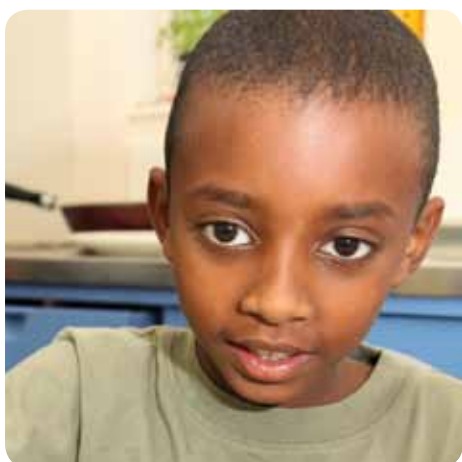




This is Us



The state of the voluntary and
community sector in Kensington and Chelsea

2010

Summary report

Foreword

As you read this report you will hopefully gain both a strong and positive view of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in Kensington and Chelsea. As we move into 2010 the sector faces a number of challenges not least the impact of the recession and what this might mean for public funds which support the work that we do. The final report of the Big Squeeze¹ following a campaign led by London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC), brought to the attention of the sector and in particular the London Mayor the fact that workload is increasing as voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) support those who have fallen victim to the impact of the recession. It also showed the need for recognition of the sector and the important role we play within society. I believe we can be proud of what we have achieved and what we will continue to achieve in the future, but I am also concerned that due to years of comfort and regular grant giving and a presumption that this would continue we have become complacent.

One of KCSC's aim for next year will be to strengthen the sector's ability to campaign and lobby. This is partly because we have the data to make a case, partly because there is an election pending and partly because KCSC is now strong enough to encourage these activities. The current economic climate has created a sense of unity across the sector, recognising that the need for social justice is ever more important as the effects of the recession take hold.

The findings of this report reveal a positive attitude for the next 12 months amongst the sector but we are reminded of the government's admission that public sector spending over the next few years will be affected due to the country's debt. It is against this backdrop that I ask the local sector to respond appropriately in ways that will ensure the survival of our small organisations whilst KCSC will continue to fight on your behalf.

Mary Gardiner
Chief Executive, KCSC

1. The Big Squeeze; LVSC; 2009

Background to the Report

Last year the State of the Sector stage one report produced very useful findings on the local voluntary and community sector (VCS) in Kensington and Chelsea, but also highlighted the need for further and more detailed research. Whilst we were able to gain a much clearer picture of the size and scope of VCOs in the borough, it was determined that more information was required to understand the position of the sector. This is because of the changes which are taking place in relation to government driven policy including the Transformation Agenda and empowerment of local communities.

Last year's report also lacked information about the very small community groups which operate in the borough. In collecting the information for this report a dedicated effort was made to ensure that the very small and particularly the black and minority ethnic (BME) VCOs contributed to the research. Throughout this report, last year's findings shall be referred to as stage one whilst this year's shall be referred to as stage two.

Last year the stage one research of the State of the Sector, concentrated on the purpose and activities of organisations within the borough. It found in both cases that were spread across a wide and varied range. This included advice and advocacy, infrastructure and capacity building, children and family support and drug and alcohol support services. On the basis of those findings stage two has aimed to understand whether social, economic and political changes over the past few years have influenced the need for organisations to change their purpose and/or deliver new activities.

Whilst stage one focused on the type of services being delivered it did not attempt to find out how those services make a difference to the lives of service users and how we capture the evidence, stage two has looked at this in detail. There was also evidence which came to light during stage one that some VCOs were delivering unfunded services, stage two has aimed to explore this further.

Last year, stage one reported only the income levels of the organisations delivering services in the borough. Stage two has looked at income in greater detail to determine the impact of commissioning and the economic climate on VCOs as well as their confidence to survive the next 12 months. Stage one also revealed that more than 50% of local VCOs receive their funding from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) whilst only 5% of income was derived through earned income. Stage two has aimed to understand the sector's capacity to diversify income.

The development of the sector's workforce is as important as the financial security of the sector. The stage one research focussed on the percentage of paid and unpaid staff working within organisations, stage two has looked in greater detail at VCO resources including that of staff paid and unpaid, trustees and future development needs.

Finally stage one did not look at the civic engagement of the sector, however stage two has focussed on the sector's ability to influence local decision making and working in partnership.

How we collected the information

- Last year to collect evidence for the stage one report KCSC sent out a total of 850 paper questionnaires to all organisations held on our database which saw a return of 111 (13% response rate). This year in order to filter out only the voluntary and community organisations operating in Kensington and Chelsea, a more focussed approach was taken to determine the survey sample. This approach led to a review of the database and resulted in the survey being sent to a total of 563 organisations. In response, 155 VCOs completed the survey, we are therefore pleased to report we had a 28% response rate.
- This year for the collection of data for the stage two report, KCSC used an on-line design package called Survey Methods to help increase the response rate. A paper based version of the questionnaire was also posted to the same number of organisations. Data from the questionnaires returned via the postal system were entered into Survey Methods for the purpose of collating and analysing all the data. To encourage organisations to respond to the survey a prize of £50 worth of office stationery was offered through a prize draw. The draw was made on 19th June 2009 and three organisations received vouchers to spend on office stationery. KCSC would like to thank all the organisations that took the time to respond to the survey and congratulate Worlds End Neighbourhood Advice Centre, Sohoboyz and Family Friends for winning.

Part A

Profile of the Sector

The profile of the sector has been constructed based on the updated information which is held on KCSC's database. Sample figures therefore vary according to the total amount of data held for each analysis.

Paid Staff	No.	%
No paid staff	13	10
Between 1 and 4 paid staff	59	44
Between 5 and 15 paid staff	35	26
16 or more paid staff	27	20
Total	134	100

Volunteers	No.	%
No volunteers	1	2
Between 1 and 4 volunteers	16	33
Between 5 and 15 volunteers	13	27
16 or more volunteers	18	38
Total	48	100

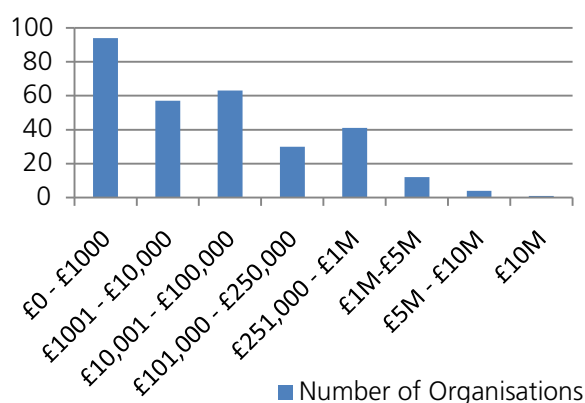
Trustees	No.	%
Between 1 and 4 trustees	9	22
Between 5 and 9 trustees	29	53
10 or more trustees	49	25
Total	87	100
Total	134	100

Area of Work	No.	%
Across London	65	11
K&C and neighbouring boroughs	153	33
K&C Only	74	56
Total	292	100
Total	48	100

Type of Organisation	No.	%
Registered Charity	188	77
Non Registered Charity	41	17
Social Enterprise	9	3
Other	7	3
Total	245	100

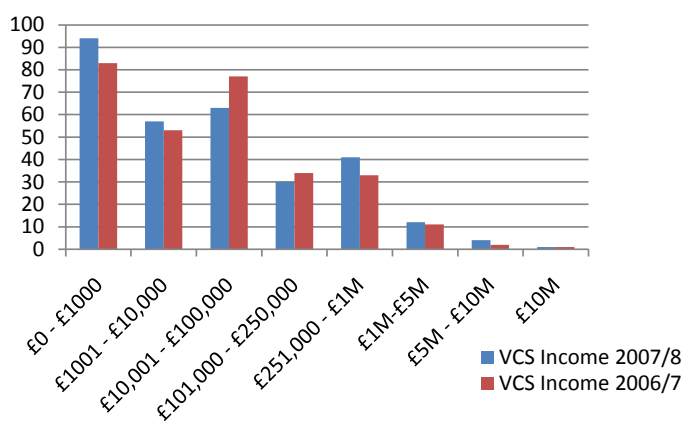
The chart overleaf shows the income of organisations either based in Kensington and Chelsea or operating services within the borough. The chart does not include large institutions such as museums and universities that deliver community projects. The total amount of income for VCOs operating services within Kensington and Chelsea was approximately £127 million for 2007/8.

Voluntary and community sector income 2007/8



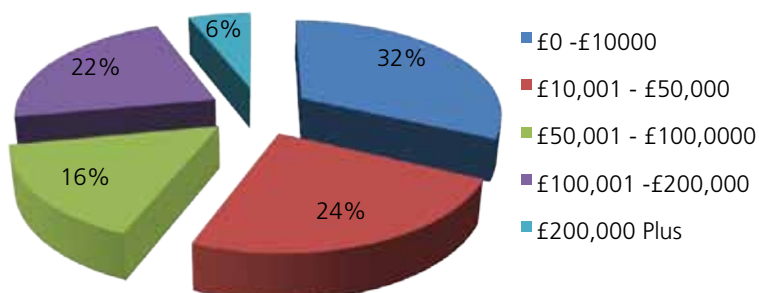
Annual Income Bracket	Number of Organisations	Actual Total Income 2007-2008
£0 - £1000	88	£3,330
1001 - £10,000	58	£306,681
£10,001 - £100,000	67	£2,633,259
£101,000 - £250,000	28	£4,500,051
£251,000 - £1M	39	£17,076,477
£1M - £5M	9	£21,972,608
£5M - £10M	3	£17,653,881
£10M	1	£62,631,000

The chart below compares the income of VCOs operating in Kensington and Chelsea for financial years 2006/7 and 2007/8. The total income for VCOs operating within Kensington and Chelsea stood at approximately £117 million for year ending 2006/7. The Chart reveals that income for the sector increased 7.8% for year ending 2007/8. This percentage is likely to increase due to 11 VCO reports of audited accounts which had not yet been posted on the Charity Commission website for 2007/8.



RBKC funding 2009-2010

This chart shows the percentage of VCOs in Kensington and Chelsea that have received up to £200,000 worth of funding from RBKC for 2009/10. From the chart we can observe that for 2009/10 the greatest proportion of organisations (32%) received funding for amounts up to £10,000. The smallest proportion of organisations (6%) received funding of £200,000 or more.

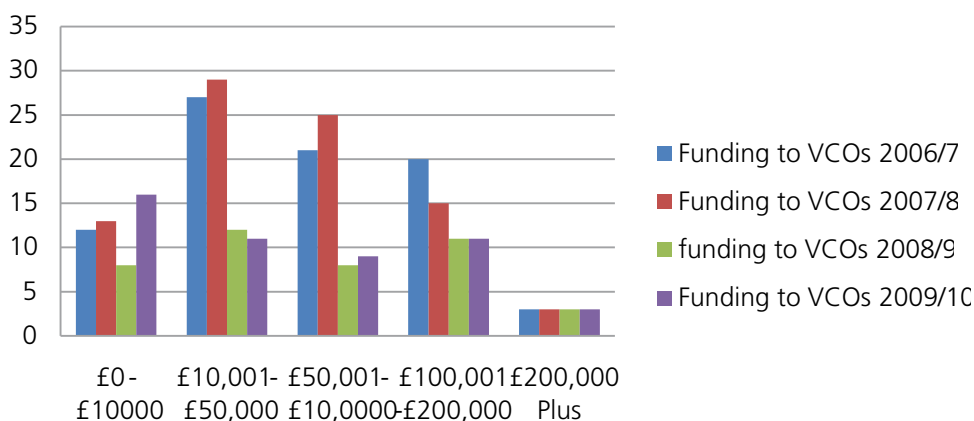


This table shows the total amounts of funding given to VCOs in Kensington and Chelsea according to each funding bracket for 2009/10. The total amount of funding awarded to the sector was £3,927,946,000.

Funding Bracket	No. of Orgs funded	Total funding awarded 2009/10
£0 -£10,000	16	£99,283.00
£10,001 - £50,000	12	£274,878.00
£50,001 - £100,000	8	£553,886.00
£100,001 - £200,000	11	£1,595,239.00
£200,000 Plus	3	£1,404,660.00

The chart below shows a comparison between funding received from RBKC for years 2006/7, 2007/8, 2008/9 and 2009/9.

RBKC voluntary and community sector funding



Since 2006/7 there has been a gradual reduction of grant funding, whilst commissioning of services has been on the increase. Last year we reported the change in funding from grants to commissioning for RBKC's Family and Children's services which saw just under £2m of funding awarded to successful VCOs through a commissioning process.

Whilst no other business group has formally moved to commissioning, it is likely that with the Personalisation Agenda, many services within Adult Social Care will be delivered through a formal commissioning process. In addition, funding from NHS Kensington and Chelsea (NHS KC) awarded contracts to VCOs during 2007/8 totalling around £1.5 million. Last year we reported that the estimated total income for the sector coming from RBKC and NHS KC was £7 million. This year our findings suggest the total income for the sector is still around the same at £7 million.

Part B

Managing Strategic Change

Main Purpose of the organisation

The State of the Sector survey asked respondents whether the purpose of their organisation had changed since it first began. Out of 155 responses 77% report that the purpose of their organisation has not changed since it first began, whilst 17% reported that it had. For those organisations that stated the purpose of their organisation had changed, some of the reasons why included the expansion of services to meet the needs of new clients, developing social enterprise activities or to provide a more holistic service.

Responding to Changing Needs of Service Users

Respondents were asked whether their organisation had captured evidence of the difference their service makes to the lives of their service users. Out of 155 responses 79% reported that they do capture the evidence, whilst 17% reported that they did not.

Some of the ways that organisations stated they capture evidence included:

- Feedback forms
- Satisfaction surveys
- Support plans
- One to one interviews
- Case Studies
- Testimonials

Other tools such as the Impact or well-being wheel were also used. Another way was to gather the view of the funder on the delivery of a service.

Solidarity Sports

Solidarity Sports delivers sport and healthy living projects in disadvantaged areas, mostly for children who cannot afford to go away for the summer or are priced out of attending other activities such as school clubs.

Solidarity Sports use film to capture evidence of the impact of their work because English is not the first language for a lot of families that are supported by the organisation and so many find it difficult to provide written feedback. Sean Mendez, Activities Manager at Solidarity Sports states 'Film is much more accurate. It is much better to get them speaking on camera than just to write down a couple of sentences. It also allows us to monitor progress as filmmakers are present throughout the life time of the project.'

At the end of the project Solidarity Sports screen the film for children and families which gives them a sense of pride and achievement. It empowers the children and boosts their self-esteem and confidence as they are seen as 'stars of the show'



Enjoying one of the many activities provided by Solidarity Sports

Making a difference to the lives of service users

Respondents were asked to list the top three changes their organisation has made to the lives of their service users over the last 12 months. From 137 responses, 88% of organisations were able to list the top three changes which included a wide range of answers such as improving skills, gaining employment, prevention of homelessness and entry into further or higher education. Softer outcomes were also listed such as improving confidence, building self esteem and reducing isolation.



Ebony Steel Band

Ebony Steel Band

Established in 1969, Ebony Steel band Trust is one of the UK's leading arts organisations and has received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Work in 2005.

Ebony's highly successful Millennium Volunteers Project is aimed at young people aged 16 to 24, whilst their Outreach Project engages communities through teaching about the history and culture of the Caribbean.

Pepe Francis, Director of the Trust believes the work of Ebony Steelband really does make a difference to the lives of those they engage with. He states *'Over the past 40 years Ebony has worked with literally thousands of young people, raising their self esteem and supporting them into employment'*.

However, whilst Ebony can celebrate 40 years of success the Trust is yet to realise financial self sufficiency. Pepe concludes *'our work is recognised but not valued and this needs to change if Ebony is to continue for another 40 years'*.

Respondents were asked whether in planning their future services they believe their organisation is able to meet the changing needs of their service users. Results reveal that from 155 responses almost 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are able to do so.

From 155 responses, 57% of respondents stated that they definitely plan to provide new services in the future that can meet the changing needs of clients, whilst a further 31% said they may do so. When asked how they planned to fund these new services responses revealed to a large extent that the VCS is increasingly changing to a mixed economy of funding sources.

From 134 responses, 33% said that they would seek grant funding whilst almost 40% said they would also generate income through public sector and NHS contracts and 13% through selling services or products. When asked for further information on how they plan to generate income, answers included through volunteers, donorship and through partnership working both with the statutory sector and with other VCOs. Results for the BME sector reveal that there will be a greater reliance on grant funding for provision of new services whilst the spread across the other sources of funding was relatively similar to the total sample.

Respondents were asked whether they currently provide services that are not funded, results showed that out of 153 responses almost 67% of organisations said that they deliver services that they are not funded to do. When asked for further information as to why this was the case this revealed a range of responses. One of the most common was the demand for the services from clients even after funding is no longer available which can lead the organisation to continue to deliver services.

Interestingly, one organisation which operates on a voluntary basis and receives no funding stated that by providing a service which is unfunded they are free to respond to need without justifying this to a funder. Findings from the BME sector revealed that running unfunded services was almost one fifth greater than the total sample.

If two thirds of the total surveyed and over 85% of the BME sector state that they deliver unfunded services, this raises an important issue of how much the sector contributes in additional volunteering time and the social benefit of those activities which goes unmeasured by funders. The next case study highlights this issue.

Helping Hands

Helping Hands was set up in 2007 to provide an opportunity for children to have extra tuition and help to achieve better academic results. Teaching is provided in Maths, Science, English and Arabic at primary and secondary level. The classes attract between 20 to 25 students from various ethnic backgrounds such as Moroccan and Sudanese.

Helping Hands was originally planned to set up other services such as sports, youth activities and adult learning, but a lack of funding has meant that even the core services are not fully funded. However, the services provided impact greatly on the children who have gained in confidence and improved their performance in school despite the lack of funds.

Helping Hands rely on very small pots of grant funding. Tutors are volunteers and Abdalla Salim the founder and coordinator of the organisation works voluntarily. Abdalla states '*I would like to see the organisation receive more funding to cover the cost of its services and to diversify into other areas*'.

Strategic planning

Respondents were asked whether they had a strategic plan and the time span at which the strategic plan covered. From 153 responses 38% of respondents said they have a 1-3 year strategic plan (the most likely time span) and just over a quarter (27%) stated that they do not have a strategic plan. Of those organisations that do not have a plan 12% said they are planning to develop one. Only 2 respondents revealed that they had never reviewed the strategic plan whilst 76% have reviewed their strategic plan between 1 and 12 months ago. Other responses stated that their business plan was open ended whilst 2 respondents stated that their business plan spanned 10 years. Findings for the BME sector found very similar results to that of the total sample

Part C

Voluntary and Community Sector Funding and Resources

Commissioning

Results from the State of the Sector survey revealed that at this current time in Kensington and Chelsea out of 151 responses there are slightly more organisations who are not delivering a contracted public service (50%) than those that are (44%). This can be viewed positively as the grant system is far more suited to small VCOs. However, this reliance may prove challenging in the future as grant funded services move towards a formal commissioning process leaving many VCOs in a vulnerable position.

For those VCOs that are delivering a contract, it is encouraging to know that 65% say they are the main provider whilst only 13% are sub-contractors. Other responses showed that 5 organisations were both main and sub contractors. Answers for the BME VCS reveal that 30% of organisations are delivering a contract and 62% are not revealing an even greater reliance on grant funding. Encouragingly, 62% of BME organisations delivering a contract report that they are the main provider whilst 38% state they operate as a sub contractor.

When asked if delivering a contract had improved a range of their organisation's resources, a total of 63% of respondents stated that delivering a contract had improved their organisation's financial stability whilst only 14% believed it had made their financial situation worse. Results also show that 50% or more of organisations feel that delivering a contract has helped improve their strategic planning for the future and given them more confidence to deliver more contracts as well as helping to achieve their organisation's goals. Worryingly only a quarter of respondents say that it has improved their organisation's independence and 23% say that it has improved their ability to campaign.

When respondents were asked to describe in greater detail the impact delivering a contract has had on their organisation comments included:

'The increase in paperwork such as monitoring requirements has placed undue pressure on the organisation'

'Conflict arises between delivering to contract specifications and delivering to the values of the organisation'

Some positive comments included:

'Delivering a contract has improved my organisation's understanding of the needs of our users'

'it has improved our financial and entrepreneurial skills'.



InterAct Reading Services uses professional actors to read with stroke patients

Health and Wellbeing

A new opportunity

A great opportunity arose for the local voluntary sector in 2008 when NHS Kensington & Chelsea (at that time known as the Primary Care Trust) announced a new commissioning programme. After a period of financial recovery during which time no new community projects were funded, the local NHS announced that new funding was available for projects to improve health and reduce health inequalities, and local voluntary organisations were invited to submit proposals. Two commissioning rounds were held, and out of these came 23 funded community projects. Funded to approximately £2million per year, KCSC was commissioned to provide advice and support to this programme, we helped organisations with the proposal documents and design of projects.

4Minds

In 2009, NHS Kensington & Chelsea announced a commissioning opportunity for a new service – community development work in mental health for BME communities. This came about following an inquiry into the death of David 'Rocky' Bennett in 2003 and which highlighted huge differences in experiences of mental health services by people from black and minority ethnic communities. Following lobbying by KCSC, the local NHS put this service out to tender, and KCSC led a partnership of local organisations - Dalgarno Neighbourhood Trust, MyGeneration and Chelsea Theatre. The partnership successfully won the contract to deliver this service. Three community development workers, together with a community research coordinator and team administrator, are now working across the borough as the 4Minds project.

2. *Independent Inquiry into the Death of David 'Rocky' Bennett*; Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority (2003)

Interact Reading Service

InterAct Reading Service is dedicated towards supporting stroke recovery. Now entering its tenth year of charitable work, the charity uses professional actors and provides a live and interactive reading service for stroke patients in hospitals and stroke clubs.

InterAct delivers this service with the aim of alleviating the boredom and depression often experienced by stroke patients while also using literature and communication to help stimulate the brain's neuronal networks.

In the past 12 months, InterAct has been contracted by local health care authorities to deliver its reading service. Such contractual arrangements are testament to the validity of InterAct's work. It also helps the charity to develop more integrated relationships with health care professionals as contracts recognise their service as being part of the range of rehabilitative methods offered by hospitals and stroke clubs.

Contracts also provide financial security for the services delivered over an agreed period of time.

This is only the beginning ...

A recent restructuring of the NHS has seen primary care trusts split into two organisations - a commissioning organisation (now known as NHS Kensington & Chelsea) and a provider organisation. Now the commissioning organisation is required to put more services out to open competition, we hope that the voluntary sector will be in a strong position to bid for a win more service delivery contracts, which will mean that services are delivered more closely to local communities, in a way that involves local people, and is more responsive to local needs and issues. Kensington & Chelsea Social Council will continue to provide leadership and support to enable local organisations to rise to this challenge over the coming years.

Voluntary and community sector funding

Results shows that out of 147 responses, 71% of organisations receive their funding through grants and over a third, 34%, are charging for services. 14% of organisations reveal that they are currently unfunded. Encouragingly 48% of organisations state that they are definitely looking to diversify their funding in the future whilst 21% say they may do. Given the current climate of funding for the sector, organisations will have to consider other ways of raising income to help sustain their organisation.

When asked to describe how the organisation intends to obtain funding in the future, out of 104 responses over one third (38%) said it would be through generating income such as through venue hire, running a charity shop, charging fees or fundraising activities. Other answers included through delivering contracts (15%) grant funding (10%), donorship (10%) and sponsorship (5%). 8% of organisations were unsure. However over two thirds of respondents still intend to rely on grant funding for the future.

Last year the stage one findings reported only 5% of organisations received funding through earned income so it is encouraging to see that more organisations are considering this approach as a more guaranteed way of securing their survival or growth. Results also show that organisations intend to use other ways of generating income compared to delivering a contract.

For the BME sector results reveals that whilst organisations receives the majority income through grants they are less likely to receive income through donations, legacies, investment income and other fundraising activities. There is also a greater proportion of BME VCOs that report they are unfunded compared to the total sample.

During the last 12 months 14% of the total sample stated that their income has increased significantly. The highest response was for those organisations that have stated that their funding has remained constant at 28%. 11% of organisations have reported that their funding has decreased significantly. When looking at the BME sector the results are similar to the total sample, only 4% more than the total sample report that their funding has decreased significantly.

When respondents were asked to describe the impact of change in income on the organisation, 21 of those respondents (61%) stated that it has helped them to develop new services. 19% said that it had helped them

to focus strategically, whilst 14% said that they were able to increase their workforce. For those organisations that indicated a reduction in funding, when asked of the impact individual comments included a reduction or loss of services, loss of staff and having to become more financially stringent.

From 145 responses 90% of organisations stated that they either strongly agree or agree with the statement that they are confident of their organisation's ability to survive the next 12 months. Only 2% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. When asked why they felt confident about their ability to survive the future answers included confidence in the services they provided, strong leadership vision and positivity, healthy reserves and secured contracts or grants. Results from the BME sector show a similar level of confidence when compared to the total population

Managing resources

Respondents were asked whether they believe their organisation to be adequately resourced to meet their objectives over the next 12 months. From 145 responses the strongest response was in management and leadership with over 80% agreeing or strongly agreeing they were adequately resourced, the second highest was in trusteeship. Staff training and reserves received the lowest response.

When looking at workforce development in greater detail 145 organisations were asked where they had committed the most money and time. The highest response was found to be management and leadership (72.6%), secondly volunteer training and development (63.7%). The lowest response was towards governance training and development (41.8%) and paid staff training and development (49.3%). Results for the BME sample revealed a very similar result with money and time mostly committed towards management and leadership and least of all to paid staff training and development.

Part D

Partnership Working, Voice and Influence

Partnership working

When asked if organisations were involved in partnership working 44% of the total sample state that they have worked in partnership with two or more VCOs and 33% have worked in consortia.

The results show an encouraging sign of VCOs working together to help build their sustainability. Partnerships through consortia can be one the ways small VCOs can come together to bid for a contract. Only 10% of organisations stated they did not work with any other VCO during the past 12 months. Almost 79% of organisations strongly agree or agree that being involved in a partnership has helped to strengthen their organisation.

Analysis for the BME sector reveal similar results with 11% stating that they had not worked in partnership, 7% working with one VCO, 37% with two or more VCOs and 41% in a consortia.

When the total sample was asked for further explanation on how partnerships have helped to strengthen their organisation out of 41 responses the highest response (21%) revealed that they felt partnerships were necessary for the future or they could be left behind. Other answers included that they helped to spread risk, build knowledge and skills and helped fuel creativity.

Advice Now

In September 2008, 8 local organisations were successful in securing funding from the Big Lottery to deliver a programme which aims to improve and support the provision of advice services in Kensington and Chelsea. This would be achieved by joining up advice services across the borough into a network. It would also build on existing partnership arrangements between advice agencies in the delivery of general and specialist services. Community groups are also an important part of the network particularly those who may have no formal advice role but need better knowledge of issues, boundaries and referral procedures. Advice Now is an example of the way in which VCOs can come together to bid for large contracts and deliver much needed services locally.

Women in the UK (Umaru)

UMARU started its activities in 2000 with the main focus to help integrate Angolan women into British society. Ana (role) states 'there was a feeling that the women in the Angolan community kept pretty much to themselves and were not integrated into British society in terms of speaking the language, taking an active role and applying for good jobs. Our role was in teaching and pushing this agenda'.

UMARU believe that partnerships work well in the voluntary sector, the organisation currently works in partnership to deliver the 'Good Health 4 Parenting' project. Ana went on to say '*the nature of our work means that we always operate on limited resources, so when an opportunity comes that matches our needs and wants it is a perfect marriage*'. At the moment UMARU have been experimental but are now proactively talking to other Angolan charities to see where they could assist and support each other.



UMARU helping Angolan women integrate into British society

Another form of partnership working is for VCOs with similar charitable objectives to merge. Merger has become more common in recent years within the sector. This could be due to the difficulty in obtaining sustainable funding, but even more importantly there is a recognition that a strategic alliance will help to strengthen service provision and drive economic efficiency.



The merger of Age Concern Kensington and Chelsea and Sixty Plus has brought additional benefits to older people in the borough

Age Concern Kensington and Chelsea

Age Concern Kensington and Chelsea and Sixty Plus merged on 1st April 2009 following a feasibility study which took place to examine the compatibility of both organisations aims and objectives, alongside many other aspects of organisational life. Both organisations worked very closely to agree joint aims and values which would ensure that the merger would bring wider benefits to its service users. Cynthia Dize, Director of the Age Concern/ Sixty Plus states *'the process of the merger was challenging but the benefits as a result have been worth it'*. Cynthia went on to say *'it is vital that the differing cultures of the organisations are recognised and the values agreed as a priority before thinking about the brand, whilst it has been a very ambitious programme we have celebrated our achievements together throughout'*.

Voice and representation

The percentage of VCOs from the total sample that agreed that they find it easy to get the views of their service users represented to local statutory bodies (33%) roughly equals that of those that feel neutral (34%) meaning they do not feel either one way or the other as to whether this is the case or not. However over a total 50% of the total sample strongly agreed or agreed that they found it easy to represent the views of their service users to local statutory bodies. Findings from the BME sector reveal that just under 60% of organisations strongly agreed or agreed that they found it easy to represent the views of their service users to local statutory bodies.

However, when looking at whether VCOs from the total sample are satisfied that their views are acted upon by local statutory bodies, the highest response was in the neutral category which again reveals that just under 50% of organisations are unclear one way or the other whether this is the case. Whilst the BME sector report a higher satisfactory level at representing their communities they feel less satisfied with the ability to influence decisions locally.

The highest percentage for the total sample was in the neutral category when organisations were asked whether they believe there are significant barriers to getting their voices heard and influencing decisions when representing their users with. 47% of the responses were neutral to this statement. However 28% agreed that there were significant barriers and 10% strongly agreed.

Compared to the total sample the BME sector report greater discontent with the barriers which face them getting their voices heard with almost

17% more than the total sample strongly agreeing or agreeing with the statement.

When asked for further information on the barriers to getting their voices heard or influencing decisions, organisations which defined themselves as small stated that limited resources, a feeling of not seen as important enough, their voices not being heard and a lack of understanding on what they do and the needs of their clients were listed as their main concerns. Some organisations also stated that there was no two way communication between the small VCOs and the statutory sector. Suggestions to overcome these barriers included a forum for small organisations, partnership working and networking and lobbying.

Somali Forum

The Somali Forum began in September 2009. It consists of 7 local organisations which come together on a quarterly basis to discuss issues relating to their community and to address ways in which they can work together to improve outcomes.

Although it is in its early stage of development the forum aims to strengthen the role and the voice of Somali VCOs in the borough and in particular through a coordinated approach bring to the attention of the statutory sector the contribution they can make to the delivery of services to improve the lives of their community.



The Somali Forum aims to strengthen the voice of the Somali community

Looking to the Future

The impact of the recession

Recommendations

- KCSC mirror the advice to the sector found on NCVO's website, that VCOs should plan ahead, revisit costs, develop volunteers and build partnerships.
- KCSC also encourage VCOs to collect evidence from their service users on how the recession is impacting on their lives and the lives of their families. Evidence on the impact of the recession is being monitored through RBKC's recession dashboard and further local evidence from VCOs would help provide a fuller picture.
- KCSC has produced a briefing on the recession³ which outlines what the potential impact could be on the sector. We have also developed an on-line questionnaire which VCOs can complete on a regular basis to help build the evidence of what is happening locally.⁴

The reduction of grants

Recommendation

- KCSC want to maintain the financial security of the local sector and ask that RBKC Business Groups continue to provide small grants of up to £50,000 to keep small and micro VCOs active in the borough.

The delivery of public services

Recommendations

- Intelligent Commissioning become standard practice within RBKC.
- The VCS be involved in the design of service outcomes and that VCS specialist knowledge and links to the community be fully recognised.
- The Social Value of the work carried out by VCOs be recognised by commissioners as a valid way of meeting wider outcomes that are of financial benefit to society and the state.
- Kensington and Chelsea's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment be used as a mechanism for strengthening local partnerships and local delivery of public services by the VCS.
- KCSC is financially supported by RBKC to ensure that VCOs are able to develop consortia bids and are capacity built to engage in the full commissioning process.

Developing social enterprise

Recommendation

- KCSC would like to see greater support given to local VCOs from NHS KC and RBKC that want to establish a social enterprise. We welcome the Council's development in social enterprise and business development but would like to see more investment placed within the sector.

3. *The Voluntary and Community Sector Resilience Action Plan*; KCSC (2009)

4. www.kcsc.org.uk/

Personalisation

Recommendations

- VCOs need to learn how to market their services as individuals will be given the power to choose which organisation to buy services from
- RBKC should work closely with the VCS to explore widely the opportunities that will be available as providers of services under Personalisation.

Management and governance

Recommendations

- VCOs should ensure they build in the cost of staff and trustee development into grant applications and tenders.
- The statutory sector must recognise the importance and management and leadership within VCOs and acknowledge the financial cost of resourcing its development.

Third sector engagement

Recommendations

- Community engagement should be resourced, the borough's community engagement team could seek new and innovative ways of engaging the local community particularly through resourcing local VCOs to carry out engagement activities such as community and advice centres.
- The BME sector should be adequately resourced to fully participate in engagement activities.
- VCS representatives should attend training programmes which develop the skills of representatives as a compulsory element of taking on the role as a representative for the sector.

The BME voluntary and community sector

Recommendations

- The statutory sector should recognise that it can often take longer to organise engagement activities due to resource constraints within the BME sector and this should be addressed throughout the consultation process.
- The statutory sector should ensure that responses to consultations are ethnically monitored to ensure that a wide cross section of the community is engaging.
- The BME sector need to ensure that they take advantage of support available to help bring them to the table of decision makers and participate in local forums and networks.

Child Poverty will be an important area of our work for 2010, we hope to raise more awareness about the impact of poverty on families and particularly the children of Kensington and Chelsea. KCSC hope that you will join us in addressing this issue and seek ways of tackling child poverty in the borough.

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- www.kcsc.org.uk
- Defending Local Grants; The Local Forum (November 2008)
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- National Survey of Third Sector Organisations; Analytical Report: Key findings from the Survey; Ipsos MORI; Social Research Institute (May 2009)
- www.rota.org.uk

About Kensington and Chelsea Social Council

KCSC aims to enable the voluntary and community sector to achieve the following outcomes:

- Increase knowledge, confidence and skills of VCOs so that they are strengthened and improved
- Increase VCO good practice
- Increase VCO ability to develop new projects and services and respond to emerging needs
- Increase awareness of the context and environment in which VCOs are operating
- Increase awareness of all service provision within the borough resulting in more holistic provision, less duplication and complimentary services
- Increase in the number of partnerships, collaborative projects, consortia and networking between and within sectors
- Increase input into strategies, plans and their implementation with changes made as a result of influence and contribution by VCOs
- Smaller less established VCOs access our services and become engaged in the VCS
- Are able to campaign and lobby effectively for local people



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