



# **Voluntary & Community Sector Training Strategy**

## **Background**

*Revised (& abridged) version – July 2009*

The London Borough of Hounslow is dedicated to the development of a strong and thriving third sector. A key part of the Corporate Community Investment and Cohesion Unit's (CCICU) role is to work closely with the voluntary and community sector; building its capacity and contributing to the sector's empowerment through the development of latent skills, abilities and talents. To support this, the CCICU provide a range of training services throughout the year to voluntary and community sector organisations working in the borough; meeting training needs and any identified gaps in provision. The arrangement of training courses throughout the year gives the CCICU the opportunity to offer courses that reflect the changing needs of the third sector, as well as enabling particularly popular courses to be repeated.

This strategy details the means by which the CCICU administers the borough's third sector training courses and manages their implementation.

## **Training support**

### Training needs analysis

Throughout the year, continuous training needs analysis of the voluntary and community sector is carried out. A number of modes of information feed into this analysis;

- A bi-annual 'training needs questionnaire' distributed alongside the Voluntary Times mailing update, inviting the third sector to provide information on what subjects they require training on, and the level of training required
- Feedback from the evaluation forms for attendees on CCICU organised training courses
- Consultation from any Voluntary Sector Information & Consultation Events
- Information gained from local organisations during monitoring meetings, fundraising assistance, and any other contact between officers and third sector organisations
- Consultation with other third sector training providers, such as CVS Hounslow

The programme of training courses is delivered in affiliation with CVS Hounslow; ensuring that any training needs identified within the local third sector are met, and that any duplications within the training courses offered are prevented.

### Training courses

A programme of training courses is organised throughout the year, drawing from evidence supplied by the training needs analysis work. Five 1-2 day training courses taking place at the Civic Centre in Hounslow are offered free of charge to all third sector organisations operating in the borough; whether paid staff or volunteers and inclusive of management committee members.

The courses are advertised through a series of means such as the Voluntary Times, the 'e-volve' email network and the website.

## Training bursary

The CCICU recognises that the training course programme cannot meet all training needs. For this reason, a 'Training Bursary' fund is distributed by the CCICU. This is a flexible fund to help organisations pay for additional training that has been identified as necessary for their organisation.

The fund is available to groups on recommendation from council officers, who have identified any specific training needs which have not been met by the main training support programme. Training bursaries are awarded in an ad hoc manner; applications can be made using the application form found on the CCICU website.

## Other support

The CCICU recognises that there are many other valuable training providers operating within the Borough and supports the contribution they make to building the capacity of the third sector by publicising them alongside our own training programme.

## **Benefits**

For the voluntary and community sector to operate effectively, it is important that they have access to professional and high-quality training. By supporting third sector organisations in the borough through the provision of training, Hounslow will benefit from a voluntary and community sector that provides good quality services and projects to the local community, with an increased ability to access external funding sources.

## **Looking ahead**

The CCICU is keen to have a regular Voluntary Sector Training Strategy to encompass all of the unit's training support work and ongoing commitment to training issues. Experience elsewhere has shown that regular training sessions, support, and analysis are successful and breed a positive 'training culture', whereas erratic training support is often unsuccessful, despite being well intentioned.

The CCICU will continue its training work, and will review this strategy each year, with reference to changing research, resources, feedback, ideas and priorities.