

Voluntary Sector Hubs for Hackney



The Voluntary Sector Liaison Group (VSLG) has been set up to provide a regular and effective channel of communication between Hackney Council and network/umbrella voluntary organisations that deliver frontline services to community organisations.

As part of its on-going workplan it has established a subgroup to look at developing Voluntary Sector Hubs for the voluntary and community sector in Hackney. These hubs have been proposed by Cllr Nargis Khan and the London Borough of Hackney (LBH) as a way of addressing the urgent premises needs of many, particularly smaller, voluntary and community organisations in the Borough.

A report from Property Services will go to the January Cabinet meeting for discussion and will include progress on the development of the VCS hubs. There is a commitment from LBH to develop two pilot hubs in the first instance with four in total over the next few years. The need for premises has been highlighted repeatedly over the last five years and specifically in Link Up Hackney's research conducted early this year with over 200 VCS groups, the respective premises campaign by Link Up Steering Group members and a number of other premises needs surveys notably by Hackney Refugee Forum and Interlink Foundation.

The premises subgroup includes representatives from: LBH (Property Services and Community Development), HVA, Interlink Foundation, HCVS

and Hackney Play Association,. They have met on a number of occasions to start looking at possible locations for the first two pilot hubs (Salcombe Road and Belfast Road proposed by LB Hackney) and to try to map out what would make an ideal hub for local groups. It is important that these hubs provide networking areas, shared facilities such as photocopying, and meeting room space as well as provide hot desk of office space at a subsidised rate so that groups can get a foot onto the property rental ladder.

SPARK and the Premises Sub Group are keen to know the following:

- Are you currently in need of desk or office space for your organisation? If so, drop us an email with details of what you ideally need to jake@hcvs.org.uk
- Do you know of any other premises in the Borough that could be utilised as a voluntary sector hub?
- Do you know of any examples of voluntary sector hubs in other boroughs that support community organisations with premises needs?
- Have you an idea what facilities should be provided in one the hubs or have you a general comment about premises for the sector you would like to share with premises subgroup?

If you answered yes to any of the above, please email jake@hcvs.org.uk

The Premises Subgroup have visited two examples of voluntary and community sector hubs in Kensington & Chelsea. Here are some more details.

MRCF RESOURCE CENTRE

This hub is a Migrant and Refugee Communities Forum that offers:

1. Hot Desking for Refugee Communities.
2. Support for Refugee Doctors and Dentists
3. Clinical Training for Dentists to practice Dentistry
4. Advocacy support for individuals
5. English Classes
6. Lobbying
7. Kitchen Facilities and various groups use the small hall adjacent.

This property is owned by a property developing Company and MRCF put in £25K and originally had a peppercorn rent. There is a Training Room, Meeting Hall with Kitchen, a Playroom and additional facilities (OHP,TV,Flipchart etc). Some organisations hot desk and each organisation has a filing tray for their post and a filing cabinet where they could store their equipment. The property is overseen by a Management Board who are a group of Trustees from different refugee groups who are resident in the property.

Canalside

This hub is owned by the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. Hub was built to incorporate office space for the voluntary sector. There are two types of offices full time licences and part time licences. There is one meeting room, interview room and these are taken up separately and paid for separately. Meeting Room & Interview Rooms need to be booked in advance.

The office can be used in the evenings (All by prior booking). The centre has a Manager that is responsible for the Centre 24 hours a day. If someone wants to use the meeting room in the evening, if they are a full time licensee then they can manage the fire system themselves and do not need a caretaker. If it is a new group/outsider or part time licensee then the Manager employs someone to manage this. The rates for long term licence are £18.05 per square feet (business rate) which includes all utilities. Short term rates are also available.