruitment
 |
| * Working on a unit costing tool with other London Home-Starts at present - in progress.
 |
| * Considering re-tendering our annual audit based on benchmarking audit costs in other similar organisations
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**Additional Comments**

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| **Overall efficiency and effectiveness of your organization** | **Additional support (from Hounslow Council, from HVSSS or from any other organisation) which could assist you in increasing efficiency of your organisation or help you save costs.** | **Any other comments you wish to add on the Hounslow VCS Efficiencies Review and / or ideas to increase efficiencies or save costs within the wider VCS in Hounslow** |
|   |   | There is only so much efficiency any group can do.  |
| We have always been a very streamlined organisation. We want the money we receive to go directly to participants and not be clogged up in office costs or overheads  | Hounslow has been great to us over the year. We look to doing more work with the council in the years to come  | VCS Hounslow is great. Long may it continue!  |
| New premise is our most urgent need |  Advice on accountancy / IT costs |   |
| Good ät present | Good job in difficult circumstances |  |
| Already paired down to the minimum |   |   |
| We're lean and mean |  Would like access to community accountant - a cheap solicitor and a charity insurance broker |  |
| Group's aim is healthy living. | Volunteer yoga teacher required |   |
| Very efficient as we have only about £300 per year of running costs in total. We collect from donations approximately £20,000 worth of food per year. | Grants from Hounslow Council for specific projects. |   |
| We keep our costs down as much as possible. Concentrate on what our members want.  |   |   |
| The Society has been going for 101 years and is both well established and incredibly efficient | They could waive or reduce the £150 rental of our allotment space |   |
| As we are run by volunteers and have minimal costs, we're already incredibly efficient | Not applicable |   |
| I believe that for a small organisation we offer impressive value for money with our services and make a real difference to those whom we support. |   |   |
| Only efficiency measures that can be considered would relate to nontraditional forms of employment. | Probably nothing. HR specialist advice if any. |   |
| We are very low maintenance. The 3 member committee use their own resources to support the group.  |   |   |
|   | We find HVSSS sessions are geared towards charities with income of less than around £500k pa and are less relevant to us.  |   |
| Moving forward, we will be exploring measures to increase the sustainability and efficiencies of our organisation  | We are open to partnership developments with other VCS groups to move towards on this.  |   |
| Recently been awarded PQASSO Level 1 accreditation which resulted in a total audit of the charity and led to many process changes | Volunteers Volunteers Volunteers!! | Volunteers Volunteers Volunteers! |

**Appendix 1**

**Survey Respondents**

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| **Organisation Name** |
| **Age UK Hounslow** | **Hounslow Friends of faith** |
| **Alliance Dance Unit**  | **Hounslow Pensioners Forum** |
| **Autism Hounslow** | **Hounslow Phab** |
| **Beanstalk** | **Hounslow Voluntary Sector Support Service** |
| **CAN Mezzanine Hounslow** | **ILAYS** |
| **Carers Trust Thames** | **Integrated Neurological Services** |
| **Centre for Armenian Information & Advice** | **Ivybridgelink** |
| **Chiswick Horticultural & Allotments Society** | **Lavender Court Tenant Association** |
| **Clayponds Estate Residents Association** | **Otakark Kraus Music Trust** |
| **Cultivate London** | **Our Barn Youth Club** |
| **Darpan** | **Pregnancy Matters (Life)** |
| **Dewachan Buddhis Centre** | **Retired Members' Association (Asian Elders)** |
| **East European Resource Centre** | **SFIDA Kosovan/Albanian/Macedonian and Gorani Group**  |
| **Feltham Arts Association** | **Spark!** |
| **Feltham Food Bank** | **Speak Out in Hounslow** |
| **Friends of Beaversfield Park** | **St George's Youth Club Hanworth** |
| **Friends of Cathja** | **Tale Be Told Theatre** |
| **Friends of Chiswick Health Centre** | **Teens and Toddlers** |
| **Goldy Goldy Women's Group** | **The Conservation Volunteers** |
| **Havelock Family Centre** | **The Mulberry Centre** |
| **Heston and Isleworth Old Peoples Welfare Committee** | **Together We Create** |
| **Home-Start**  | **Volunteering Hounlsow / Groundwork London** |
| **Hounslow Community Association Limited** | **WAGES: Women & Girls Empowerment Support Ltd** |
| **Hounslow Community Transport** | **Watermans**  |
| **Hounslow COPD Support Group** |  |

**Apprendix 2**

**Please provide details of all other external funding secured for your organisation over the last two years e.g. through The Lottery or charitable trust.**

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| **Funder, Amount** | **Funder, Amount** | **Funder, Amount,** | **Funder, Amount** |
| Age UK £15,000 | INS £17,500  | Hounslow CCG £35,000 and £2,000 | London Sustainability Exchange £3,000  |
| BBC Children In Need £10,000  | Heritage Lottery Fund - £73,000  | Carers4Ealing Consortium £8,000 | Ealing Advice Forum £5,000  |
| Ealing Council £60,000,Community Gardening Project | Hanwell Big Local, £50,000 | Inspire Hounslow, £35,000  | Housing Pathways Trust, £125,000,  |
| Too numerous to fit here but approx £1m pa  |   |   |   |
| BBC Children in Need, £8,000 | Southern Housing, £14,000 | Big Lottery Fund, £10,000 for ICT project | Origin Housing, £20,000 |
| BBC Children in Need £18,883  | Hampton Allotment Charity £27,500  | City Bridge Trust £21,450  | Richmond Parish Lands £34,400 Music Therapy |
| Heathrow Community Fund - £12,000 | Thames Valley Housing (Community Chest) £5,000 | Awards for All - £10,000 |  The Freemasons - £2,500 - new minibus |
| Awards for All £20,000 Healthy Living Project | CCG Home from Hospital £30,000 | Bailey Thomas Trust, £5,000 f0r ICT project | HRCH £18,000 for health project |
| Sports activities, various funders £15,000 | Awards for All - £10,000 | Community gardening work £25,000 various funders | Extra youth club activities £10,000 |
| Corporate Funders, £245,000,  | Trusts & Foundations, £1,460,900, 1-3 years School projects | DWP, YEF, £1,582,700, 1-3 years School projects | Whalley White Trust £10,000 for learning disability support |
| Wates Foundation £7,000 youth work | Many small funders for annual youth work | Inspire Hounslow, £4,990 | Big Lottery Reaching Communities £150,000 over three years for health project |
| Big Lottery Reaching Communities, Fresh Horizons project £439,4194 over 4 years  | Grow Wild, Garden Project £4,000  | Tesco Carrier Bag Fund, Garden project £2,000  | Heathrow Communities Fund £2,500  |
| Clothworkers' Foundation £15,000 - towards a new minibus | Department of Health - £93.673 over 4 years Pro-Active Minds Project |   |   |
| Rugby Union Foundation £9,500 - Kitchen | BBC Children in Need – £31,000 | Tesco Carrier Bag Fund, £5,000 for Children’s’ play garden | Evening Standard Dispossessed Fund £20,000 |

**Appendix 3**

**Please provide details of any other income you have secured for your organisation over the last two years e.g. via membership fees, fundraising events, business donations.**

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| **Item and Amount** | **Item and Amount** | **Item and Amount** | **Item and Amount** | **Item and Amount** |
| Retail Business £100, 000  | Client Charges £84,000 | Membership fees £17,000  | Donations £33,000 |   |
| £30,000 pa membership, hall hire, donations | £300 donation to cover website costs. | Donations (local residents and businesses) - £2,000 | Fundraising eg car boots, coffee mornings -£2,000 | Groups have a small subscription each session, £1.50 or £2 per person |
| Plant sales - £30,000 | Landscape gardening - £90,000  | Fundraising dinner - £5,000 | Fundraising events £2,000 |   |
| Box office £350,000 p.a. | Hire of space £60,000  | Misc trading £30,000 | Friends, donations £70,000 | Small donations from companies/followers |
| Fundraising events £17,500 | Donation £6,000 per annum |   |   |   |
| Donations - £40,000 | Schools - £150,000  | SKY - £20,000 for Filmmakers project  | Members' Donation £1,380 |   |
| £250 - the Isleworth Society | 3 charity shops raises just over 2/3rds of our running costs | £1,000 - area grant - seed fund for photography group -  | Membership fees. £365 |   |
| Memb. fees and donations £700 |  Gift aid £150 | Members contribution and donations £4,000 | Regular monthly donations - £1,500 per year | Ad hoc cash donations - £500 per year |
| Members' subscriptions - £2,500 | Local advertisers in our handbook - £1,000 | Trading sales - £9,000 | Shows & Events - £3,000 |  Donations £26.00 |
| Weekly attendance levy £4,487 | Members Fees £ 95 | Functions charge £ 940 | Excursions - Day Trips £1,788 | Various fundraising events- approx £1,400 |
| Donations & Events £96,700 | Charity shop, £22,000 | Donations, circa £8,000 pa | Local business donations £6,000 |  Fundraising events £800 |
| Membership Fees £2,000 | Minibus Hire £6,000 | Corporate volunteering £3,675  |  Metal recycling/clothes bank roughly £500 per year |   |

**Appendix 4**

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| **Please provide details of how you recruit volunteers and what their key task areas are** |
| Volunteers help withSocial Care for Elderly Day Centre at Bedfont Administrative - Gardening - Walkers Activties - Health Champions | Recruitment through word of mouth and members |
| Volunteers help withRegular eventsCommunity library  | Recruitment through professional contacts, personal links, website, local VCS, previous service users:Volunteers act as Counsellors, Therapists, Welcomers, Admin Support, Fundraising Support |
| Volunteers are recruited via social media, Volunteering Hounslow, and word of mouth. Most volunteers help with basic gardening tasks. | Variety of volunteer functions depending on specific projects - no generic volunteers.Recruitment through Do-it, Team London, Charity Jobs and social media. |
| Volunteers ask for placements, we check their experience and credentials, we train them if they need training and their tasks include helping organise events and childcare etc.  | Our volunteers are our members who offer their services voluntarily, they lay out tables and chairs, serve tea and refreshments and clean up. |
| Recruitment through word of mouth and through service users. | Recruitment through various publicity through schools and the local community. Volunteers visit families at home to provide emotional and practical support  |
| Recruitment through word of mouthAssisting at our events | Recruited via Volunteer Connect database using Groundwork London's Organisation account. Key tasks are related to the day-to-day administration of the service i.e. updates to volunteer connect, contributing to comms bulletins, and the management of monitoring spreadsheets. |
| Recruitment through networking, corporate contacts, chamber of commerce. Volunteers act as role models by sharing knowledge of their industry and developing young people's employability skills.  | Volunteers help with office admin, business support, marketing, ICT |
| Recruitment of volunteers is incredibly difficult we use a variety of meansFace to face in shops - most successful methodHounslow Volunteer Centre - have secured 2 or 3 volunteers over the yearFacebook - no one Friends and family - fairly successful Posters in the shop window - difficult to gauge | Recruitment via parents and ex members - all police checked - as volunteer assistant youth leaders |
| Volunteers act as stewards, catering, speakers | Recruited by Groundwork London through Volunteer Connect. Tasked with basic administrative duties for volunteer brokerage coordinators in Hounslow, Barnet, Brent and Westminster. |
| Volunteers act as support workers at the youth club - recruit by word of mouth. Young people volunteer and get something on their CV, our service users meet other young people. | The majority of volunteers are part of the Campaigns and Partnership project and our recruited through Speak Out activities.  |
| Recruitment by word of mouth. Key volunteer tasks are, Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer, Committee Members.  | Recruitment by word of mouth, Job Centre Plus and related agencies |
| Recruitment by word of mouth in the community | We recruit via Volunteering Hounslow, Duke of Edinburgh Award and previous members or parents |
| Volunteers interact with clients, publicity, counselling, collecting, refurbishing, sorting and delivering baby clothes and equipment |  |