

THIS IS US

Kensington and Chelsea's voluntary and community sector remains confident in its ability to survive the impact of recession and in its ability to meet the changing needs of its service users.

Despite a threatened funding squeeze and an increased demand for services this optimism reflects the sector's belief that it is making a real difference to the lives of local residents.

These are just some of the key findings from our 'This Is Us' report based on research carried out in 2009 with 155 local organisations.

Other findings show how organisations are starting to adapt the way they operate and generate income in response to the changing external landscape.

A recognition that a greater diversity in income sources is required has seen increasing numbers of organisations looking into delivering contracted services. There is also a willingness to explore other means of income generation such as selling services. The report recommends that this should be encouraged through the greater involvement of VCO's in the design and delivery of public services and in support from local statutory agencies for social enterprise.



Attendees at the Health 'Open Space' event held on 11 February which discussed priorities for the new Community Health Consortium.

However the report also recognises that grant funding is still critical to the survival of many organisations and in particular for the borough's Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) sector. It goes on to highlight issues around voice and influence with the statutory sector, again with particular reference to the BME sector.

This Is Us showed that the vast majority of organisations (79%) strongly agree that partnership working has a positive impact on their work. This fact is further evidenced by the recent progress towards the formation of a community health consortium to help design and deliver health services in the borough (see page 6).

The report concludes with a series of recommendations

designed to strengthen the sector and influence policy and decision makers. Its full findings will be presented on 29 April as part of an evening of celebration to mark the Social Council's 50th Birthday (see back page for details).

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Kensington & Chelsea Social Council (KCSC)

works to support locally focused
voluntary and community
organisations serving local residents.

The views expressed in Link are not
necessarily those of KCSC.

A WORD FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

As both local and national elections draw closer our thoughts at the Social Council turn towards how, as a sector we might survive the next few years, and also how we will get on with the new local and national government, no matter who wins the election.



Mary Gardiner

campaigning for necessary change now even more than before.

This is a strange world we live in where we are over policed and over measured in many ways but where we can be lonely and isolated at the points

in our life where we need human beings the most. Our job as a sector is to keep reminding decision makers that we are necessary, that for many we humanise what can otherwise be a dehumanising series of experiences in modern life.

Many of the changes we have been persuaded to undertake in recent years have had the best of motives of the government and local government behind them, but they have led to something which sometimes feels like over prescription and control.

We can reassert ourselves as leaders of civic movements and encourage our beneficiaries to use their vote and to recognise the value of this right. We can then follow up by ensuring elected councillors and members of parliament represent us properly, listen and advocate for us in the way that they should. If we do that we will be echoing once again the fight that brought the vote to more people.

Aneesa Chaudhry has 2 new roles...

Personalisation Awareness

Personalisation means greater choice for people with individual budgets thereby creating greater opportunities for the voluntary and community sector but also increasing competition from the private sector.

At the Social Council we are liaising with a variety of organisations to help you prepare for the coming changes. We will keep you informed of the Council's work on Personalisation and provide up to date information to help you decide if you see a role for your organisation within the Personalisation Agenda.

Arts & Olympics Development

The Social Council aims to improve well being and access to the arts for local communities of all backgrounds. Aneesa will be working to ensure your voices are heard through the arts. As it is our 50 year Anniversary this year she is organising the special calendar of events. (see back page).

More info: Aneesa Chaudhry
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12 YEARS OF LABOUR

Voluntary and Community Sector Gains and Losses

In 1997, Labour came to power after 18 years out of office, the success was partly due to the vibrancy of its new leader and the rebranding of Labour as 'New Labour'.

This article aims to highlight what Labour has done for the voluntary and community sector since 1997. By simply stating the facts you as the reader can make up your own mind whether the story of the voluntary and community sector has been a positive.

In 1997 New Labour said they were committed to voluntary activity as an expression of citizenship. They would also encourage a broad range of voluntary initiatives, no longer driven top down but now led by communities.

In 1998 The Compact was published which led the way for local Compacts. This established Labour's commitment to a new way of working in effective partnerships based on mutual respect and understanding between the sectors.

By 2001 when Labour won a second General Election they had pledged greater commitment to the sector through voluntary sector involvement in the design and delivery of public services. The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund was introduced in 2001/2 to narrow the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest of the country. This led the way for many voluntary and community projects to be set up to tackle social and economic deprivation.

In 2002, the Government led the Cross Cutting Review, which reviewed the role of the sector in service provision and set a framework whereby central and local government could work more effectively with the sector.

In 2004 another review was carried out which led to the setting up of Future Builders and ChangeUp through Capacitybuilders. This helped transform the capacity of organisations to deliver public services and strengthened infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector.

In 2007, a further review took place; the Third Sector Review was part of the Comprehensive

Spending Review and resulted in £515 million investment. This was to give a stronger voice to the sector through campaigning and other mechanisms.

It aimed to support community foundations and youth volunteering. It planned to build the capacity of organisations to deliver public services, and to encourage social enterprise as well as improve conditions for the third sector to thrive. Since the recession further financial commitment has been given to the sector to help organisations support communities through difficult times.

There is no doubt that the Government has shown commitment to the sector through financially resourcing its development since 1997. Public spending on the sector has doubled since 1997 and financial security for the sector through

delivering contracts is on the increase.

Kensington and Chelsea has benefitted from some of the government programmes, the setting up of Kensington and Chelsea Partnership, the receipt of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the joint delivery of infrastructure training and support through ChangeUp.

However the story of the voluntary and community sector has not always been positive. Labour's drive to ensure the sector plays a key role in strategic partnerships and public service delivery has led to the sector becoming polarised with larger organisations able to play the strategic game whilst smaller groups continue to struggle to get their voices heard.

Let's use the opportunity now as the election looms to say what we want and how we want it. To reinforce the view that we are the 'glue that binds society together'. You can help by feeding into the Manifesto which is being developed by Social Council.

“There is no doubt that the Government has shown commitment to the sector through financially resourcing its development since 1997... However the story of the voluntary and community sector has not always been positive.”

Voluntary Sector G

With the general election just around the corner we thought it would be their key policies that could impact on the sector should they g

CONSERVATIVES



The Conservatives have been critical of Labour's 'over management' of the sector which in their view hinders the voluntary and community sectors ability to innovate and reduces its independence. They believe the job of government is to create a space in which charities can operate and that they work best when given the freedom to set their own priorities.

There has been some talk of 'too many charities' and their belief is that it is not state support and funding but personal commitment and donations that form the bedrock of voluntary sector independence. Therefore many of their policies are geared towards reducing the role of government and encouraging 'social responsibility' in its place.

KEY POLICIES

- 1 To encourage volunteering as a 'social norm' and charitable giving. Starting with a volunteer hours scheme for central government employees and reform of the Gift Aid system
- 2 Drawing a clearer distinction between contracts and grants with contracts being used to deliver a limited number of core public services. Some contracts would be smaller lessening the onus on organisations to form consortia and partnerships.
- 3 A greater priority towards smaller charities and community led organisations backed up by a one-stop funding portal for statutory grants, model contracts and support for co-ops running and owning community assets and services
- 4 Going beyond 'full cost recovery' by allowing VCO's to keep any surplus generated through contracted work to be spent freely on their charitable activities.
- 5 To allow front line VCO's to commission the support they need from Council's for Voluntary Service and other providers.
- 6 Abolishment of the Big Lottery Fund and its replacement with a Voluntary Action Lottery Fund which gives 100% of its funds to the VCS (although the overall level of funding is not guaranteed)
- 7 Replacement of the Office for the Third Sector with an Office of Civil Society
- 8 The establishment of a Social Investment Bank to fund social enterprise.

APRIL 20

Have your service users registered to vote?
The deadline to register for the May 6th elections is approaching.

More info:

www.rbkc.gov.uk/councilanddemocracy/localdemocracy/registeringtovote.aspx
www.aboutmyvote.co.uk



VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY

All local voluntary and community organisations and to put your questions to prospective lo

WEDNESDAY 21ST APRIL

THE GREAT HALL, KEN

Confirmed candidates: **Sam Gurney** - La
Robin Meltzer - Liberal Democrat, **Sam**

Register online and submit

More Info:

Guide to the Election

be useful to examine the approach the two major parties are taking in the publication of their election manifestos we identify what we think will be elected.



SECTOR ELECTION HUSTINGS

are invited to attend a special election hustings with local parliamentary candidates for Kensington.

2010, 10.30am-12.30pm

KENSINGTON TOWN HALL

Labour, Sir Malcolm Rifkind - Conservative, Sir John Edwards - Alliance for Green Socialism

a question for discussion.

www.kcsc.org.uk/50yearcalendar

LABOUR



Since Labour established the Office for the Third Sector in 2006 they have been keen to widen the role of voluntary and community sector organisations. Through the Compact and investment in programmes like Capacitybuilders and Futurebuilders they have aimed to provide the basis for a more stable voluntary and community sector that can compete to deliver public services. They have emphasised support for partnerships and consortia and more recently introduced personalisation in care services to allow greater choice for the service user.

A programme to encourage volunteering has aimed to strengthen civic engagement although support to encourage a voice for VCO's and campaigning has been undermined by the withdrawal of proposed funding.

KEY POLICIES

- 1** Extending the role of personalisation. Originally introduced for care service users, personal budgets are already being extended to cover education provision and will be used more widely.
- 2** Further increase the role of VCO's in public sector service delivery. Funding to support national faith organisations wishing to deliver public services has just been announced.
- 3** A new portable Third Sector Pensions Scheme for employees as they move from job to job within the sector.
- 4** Support for local communities to take over and run community assets.
- 5** An extension of the Future Jobs Fund and the Young Person's Guarantee which will allow organisations to bid to deliver job creation projects over the next two years.
- 6** The budget announced a consultation on plans which could lead to more money from banks being made available to community organisations in the form of loans.
- 7** The budget also pledged to set up a Social Investment Bank to provide more funds for existing Social Investment Funds that lend to the sector.
- 8** An exemption from VAT rules to encourage more sharing of back office functions amongst voluntary and community organisations.

Community health consortium launched

February 2010 saw the launch of a new consortium that will bring together organisations that are improving health and reducing inequalities in Kensington & Chelsea.

NHS commissioners have invited local organisations to be part of two 'polysystems' in the borough. This is a new approach which aims to get clinical and other healthcare professionals working together much more closely. It is hoped that this will improve partnership working and referral arrangements between voluntary organisations and the NHS and social care providers.

The Social Council is leading the early development of this project. Following a successful 'Open Space' event (pictured on the front cover)

attended by 38 people, we have now supported the appointment of an interim board. It will work on establishing a legal entity which we hope will hold a contract with the NHS to deliver services as part of the two new poly-systems – one in North Kensington and one in the south of the borough.

More info: **Lev Pedro**

020 7243 9809

www.kcsc.org.uk/healthconsortium

Evaluation highlights successes and development areas

Research conducted by WSA Community Consultants for the Social Council studied the overall impact of 19 health projects run by local organisations. The project steering group, made up of managers from the funded projects, identified five overarching outcomes that all of the projects are working towards to a greater or lesser degree:

- access
- reach
- community engagement
- partnership
- quality

The research showed good evidence of the projects achieving their outcomes, particularly around helping people to access mainstream services and educating people about health improvement. It also highlighted some development areas, such as better referral mechanisms between projects, better links with

primary care, and more consistent ways of organisations capturing and reporting their outcomes.

In response to the report, Mary Gardiner, Chief Executive of the Social Council says:

"We welcome these results. It is great to see the value of these projects being recognised, and by shining a spotlight on some of the weaker areas, this gives us an opportunity to make the voluntary sector more effective and efficient, which we hope organisations will embrace."

The report is available on the Social Council website.

More info:

www.kcsc.org.uk/health

Good Practices for Access and Well-Being

This project, conducted by the Migrant and Refugee Communities Forum in partnership with the Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Health Forum, has produced a booklet to help people to understand and use interpreting services better, and a series of information cards on primary care. These have been produced in five languages and will be distributed widely throughout the local community.

FOR MORE COPIES:

020 7150 8128

bmehealthforum@westminster-pct.nhs.uk

www.kcsc.org.uk/bmehealth

Choosing a GP – national consultation

The NHS is currently asking for feedback from the public on proposals to improve access to GPs for all of us. The leaflet for the public is written in plain English, and can be downloaded from the Social Council website with a questionnaire that you can complete and return to have your say.

More info:

www.kcsc.org.uk/health



The 4Minds Project

Mental Well-Being Awareness training is booking up quickly.

Places are still available on the two day course on:

Friday 23 & Friday 30 July
Friday 17 & Friday 24 September
Friday 19 & Friday 26 November

If you are interested in any of these training courses or in receiving this training outside of these dates please get in touch.

More info: **4Minds**

info@4mindsproject.org.uk

020 7373 9113

www.4mindsproject.org.uk

Voluntary Organisations Forums Update

The Social Council coordinates meetings of three thematic forums providing voluntary and community sector organisations with the opportunities to meet decision makers and influence policy decisions. The forums enable participants to get news and expert views from a range of speakers, find out about funding opportunities, training and resources, share information and knowledge, and to network with

individuals and organisations from across the Borough. In addition, the Main VOF feeds into the Kensington & Chelsea Partnership, the strategic partnership for the borough. All meetings are open to voluntary and community sector organisations and you are welcome to attend.

More info:

www.kcsc.org.uk/vof

Review of the Forums

Over the next three months, the Social Council will be undertaking a review of the Forums to assess their reach, effectiveness and future direction. The review will be carried out through informal lunch meetings involving a maximum of six people from each of the themes.

We would particularly like to involve organisations that currently do not engage with the Forums. If you are interested in being a part of the process please get in touch.

More info: **Debi Gardner**

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Forum Elections –

At the next round of Forum meetings we will be seeking to elect the following representatives:

Deputy Chair, Engaging Communities VOF (EC VOF)

The EC VOF meets quarterly and focuses on issues such as community cohesion, safety and sustainability. In the absence of the elected Chair, the Deputy Chair is required to chair meetings and/or attend meetings of the Kensington & Chelsea Partnership.

*The closing date for nominations is **19 May 2010**. Elections will take place at the next Engaging Communities VOF meeting on **26 May 2010**.*

BVOAG voluntary sector representative (substance misuse)

The Borough Voluntary Organisations Advisory Group (BVOAG) is made up of Councillors and voluntary & community sector representatives. A seat has become available for someone to sit on the Group to represent organisations working with substance misuse.

*The closing date for nominations is **23 June 2010**. Elections will take place at the Main VOF meeting on Wednesday **30 June 2010**.*

If you would like more information, or if you are interested in standing for election to either of these positions please get in touch.

More info: **Debi Gardner 020 7243 9808**

debi@kcsc.org.uk

THANK YOU!

Anna Porta and Len Charles have recently resigned as Deputy Chair of the Engaging Community VOF and voluntary sector representative (substance misuse) on the Borough Voluntary Organisations Advisory Group respectively.

Both Anna and Len contributed significantly to the voluntary and community sector through their positions and have cited work demands as the reason as to why they could not continue in post. On behalf of the local sector, the Social Council thanks them for their hard work.

DIARY DATES

Monday 26 April	3.00pm to 5.00pm	Older People's VOF
Wednesday 26 May	10.00am to 12.00pm	Engaging Communities VOF
Wednesday 23 June	10.00am to 12.30pm	Children, Young People & Families VOF
Wednesday 30 June	9.45am to 12.00pm	Main VOF

Information on all meetings, including venue details, minutes and agendas, can be found on our website at www.kcsc.org.uk/vof

In the second of our interviews to mark our 50 years celebrations we spoke to Jane Gray from the Worlds End Neighbourhood Advice Centre about the organisation's development, and the changes she has seen in the voluntary sector during her 24 years there.



The Centre has been advising local residents for 28 years

Do you think there's less activism now?

In the 1980s there was a kind of collective activism among local voluntary groups, for instance around slum landlords. The activism now might be less dramatic! But it is still there and local and national issues get taken up by main advice centres and community organisations amongst others.

Can you tell me about the history of the Centre?

It was set up by a steering group of the Ashburnham Community Association that involved a GPs wife, Councillors and local residents. They held surgeries at Ashburnham Community Centre and recognised a need for an advice centre in the area. Still here 28 years later, with the major area of work still being welfare benefit/ debt advice.

Have there been many changes over the years?

Some noticeable changes in client groups as different communities move into the area. Our mission is still the same, to provide a high quality, accessible advice service to the local community. From any perspective, people are concerned about employment, income, housing, education, health – rights and responsibilities within a social welfare law framework.

Another big change has been technology, we had no PCs when I started. The first PC we purchased in 1989 at a phenomenal price, before that we used typewriters. It didn't create the paperless office though.

Have you noticed changes in the voluntary sector generally?

It's become more professional and we've had to achieve quality standards to maintain funding. These developments are positive but they come with an administrative burden. I think staff feel that's to the detriment of front line advice work but they also recognise that people using the voluntary sector deserve the same quality of advice as those using private solicitors.

There is also an emphasis on partnership working which increases the range of services.

Have you noticed changes in the sector in this area?

Chelsea Boys Club is now called Chelsea Youth Centre – when I came it was a boys club and girls were excluded, which was quite remarkable. Most World's End Neighbourhood organisations remain, although the direction of their activities might have changed.

Has the voluntary sectors relationship with the statutory sector changed?

There are more ways to feed in our opinion and we've entered into more formal agreements. That's not a bad thing, it gives a direction and understanding to our relationship.

Are there any further changes you envisage happening?

There will be more partnership working as services try to meet demand.

The recession is having an impact, more people need debt or employment related advice which might affect the direction of advice giving organisations. The squeeze on funding means it's going to be more difficult for organisations to fund what are very necessary services.

KCSC CELEBRATING 50 YEARS!

To celebrate our 50th anniversary the Social Council would like to invite you to attend this special event at the

INN ON THE GREEN
3-5 Thorpe Close, Ladbroke Grove between
29 April, 6.00pm - 7.00pm

FEATURING

- This Is Us Findings
- Social Council 'This Is Your Life'
- Exhibitions and film
- Buffet

The event will be followed by a night of live music and entertainment from Lev's Lounge at 7.30pm.

You can order food for £4 and tickets to Lev's Lounge for £6 from our website.

For details of other 50 year celebration events visit:
www.kcsc.org.uk/50yearcalendar