

Appendix 2

Progress on Recommendations from the Islington Voluntary Sector Conference 2012

Based on discussions and suggestions at the 2012 conference, fifteen recommendations were made for support services to the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the borough. The support services in question are: Voluntary Action Islington (VAI), Islington Council (IC), Islington Community Network (ICN) and some of the ICN member networks.

Over the year, efforts have been made to address these recommendations. The progress that has been made is listed below.

1. Recommendation

To put on a voluntary sector conference for 2013, with the priority of considering the changing environment for residents and VCS organisations and how they can respond to and influence change; and to invite senior representatives of local funders **VAI / ICN / IC**

Response

This document has been prepared for delegates at the Islington Voluntary Sector Conference 2013, to take place on the 23 November. The theme of the event is 'meeting the needs of our communities in tough times'. Local funder Islington Giving will have a stall so they can give out information and talk to delegates.

2. Recommendation

To better promote relevant corporate social responsibility (CSR) offers from businesses, with a focus on business planning. **VAI / ICN**

Response

- VAI has collaborated with the Businesses for Islington Giving (BIG) Alliance to bring employee volunteers with business planning expertise to VAI's regular advice sessions for local community groups.
- VAI and ICN have facilitated contact between Philip Corthorne, the Business In The Community (BITC) Business Connector for Islington, and local community groups.

3. Recommendation

To work with the council's Business Employment Support Team (BEST) to develop a programme for working with larger charities and, particularly, to put effort into helping VCS organisations to offer work related opportunities. **IC / VAI / ICN**

Response

- The ICN Project Officer met with BEST and shared information on its services with the ICN.
- Islington Council, Creative Islington and others teamed up to offer 11 apprenticeships and internships in arts organisations.

4. Recommendation

To encourage giving by businesses to neighbourhood projects.

Octopus Community Centres Network

Response

Some of Islington's community hubs are working with local businesses and Octopus is in discussion with Islington Council's Business Employment Support Team (BEST) on how to develop this work so that all community hubs have similar links.

5. Recommendation

To maximise the potential for volunteering from local businesses, including universities and large charities. **VAI**

Response

Islington Volunteer Centre, a project of VAI, has:

- run a successful fundraising programme with Jury's Inn and their local employees.
- sourced advice through the big assist in relation to a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme from Hammersmith and Fulham Volunteer Centre.
- registered over 800 students and graduates to volunteer at graduate fairs in the last 3 months.

6. Recommendation

To explore and improve communications so that: there is effective dialogue between VCS representatives on funding panels, organisations in receipt of funding and the wider voluntary sector; there are further efforts to publicise existing services so that organisations know where their support needs can be met; national charities based in Islington are connected to the local VCS, e.g. through Twitter. **IC / ICN / VAI**

Response

- The ICN appoints three representatives to the Panel considering applications to Islington Council's Community Chest (CC) grant programme. In 2013 two new representatives were elected and all three are building on the work of previous representatives with the aim of greater scrutiny of CC decisions and continuing discussion of them at ICN Committee meetings.
- In February 2013, the ICN began producing a monthly newsletter, which regularly includes information on support services for organisations.
- VAI continues to make proposals on working with large charities in the borough, including provision of expert fundraisers for VAI's regular advice sessions and implementation of the London Living Wage.

7. Recommendation

To include a quarterly VCS feature in Islington Life magazine. **IC / VAI**

Response

VAI and other VCS groups have featured in Islington Life over the last year.

8. Recommendation

To ensure that at least some of the materials and news produced for the ICN is aimed at members of networks rather than the representatives of those networks. **ICN**

Response

A survey of communications within the ICN has been undertaken to get a better idea of what information is most relevant to members.

9. Recommendation

To keep abreast of new funding and policy opportunities and threats and to publicise them to networks at the earliest opportunity. **VAI / IC**

Response

- VAI publishes a comprehensive funding booklet for the VCS (updated twice yearly), as well as updating members of new opportunities and threats via its email newsgroup.
- In the week following the announcement of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review for 2015-16, Islington Council held a briefing for the VCS on its likely impact.

10. Recommendation

To strengthen relations between the council's Resident Engagement Team and the VCS and to ensure that the Residents' Champions have a good awareness of VCS organisations. **VAI / ICN**

Response

- The Resident's Champion, Therese Coyle spoke at the ICN Annual Meeting 2012/3.
- It has been agreed that the ICN will deliver a presentation at a Resident's Taskforce meeting in the near future.

11. Recommendation

To promote awareness within community hubs of the support services offered by VCS organisations. **Octopus Community Centres Network**

Response

Octopus and ICN are collaborating on the compilation of a list of local VCS services that can be referred to by community hubs.

12. Recommendation

To promote VCS services to young people at the Saturday Night Project (see Appendix). **VAI / ICN**

Response

The Saturday Night Project has a 'Local Marketplace' of stalls promoting services available to young people and has agreed to regularly provide space for ICN members.

13. Recommendation

To share knowledge of services supporting access (e.g. translation, signing, advocacy) so that minorities and 'hard-to-reach' groups are equally able to use the full range of services available. **Islington BME Forum / Islington Refugee Forum / Islington Faiths Forum / Islington Disability Network / VAI / ICN**

Response

VAI responds to enquiries about access services.

14. Recommendation

At Roundtable events, to identify good case studies of service user experience as a basis for developing future interventions by the council and VCS organisations. **VAI / ICN / IC**

Response

Following the June 2013 roundtable discussion between representatives of Islington Council and the VCS, the ICN and Islington BME Forum put together an ongoing project to gather case studies of the impact of welfare reform.

15. Recommendation

To communicate, once they are finalised, the new commitments of the council specified in the action plan arising from the report of the Communities Review Committee; 'Supporting the Local Voluntary and Community Sector through Procurement'. **VAI / ICN / IC**

Response

Islington Council consulted the ICN on the VCS Procurement Action Plan at the draft stage. The Action Plan is included in the 2013 Conference delegate pack.