



Voluntary and Community Sector

1. Introduction

The term 'voluntary and community sector' (VCS) is generally applied to organisations that are value-driven and reinvest their surpluses to social, environmental or cultural causes.

Volunteering is recognised as making a critical contribution to building a strong and cohesive society. It helps combat social exclusion and contributes to the delivery of public services. As service providers and advocates of local community members, local VCS organisations can identify health and social care needs, gaps in provision and the effectiveness of current services, particularly for those vulnerable and hard-to-reach communities.

The Government's Localism Bill outlines its ambitions to give local people more power and influence over improving their lives. The Government has stated that the VCS has the potential to play a larger role in the delivery of services traditionally run by the public sector.

2. The Local Picture

There are over 600 VCS organisations operating within the Borough of Hounslow, providing a wide range of services to local people. These organisations include Age Concern Hounslow and the Citizens Advice Bureau, as well as smaller community-based groups often led by volunteers, such as 'Friends Of' groups. The majority of VCS organisations in Hounslow focus on arts, sports and leisure, children, young people and families. ([Figure 1](#))

The London Borough of Hounslow has engaged BMG Research to manage their Residents' Panel, providing consultation with a cross-section of the local community on Borough-wide issues. 1,901 Panel members were mailed a survey in 2010, of which 1,245 (65%) responded. The 2010 Hounslow Residents' Panel [tracker survey](#) indicates that 20% of Panel members undertake regular voluntary work. Volunteering was defined within the survey as giving unpaid help of two or more hours per week to a community group or local organisation for the benefit of other people in the local area. The proportion of members who volunteered was considerably lower amongst those aged under 35 years (0% of those aged 18-24 years and 12% of those aged 25-34 years).

The survey showed that in 2010, 42% of respondents felt they were able to influence decisions affecting their local area. This is a slightly higher proportion than in 2009, where 39% held the same view. ([Figure 2](#)) Panel members who did not feel they could influence decisions affecting their local area were asked what the Council could do to help change this. Responses suggested that the Council should listen to people more and take on board their suggestions, have more public meetings and inform residents before making changes.

3. Strategic Leadership and Collaboration

The London Borough of Hounslow aims to build a community where individuals are empowered to make a difference both to their own lives and to the area in which they live.

The Borough's [Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy](#) outlines how the Local Authority will help VCS organisations between 2011 and 2015. The objectives of the strategy are:

- A stronger, empowered community – more people participating in local decision making;
- A cohesive, resilient community – people from different backgrounds getting on well together;
- A sustainable and independent Voluntary and Community Sector – building the capacity of the third sector and supporting sustainable growth; and
- Neighbourhood partnerships consisting of local stakeholders with residents – facilitating regeneration within the Borough's communities.

Hounslow's [Corporate Funding Strategy](#) sets out the priorities and future plans for supporting the funding of Hounslow's local VCS through a variety of funding schemes, in particular, the provision of long-term support for strategic voluntary groups that meet Council priorities, fulfill a legislative requirement or build capacity.

4. Priorities

In 2011/12, the priorities in the Voluntary and Community Sector are to:

- Continue to support access to affordable premises for the VCS in Hounslow;
- Continue to support the development of a resource centre for the VCS in Hounslow;
- Adopt a partnership approach to capacity building work, operating alongside second tier VCS organisations to minimise duplication and strengthen resources;
- Continue to support the development of social enterprises, in particular, ensuring commissioning is accessible and social enterprises are able to bid fairly for these contracts;
- Adopt a partnership approach to volunteering alongside organisations such as Hounslow Volunteer Centre;
- Facilitate the involvement of the third sector in LBH planning for the 2012 Olympics and associated legacy; and
- Support the West London Network to provide a collective voice for the VCS across 6 London Boroughs – coordination of activity to support the transformation of local infrastructure through local collaboration and consolidation.

5. Summary of Need

The following table summarises the needs in the Voluntary and Community Sector in the London Borough of Hounslow.

SUMMARY OF NEED: CHECKLIST	
Is need increasing over time?	Yes
Is need greater than the London average?	N/A
Is there qualitative intelligence indicating that need is substantially unmet?	Not avail.
Is there an external inspection or report suggesting need is unmet?	Not avail.



Are quality indicators worsening over time?	Not avail.
Are quality indicators worse than the London average?	Not avail.
Is there an intervention of proven effectiveness to address the need which is not currently delivered in Hounslow (or not delivered enough)?	Not avail.