



# LINK

THE VOICE OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

## Supporting our Communities

**In the wake of the disturbances that took place around various urban centres in August it was heartening to see the response from local communities. People came together to help in the clear up, and peace walls sprang up to cover vandalised buildings with positive messages.**

In Portobello Road local people gathered to share a cup of tea and slice of cake to reinforce a sense of community.

Whatever the causes of the disturbances were, one thing is clear; they predominantly affected the less well-off areas; and those who have been charged or convicted of offences were disproportionately young, on low incomes or out of work.

It is in these communities that many voluntary and community organisations are based. In recent weeks they have been working hard to reassure residents and in the coming months and beyond will have a vital role to play in healing the rifts that have appeared.

The question remains however: how effective can our work be at a time when resources are already being stretched to their limits?

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations has calculated that public funding for charities will fall by £2.8bn over the next five years. The spectre of reduced budgets, services closing and redundancies is all too real for many groups. In this borough we have clearly fared better than some but our own research has shown the local organisations are feeling the pinch too (see p3).

Some have suggested that community response to the riots is an example of Big Society in practice. But this community action is more likely to be sustained with the support of strong community organisations. Recent events have reinforced the



The Volunteer Centre Kensington & Chelsea helped co-ordinate volunteers to distribute tea and cakes to passers-by as part of 'Operation Cup of Tea' on 12 August 2011.

need for a healthy and vibrant voluntary sector and it is important that policy makers consider this and take into account our social value when allocating resources.

Meanwhile, for us as a sector, doing more with less is not going to be easy but it is a challenge we must accept in order to play our part in building a cohesive society.

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<b>WINTER</b>	<b>2011</b>

## Discussing our Changing Environment at Funding Fair *Plus* 2011

This year's Funding Fair Plus event on 17 June saw over 170 staff, volunteers and trustees from Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham organisations gather to listen and speak to a range of funders and support agencies.

In the afternoon discussions focused on the changing political and policy environment, with a particular emphasis on plans for tri-borough and localism.

The session generated various ideas to inform the work of the Social Council and CAVSA H&F, commissioners, the two local authorities and voluntary and community organisations. To read the recommendations in the summary report visit the Social Council website.



K&C Mayor, Cllr Julie Mills speaks to Funding Fair attendees.



Organisations from Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham discuss tri-borough and localism

More info:

[www.kcsc.org.uk/ffp2011](http://www.kcsc.org.uk/ffp2011)

## What Training Do You Need?

Training budgets may be vulnerable at a time when everyone seems to be looking for ways to save money but the importance of maintaining knowledge and skills should never be underestimated.

That is why we at the Social Council want to ensure that our training courses closely reflect your needs.

On our website we now list a number of suggested courses and invite you to register your interest. Once we know there is sufficient demand we will arrange a suitable date. We also invite you to suggest any other topics we may have missed.

Currently suggested courses are:

- Developing your leadership skills
- Writing tenders to win
- Introduction to fundraising
- Developing an outcomes approach
- Finding your way around the web

More info:

[www.kcsc.org.uk/training-social-council](http://www.kcsc.org.uk/training-social-council)

## TWO DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

**Practical workshop for smaller organisations – preparing for tenders**  
Tuesday 11 October, 11am – 1pm

This hands-on practical workshop will guide you through the information that is currently needed for pre-qualification questionnaires, and will help organisations be ready to take part in consortium bids for contracts.

We will also discuss ideas for further workshops.

**AGM and Conference**  
Thursday 17 November 2011, 10am - 4pm

This year we will use our conference to discuss how we can maintain a strong sector and continue working to support residents in light of tri-borough and the difficulties you have told us about. We will also respond to your comments on our work and give you a chance to comment on our future plans.

We hope you can join us.

[www.kcsc.org.uk/events](http://www.kcsc.org.uk/events)

## KENSINGTON & CHELSEA SOCIAL COUNCIL

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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.

# DOING MORE WITH LESS

**This summer the London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC) published 'Big Squeeze 2011'. This updates research from last year and highlights the continued plight of voluntary and community organisations around London.**

\*[www.lvsc.org.uk/campaigns](http://www.lvsc.org.uk/campaigns)

Detailing the impact of the downturn and spending cuts, its preliminary findings were presented at the 8 June Main Voluntary Organisation Forum by Alison Blackwood LVSC's, Head of Policy and Knowledge.

The report paints a picture of organisations struggling to cope and cutting services whilst at the same time witnessing a sharp increase in demand.

Across London more than four out of five organisations witnessed rising demand for services in the last financial year and even more expect an increase this year. Meanwhile:

- 51% have already closed services whilst 54% expect more to follow
- 77% expect cuts in public sector funding in this financial year with a median cut of 31-40% anticipated
- 57% were able to meet the increased demand for their services in 2010-11 but 77% are not confident of doing so in 2011-12
- 54% have made staff redundant
- 97% said the economic climate has had a negative impact on their clients

At the Social Council we wanted to know if this pattern was mirrored locally.

Since March this year we have been asking organisations to tell us how they are being affected by public sector cuts and we have found evidence which echoes the 'Big Squeeze' findings.

Our results show that in this borough three quarters of all surveyed organisations have seen a reduction in total income. 36% describe their situation as much worse whilst another 39% reported it as slightly worse.

***“ It is apparent both regionally and locally that VCOs are struggling to do more with less, to meet increased demand with a reduced budget. The biggest concern is that ultimately, communities are suffering as belts tighten, services are cut and organisations close. ”***

45% described their ability to fundraise as much worse whilst 26% say it is slightly worse.

45% of all organisations reported reduced levels of staffing with just over a quarter (26%) describing their staffing levels as much worse.

Services have been badly hit too. 45% of local voluntary and community organisations have already cut back what they offer whilst a further 17.5% expect to do so at some point during the current financial year to March 2012.

Our results suggest that local organisations are suffering but when compared to the regional picture as painted by the 'Big Squeeze' research our situation is not as bad as in other parts of the capital.

The overall percentage reduction in local authority grants to the voluntary sector this year was 6% in Kensington and Chelsea. In other boroughs the figure was much higher, in Hackney it was 33%, in Wandsworth 30%, Camden 28%, Bromley and Barnet 25% and Hillingdon and Harrow 15%.

Whilst some VCOs are reporting taking positive steps to overcome difficulties such as diversifying their income base and working in partnership we know that the road ahead is a rocky one.

We will continue to collect evidence until the end of the year and our short survey remains on our website.

## Measuring the impact of the cuts

Help us compile evidence of the impact of cuts by completing our survey at

[www.kcsc.org.uk/impact-cuts-survey](http://www.kcsc.org.uk/impact-cuts-survey)



# Meet Your Re

On these pages we introduce you to your voluntary and community representatives that we seek to influence and work alongside.

## Borough Voluntary Organisations Advisory Group

The Borough Voluntary Organisations Advisory Group (BVOAG) is the formal mechanism by which the voluntary sector is able to raise issues with councillors and cabinet members of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and directors of the Kensington and Chelsea Primary Care Trust (PCT).

The group is a vehicle to increase the Council's and local NHS's understanding of the voluntary sector and the means by which statutory authorities can raise issues of concern with the voluntary and community sector.



**Mary Gardiner**  
Kensington & Chelsea  
Social Council  
*Voluntary and community sector*



**Abdullahi Ali**  
Baraka Youth Association  
*Equalities and inclusivity*



**Vicki Laville-Davies**  
Dalgarno Neighbourhood Trust  
*Community centres*



**Dahabo Guled**  
Dadihiye Somali Development  
Organisation  
*Equalities and inclusivity*



**Robin Tuck**  
Harrow Club  
*Community centres*



**Cynthia Dize**  
Age UK Kensington & Chelsea  
*Well-being*



**Dee Dainton**  
Lancaster West Children's  
Community Network  
*Education*



**Helen Leech**  
Open Age  
*Well-being*



**VACANCIES:**  
Community safety,  
culture / social  
enterprise,  
homelessness



**Abdalla Salim**  
Helping Hands Association  
*Education*



**Sean Canning**  
North Kensington  
Advice Centre  
*Worklessness / low income*



**Jamie Renton**  
Action Disability  
Kensington & Chelsea  
*Equalities and inclusivity*



**Charles Barber**  
Citizens Advice  
Bureau K&C  
*Advice*

If you have issues you would like to raise with your voluntary sector representatives you can do so by contacting them at their respective organisations. Alternately you can contact any rep via the Social Council Partnerships & Forums Development Officer, Mohammed Miah.

# representatives

and community sector representatives. It is through our statutory partners and other stakeholders in the borough.

## Kensington & Chelsea Partnership

The Kensington and Chelsea Partnership (KCP) brings together local public organisations such as the Council, the Police and Primary Care Trust, to work alongside the voluntary sector, business and community groups.

It aims to join-up services within the borough, plan locally for the long-term, and improve quality of life in the borough, especially in more deprived neighbourhoods.

The KCP publishes the borough Community Strategy which sets out aims and objectives and outlines for new projects and policy.



**Michael Bach**  
Kensington & Chelsea Social Council  
*Voluntary and community Sector*



**Cynthia Dize**  
Age UK Kensington & Chelsea  
*Adult health and wellbeing deputy*



**Mary Gardiner**  
Kensington & Chelsea Social Council  
*Voluntary and community sector deputy*



**Dahabo Guled**  
Dadihiye Somali Development Organisation  
*Children and young people*



**Paula Murphy**  
K&C Local Involvement Network  
*Engaging communities*



**Heidi Riedel**  
Women's Trust  
*Children and young people deputy*



**Afaf Tahir**  
Advice, Support & Development Organisation  
*Engaging communities deputy*



**Jamie Renton**  
Action Disability Kensington & Chelsea  
*Diversity, equality and inclusivity*



**Helen Leech**  
Open Age  
*Adult health and wellbeing*

## Children's Trust

The Kensington and Chelsea Children's Trust is a partnership which brings together the organisations responsible for services for children, young people and their families in a shared commitment to improving children's lives.

The Trust brings together agencies from the Council (such as Education and Family Services) with other agencies (such as Police and voluntary sector organisations) to coordinate services for children, young people and their parents/carers, and for professionals working with families too.



**Clare Richards**  
Clement James Centre



**Rosemary Keenan**  
Catholic Children's Society

## Subsidised rents for charities at St Charles

The local NHS is making over 2,100m<sup>2</sup> (22,000 square feet) of unused space available at reduced rent for 6-18 months to voluntary and community organisations. The space is highly flexible, and could be used for one-off activities, regular activities or for administration.

*More info:* Steve Shaffelburg  
steve.shaffelburg@inwl.nhs.uk

020 3350 4413

## Starting dialogue with GP commissioners

On 26 July, Lev Pedro from the Social Council and Vicki Laville-Davies from Dalgarno Neighbourhood Trust gave a presentation to the board of the new West London Clinical Commissioning Group. WLCCG will take over responsibility for commissioning healthcare services once primary care trusts are disbanded. Vicki and Lev gave a short presentation about the local voluntary sector (VCS) and the ways in which the VCS can contribute to local healthcare delivery. The GPs were very interested in working with the local VCS and knowing more. The Social Council will make sure the voluntary sector stays on their agenda.



Vicki Laville-Davies

## Local consortium wins contract

Desta Health and Social Care Consortium has won an NHS contract to deliver the tri-borough Expert Patient Service.

The Expert Patient Service is a six-week self-management course for people with long-term health conditions which helps them to have greater autonomy and to improve their quality of life. Course topics include eating well, managing pain and working with medical professionals, and is open to people with conditions like diabetes, cardio-vascular disease, asthma and stroke survivors.

The successful tender was a partnership of eight local voluntary organisations, and courses will be running in community venues in each of the three boroughs.

Please contact Rain Trust if you have service users who would benefit, or if your organisation is interested in hosting a course.

*More info:* Mukuka Malenga  
mukuka.malenga@raintrust.org.uk

020 8964 2727

[www.raintrust.org.uk/epp.html](http://www.raintrust.org.uk/epp.html)



## Desta membership opens

Following its success with the Expert Patient Service, Desta is now inviting applications for membership. Membership of Desta enables organisations to be part of consortium bids for health and social care contracts.

Membership is open to voluntary and community organisations that deliver 60% or more of their services to residents in the Desta area of operation. This includes Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster. Organisations must be not-for-profit, have an office or premises in the area of operation and provide health or social care services.

To receive information, organisations must first register with CAVSA and then you will be invited to submit your consortium membership data.

*More info:* CAVSA Hammersmith & Fulham

Shani Lee [shani.lee@cavsa.org.uk](mailto:shani.lee@cavsa.org.uk)

020 8748 6345

[www.surveymonkey.com/s/FSZBJ5Y](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FSZBJ5Y)

## BME Health Forum Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday 28th September, 10-1pm

at the Abbey Centre, 34 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BU

Topic: Maternity services

The meeting will look at service user involvement in maternity services, domestic violence support for pregnant women and the BME Health Forum project which is researching the experiences of BME pregnant women.

*More info:* Nafsika Thalassis BME Health Forum

[nafsika.thalassis@bmehf.org.uk](mailto:nafsika.thalassis@bmehf.org.uk)

[www.bmehf.org.uk](http://www.bmehf.org.uk)

## Imperial Healthcare College Charity



The fundraising charity of this hospital trust which covers St Mary's, Charing Cross and Queen Charlotte's is now welcoming applications for funding for community projects that aim to improve patient experience, patient safety or health inequalities. Deadline 7 October. The first stage in the application process is to contact Grant Manager Caroline Cawson to discuss the project idea.

*More info:* Caroline Cawson

Imperial Healthcare College Charity

[caroline.cawson@imperial.nhs.uk](mailto:caroline.cawson@imperial.nhs.uk)

020 3312 2060

[www.imperial.nhs.uk/imperialcharity](http://www.imperial.nhs.uk/imperialcharity)



## The Equality Act 2010 at Engaging Communities Voluntary Organisations Forum

The UK currently sits near the top of the income gap league with twice as much inequality as places like Scandinavia and Japan but there has always been a strong tradition of people campaigning for justice and equal rights. As a result we now have the strongest legislation we have ever had protecting the rights of citizens, particularly those in the weakest and most vulnerable positions.

In 2010 the Equality Act became law, bringing together all previous legislation and attempting to make the law more inclusive, stronger and simpler.

At Engaging Communities VOF on 13th September, Rahana Mohammed, head of policy at Race on the Agenda (ROTA), gave a presentation on the new Equality Act. Rahana shared some case studies to help the forum understand how different forms of discrimination can look in real life scenarios.

Although ROTA has welcomed the Act, there were some concerns about the coalition government's attitude towards its implementation and fears that minority and vulnerable communities may be subject to discrimination under the pretext of localism. While

there are still improvements to be made, the Act was seen as a step in the right direction.

As a result of the discussion, LVSC has agreed to work with the Social Council to devise a local equalities framework which will help organisations adapt to the changes within the Act.

## Child Poverty at Borough Voluntary Organisations Advisory Group

Kensington and Chelsea, particularly the north, is home to some of the most financially disadvantaged families in England. The Social Council would like to see more done to address child poverty and has been working with our local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to raise awareness and keep the issue high on the agenda.

The BVOAG meeting on 15th June discussed the impact of child poverty and the challenges ahead for local communities. This led to members agreeing to set up a cross-sector working group (public and voluntary sector) to look at child poverty in greater detail and help to develop a child poverty strategy for Kensington and Chelsea. An initial meeting has already taken place.

### NEW HEALTH FORUM

**Monday 17 October 2011,  
12-3pm at St Charles  
Centre for Health &  
Well-being**

This new twice-yearly forum will bring together local community organisations that are interested in improving health and reducing health inequality. The forum is an expansion of the former NHS Funded Provider Forum that ran from 2008 to 2011, and will now be part of our 'VOF' structure. The first meeting will include presentations from newly funded projects and opportunities for networking and information sharing.



Last year over 80 attendees from the voluntary and community sector gathered to discuss health and wellbeing. The new Health VOF will ensure a space for regular discussion.

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday 6 September	10.00am – 12.30pm	Children, Young People and Families VOF	Kensington Town Hall
Wednesday 21 September	9.45am – 1.00pm	Main VOF	Kensington Town Hall
Wednesday 16 November	10.00am – 12.00pm	Engaging Communities VOF	Kensington Town Hall
Monday 17 October	12.00pm – 3.00pm	<b>**New**</b> Health VOF	St Charles

More details of VOF dates, agendas and minutes can be found on the Social Council website [www.kcsc.org.uk/networks-forums](http://www.kcsc.org.uk/networks-forums)

## Having the right Information Technology (IT) systems and software, and perhaps most importantly, knowing how to get the best out of it can significantly increase your organisation's productivity and effectiveness.

For those of us who are not experts in this field, however, the choices can seem bewildering, and we often struggle to keep up with the latest developments. What's more, doesn't it all cost lots of money?

Below we list five ways we think Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCOs) can get more out of technology without breaking the bank.

### 1. Get advice from the experts

Whether it's a problem with your equipment or software or if you just need some advice help is never far away and many support workers and agencies specialise in supporting VCOs.

The LASA Knowledgebase is packed full of useful articles on many aspects of IT and Communications and will help you consider your needs. Their Suppliers Directory lists details of trusted suppliers who specialise in all aspects of IT support.

Visit: [www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk](http://www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk)  
[www.suppliersdirectory.org.uk](http://www.suppliersdirectory.org.uk)

### 2. Make the most of Social Media

Social Media includes things like Facebook, Flickr and Twitter and is a general term that applies to tools that are more conversational or interactive than older forms of media. It can help you connect with more people and present your work in more creative ways. Social Media can provide a big boost to your organisation by helping you get the word out about your work. Many of the tools are simple to use and your staff may already have experience of using them privately.

To help you get started why not read the 'Social Media Planning guide for VCOs' by ICT Champions.

More: [www.ictchampions.org.uk/wp-content/Social-Media-Planning-Guide.pdf](http://www.ictchampions.org.uk/wp-content/Social-Media-Planning-Guide.pdf)

### 3. Consider 'Open Source'

Organisations frequently spend hundreds of pounds on software packages when there are 'free' alternatives that can get the job done just as well. 'Free' in this sense means the software is freely available (no purchase or license fee) although for some you may need to get specialist support to get you started.

Popular examples of Open Source software include Open Office as an alternative to Microsoft Office, GIMP as an alternative to Photoshop or Wordpress for building websites.

To read more about Open Source visit [www.fossbox.org.uk](http://www.fossbox.org.uk)

### 4. Discounted software

If you don't want to opt for Open Source there are still other alternatives. Google Docs for example, is widely used. You may also qualify for low cost software if you are a voluntary or community organisation. Many large proprietors like Microsoft provide products at hugely discounted prices via Charity Technology Exchange programme. For example you can buy licenses for it's popular Office suite for as little as £15+VAT.

To see if your organisation qualifies for the programme visit [www.ctxchange.org](http://www.ctxchange.org)

### 5. IT training

At a time when budgets are stretched it can be easy to overlook your training needs. But often, a few hours tuition can greatly enhance your productivity and help you get the most out of the software you are using. If paid training is not an option you can often find useful online tutorials or instruction to help you improve your skills.

Happy Computers and Nova specialise in IT training for voluntary organisations. [www.happy.co.uk](http://www.happy.co.uk)  
[www.novanew.org.uk](http://www.novanew.org.uk)

## Our New Website brings you the latest news for the sector *plus...*

- Funding and training updates
- Support and resources
- All your network and forum news
- Event listings and online booking
- A community noticeboard
- A searchable directory of local organisations
- A community blog on which you can share your comments

