

May 2011

Dear Colleague,

A new look, a streamlined service and a renewed promise to help your voluntary or community organisation achieve the best!

Hackney Council for Voluntary Service or Hackney CVS as we are now called is going through changes in responding to challenges facing the sector and in operating with fewer resources. We have had a 42% reduction in our contract with the Council to support the sector and lost Team Hackney Community Grants which is a great shame. There is also much less resources available nationally for the type of work we do. We have to say goodbye to some fantastic staff as a result.

However, we are confident we can provide you with excellent support. Hence we are writing to tell you how some of our services have changed and what will remain. The leaflet summarises this.

Supporting the development of Consortia and Partnerships

Hackney CVS has worked hard to support local community networks so that you have opportunities to work more in partnership and to collectively influence how local services are provided. Consortia and partnerships are now an absolutely essential part of the voluntary and community (VCS) landscape. Funders and commissioners expect the VCS to work in partnership to deliver services in a world of diminishing resources and larger contracts. As such, we are focussed on consortia development programmes with:

- City & Hackney Health & Social Care Forum to support the development of lead agencies for the delivery of adult social care and will be investigating the development of a special purpose vehicle to help smaller providers bid for large contracts around health and wellbeing. Please contact Jackie Brett at hscf@hcvcs.org.uk
- the Economic Development Network and Safer Young Hackney network to support local providers to work with the Single Work Programme prime contractors and tackling youth crime. Please contact Gary Francis at gary@hcvcs.org.uk
- the Children & Young People's Providers Forum to support local groups improving educational attainment through a variety of approaches. Ensuring there are better outcomes for disabled children is everyone's responsibility. The Forum is working with providers, The Hackney Ark and local commissioners to improve access to services for disabled children. Please contact Kristine Wellington at kristine@hcvcs.org.uk

Community Empowerment Network - Influencing local services and the Sustainable Community Strategy

We are committed to supporting a strong Community Empowerment Network (CEN) which enables communities of interest and representatives of local community networks to influence the work of the Council and partners, including the NHS and Metropolitan Police. The Sustainable Community Strategy is the overarching strategy for the Borough. It's being refreshed this year and offers the opportunity to rethink which communities or issues need prioritising, especially with fewer resources. As a result of the CEN event in February, Team Hackney recognises the need to focus on the most vulnerable people in Hackney and to ensure that partnership working is developed with the sector as it is very close to these communities. Please contact Andrea Enisuh at andrea@hcvcs.org.uk

Grants, fundraising and philanthropy

Team Hackney is no longer funding a Community Grants Programme which is a huge loss. We are committed to ensuring there are local grants for you. We secured extra Grassroots Grants, albeit only £67k, but we are exploring how we could develop a local endowment fund for community grants built from local donations from people who live or work in Hackney. This is at its very early stages but, if successful, could provide a lifeline for that great work delivered by generally small VCS organisations. Visit www.hcvs.org.uk or subscribe to our email service, email info@hcvs.org.uk

Assets for the sector

We benefit hugely from sharing our office space with other local groups. We are looking for more cost effective premises so that we can move. In the meantime, we offer cheap desk space to organisations that can't afford commercial rents. Space is available; please contact Paul Conway at paul@hcvs.org.uk

VCS Strategy, commissioning and the Compact

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the VCS strategy consultation. The draft was presented to the Team Hackney Board where it was well received. We need to make a few small changes and will publish the final strategy on our website at www.hcvs.org.uk where we will also announce the winner of the BlackBerry shortly! Please contact Jake Ferguson at jake@hcvs.org.uk

Part of our work is with commissioners to ensure their processes help the VCS compete for contracts. It's fair to say that commissioners are listening and seeing the benefits of engaging the VCS in their processes. We are committed to making sure the Compact principles are upheld and will continue to help you resolve disputes you may have with public sector agencies. Please contact Rebecca Clarkson at rebecca@hcvs.org.uk

Organisation and Workforce Development

Following the reduction in funding for infrastructure work we can't offer you as many one-to-one surgeries which is a real disappointment. We are trying to secure funding to resolve this. In response we are looking to do more organisation and workforce development work by getting you into groups and working with you as a collective or cohort of organisations. We will continue to bring funders into Hackney so that you know what funding is available. We plan to build on our accredited sector development training programme directed at adult and children's service providers, such as our youth sector development programme. Please contact Kristine Wellington at kristine@hcvs.org.uk

Information and Communications

None of the services we offer or the opportunities for partnership, collaboration or influence would be any good if we didn't communicate them to you. We have to cut back on some of our spending here, such as a printed copy of SPARK which is hugely disappointing but we are going to continue to publish an electronic copy as we know how important SPARK is to promoting the work you do.

Finally, we will now be known as Hackney CVS rather than HCVS, to show our roots in the borough. This is the beginning of our new approach to sharpen up how we communicate with you in response to what you told us in our user surveys. You need clear, timely information targeted for your work. Look out for a new website which will help you find out about what we do and will allow us to streamline our email service. Please contact Gillian Trevethan at gillian@hcvs.org.uk

I hope you have found this update useful, please use our leaflet to get a better understanding of what we do and do continue to let us know how we can help your organisation.

Kind regards from everyone at Hackney CVS,



**Jake Ferguson, Chief Executive Officer
Hackney CVS**