VCSE Operating Model

Putting the VCSE at the heart of local health & care transformation

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Thanks & acknowledgements

Frances Haste, Liz Hughes, Jake Ferguson and Jackie Brett for drafting the document

Jonathan McShane and Carolyn Kus for their support with system integration

Members of VCSETLG for their input to the drafting

Cllrs Chris Kennedy, Feryal Clark and Caroline Selman for their ongoing commitment to the VCSE

CCG and LBH for their support to the Health & Social Care Forum

Claire Witney, Strategy, Policy and Economic Development, Hackney Council

All the VCSE and Public Sector organisations who took the time to contribute their case studies

Welcome

We set out here a map of our current and future resources that help us answer the key question: "What relationships help our communities live healthier lives?"

Relationships are the core of our proposed operating model – a model built on collaborative leadership and networks, neighbourhood and system wide delivery partnerships, with sustainability and community development consciously built into our approach. Our work forging trusting relationships – with the people in our communities, with each other, and with system partners is what has enabled our sector and our partners to step forward with purpose and build on the care that our local communities are showing for each other through these testing times. In developing our Target Operating model we hear stories of agility, imagination and resolve, and, above all, potential.

Vanessa Morris, Chair of VCSE Transformation Leadership Group

Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure in City and Hackney for the Integrated Commissioning and Care System

Executive summary

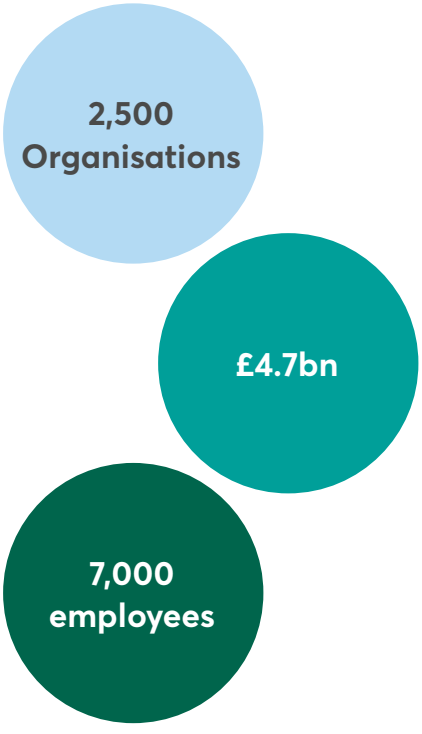
City & Hackney has a hugely diverse VCSE, with over 2500 organisations with a combined income of nearly £4.7billion* employing over 7000 people and utilising many more volunteers to offer a huge range of interventions.

Embedded in their communities, values based with trust at the heart of what they do, VCSE organisations are often set up to meet urgent unmet need, and many go on to become specialist providers, pioneering service development in their field. Services are person centred, and services users are often centrally involved in planning. VCSE organisations use imaginative ways to deliver services and work with those other services find 'hard to reach'.

The Covid-19 crisis has shown how agile and responsive the VCSE can be, often first to re-organise to respond to needs of the most vulnerable in the community.

Locally there are long established networks and representation arrangements which mean lots of organisations and people can be mobilised to be part of the thinking, delivery and improvement of health & care services, as well as providing community insight for horizon scanning and prioritisation. These networks can be the key to delivering important messages too – evident in the current work with Public Health on Test and Trace.

The VCSE in City & Hackney:



* Data from NCVO and https://data.ncvo.org.uk/profile/size-and-scope/. Nationally VCSE organisations with an annual income of over £1m accounted for 82% of the sector's total income in 2016/17, yet they made up less than 4% of the total number of voluntary organisations

Create Your Future meeting

The energy, skill and reach of these VCSE organisations could work to complement public sector services – but often we are not making the connections, and not resourcing the organisations to flourish.

Work was happening to make these connections, for example with the proposed VCSE Enabler Workstream, the engagement work through the Neighbourhood Model and plans for joining the Neighbourhood and Care Alliance. And this has been accelerated through the pandemic response, where in some areas, transactional relationships have been replaced overnight with full collaboration and partnership– showing the potential for different ways of working across the system.

For this potential to be realised the VCSE needs to be systematically embedded as equal partners across the health & care service. The VCS strategy produced by the Council working with the VCSE details the development needs of the sector, understanding the strengths and the challenges, and positioning this work as everyone's responsibility within the system.

There is potential too, for VCSE organisations to be system leaders in some areas. The VCSE brings particular expertise for example in the co-production of services and in building social capital within communities, where both volunteers and communities are empowered to innovate and participate in local solutions.

What we ask for, with the development of the VCSE enabler group, is a commitment to working in the framework of these good practice guidelines. NCVO, who are NHS England Learning Partner on the NHS England VCSE accelerator programme, have identified in these the components of success for involvement of local VCSE in the local Integrated Care System as being building relationships, shared vision and values, agreed principles for joint working and investment and resources.

We are aware there is a lot for the VCSE to do as well to engage with the wider system, and one thing, evident in this document, is the need to link the VCSEs in Hackney and the City.

Introduction

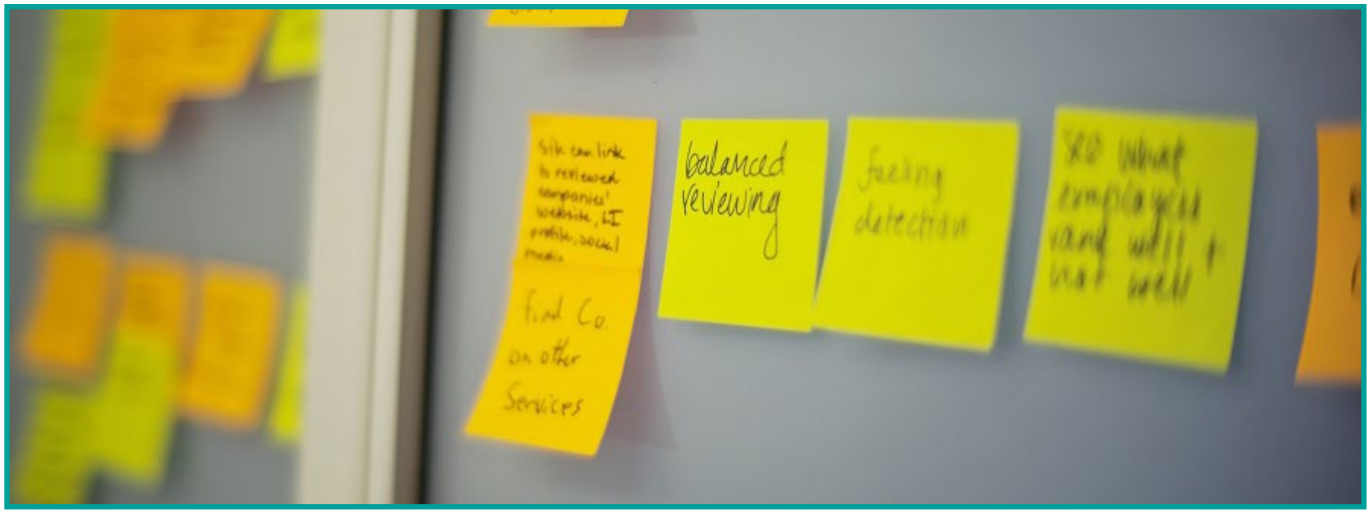
The NHS Long Term Plan recognises the positive contribution of the VCSE as being critical to the success of transforming health and social care. The range and reach of voluntary and community sector services in Hackney and the City provide a bridge into communities and the prevention work undertaken improves wellbeing and acts as a buffer through being responsive to increasing demands on the Health and Social Care services.

VCS: Voluntary and Community Sector

VCSE: Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector

What is the VCSE?

The voluntary and community sector encompasses organisations whose primary purpose is social impact, but are not part of the state. We use the term VCS for Voluntary and Community Sector, or VCSE for Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (with a Social Enterprise being an organisation that trades, but does not take profit). Other terms used are Third Sector, Civil Society or Not for Profit Sector. A common confusion is that the Voluntary Sector is made up of people who volunteer. While many VCSE organisations do have volunteers, the "Voluntary" term is from the voluntary or charitable contributions on which many VCSE organisations have their origins. This confusion can lead those outside the sector to see the VCSE as "unprofessional" or "amateur" when in fact many VCSE organisations have a wide range of professional skills and great expertise, often pioneering developments in their field.



Current Landscape: The VCSE in City and Hackney

'The vast majority of charities are small and local'

Hackney has a rich and diverse VCSE offer, and encompasses a range of organisations from micro resident-run community groups, small, borough wide, long established charities that help make the identity and community feel of Hackney, and larger local charities that deliver a range of contracts on behalf of the system. Many of these organisations, especially those most embedded in the fabric of Hackney, are reaching people furthest from mainstream services, whether due to poverty or cultural/ language barriers. Officially, there are 2597 charities in City & Hackney but a large proportion of these are large national / international charities with their headquarters here. Hackney CVS holds a database of over 1500, mainly local,organisations.

Table showing the no. of VCSE organisations in City & Hackney (according to latest NCVO figures)

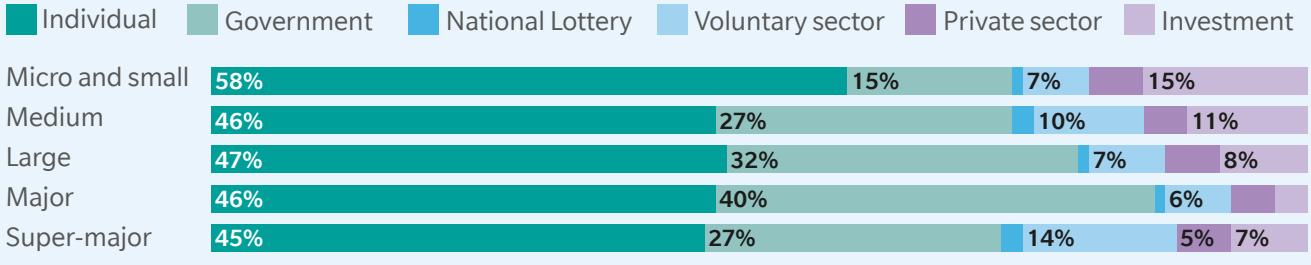
Size of org	City	Hackney
Micro (less than £10k)	295	299
Small (£10k – 100k)	353	358
Medium (£100k – £1m)	334	494
Large (£1m–£10m)	124	136
Major (£10m–£100m)	40	18
Super Major (£100m plus)	8	1
Not known	64	73
Total	**1218**	**1379**

Table showing different types of services by income/exp level

	No of orgs	% share of income
Grant-making foundations	513	35.0
Social Services	446	15.3
International	222	11.7
Health	99	5.4
Research	69	5.0
Culture and recreation	251	4.9
Religion	445	4.7
Employment and training	39	4.3
Law and advocacy	125	3.9
Development	51	2.4
Housing	46	2.1
Environment	54	2.0
Education	129	1.9
Other	27	0.9
Scout groups and youth clubs	11	0.3
Umbrella bodies	21	0.3
Playgroups and nurseries	26	0.2
Parent Teacher Associations	21	0.0
Village Halls	2	0.0

In 2016/17, there were 166,854 voluntary organisations in the UK with the majority – over 80% – either small or micro in size which mirrors the profile in City & Hackney. In C&H these small organisations only share 4% of the total income of the sector. This is important as it means these smaller organisations are not cash or asset rich. Smaller charities funding mix differs somewhat from medium and larger charities with 15% of their income from govt whereas medium and larger charities rely on 27% and 32% of their income from govt respectively.

Income source by size of organisation, 2015/16 (%)



National VCSE figures:

Nationally it is estimated that the VCSE contributes £17.2 billion to the economy, that is 0.85% of GDP, or approximately the equivalent of the GDP of Honduras or Cambodia. In 2016/7 it employed 877,000 people and worked with 11.1 million volunteers (who it is estimated contributed the value of £23 billion to the economy). (NCVO figures) Locally, the VCSE provides employment to around 7000 local people but there is no clear figure for the total contribution to the economy. Equally, there is also no accurate picture of the amount of funding awarded to the VCSE in City & Hackney from public sector sources. This is something we will be keen to establish as part of the VCS Enabler Workstream action planning. We know that the VCSE has been able to bring in funding from other local, regional and national organisations and sources – making the direct economic total, many times this value. The value of volunteering locally is a considerable extra resource.

While VCSE organisations tend to share core values, they have quite different capacities and funding models.

— **VCSE Commissioned Services** – run by the more formal Voluntary Sector, capable of taking on borough wide contracts, providing services on behalf of local authority or NHS. Current examples in Hackney – Advocacy, Advice Services, Healthwatch, Wellbeing Network

— **Wider VCSE Activities** – largely grants funded services, some funded by Hackney Council and the local NHS, some by outside funders, like the Lottery and Trusts like City Bridge Trust. Many organisations will have a variety of funders. Some will also have earned income, for example from renting out office space.

— **Informal / voluntary activities** – many community organisations deliver their services using a mixture of small grants and volunteers

VCSE organisations, whether large or small, and whether commissioned, funded and unfunded, come together through networks and partnerships, some ad hoc, some more formal. The range of networks and engagement mechanisms are described in Appendix A. While there are agreements where organisations deliver in partnership, all the representation, involvement and community insight – often co-ordinated through networks, is based on good will with most organisations contributing their time with no recompense.

In order to maximise an integrated support offer to residents we, as a borough, need to link all these to the system, and therefore we need an infrastructure that can support organisations within the system.

Vision

Bringing the uniqueness of the VSCE into the wider health and social care partnership to support the delivery of Integrated Care System

The vision is for VCSE organisations to be at the heart of early intervention and primary wellbeing activities, as well as offering specialist and hospital based services. Creating a flexible, responsive and early intervention support to people in crisis wrapping around and adding value to statutory forms of support, providing social action for innovative solutions.

How would all this work

— A flourishing VCSE sector, working in an integrated system as equal partners, collaborating with the statutory sector, focussing on their own strengths and so best able to meet the needs of Hackney residents from all communities and age groups, and including those with the most complex needs.

— With sufficient infrastructure resources provided to the VCSE to support network working e.g. (as above), commissioners will be better able to co-produce their workstream plans and programmes with the expertise and insight that VCSE groups, large and small, can offer. At the heart of the networks would be the VCSTLG/VCSE Enabler Group, resourced to be able to support input to leadership forums across the borough, and providing its own leadership of the sector by the sector, confident in having reached even small groups in a feedback loop managed by its comms and being able to fully participate in the integrated care structures through its admin and rep support.

— On the delivery side the VCSE as a member of the Neighbourhood & Care Alliance, would hold a number of borough wide contracts that could include but are not limited to , carers support, floating support, housing information/ advice; general advice services; befriending; debt management; advocacy; maternity and family support; mental health support, culturally specific services; language specific services ; drug and alcohol services; homelessness support, out of hospital support; homecare; befriending; supported employment services, volunteering programmes and that these are integrated in the neighbourhoods operating model. This will enable even small organisations with specialist reach into communities, or offering a specialist service to participate.

What would help to make this happen

— Contracts from the statutory sector would either be held by a form of partnership (see Appendix C) supported to form through the network working, or by a single provider. Or they could be multi partner contracts which will be run through City & Hackney Together or a similar model. The board would have a membership representative of the sector, and it would become an independent legal entity supported by Hackney CVS and does not employ its own staff. It can be a vehicle for borough wide or neighbourhood consortia bids to external funders.

— We would also have developed mechanisms for organisations or delivery partnerships to hold borough wide contracts for services which are integrated in the neighbourhoods' operating model (in or outside of the Alliance)

— To be a partner we will need a more sustainable approach to funding the VSCE. We would then create a Sustainability Programme which would include:

— training and development programme to build the new roles and organisational structures that are necessary for truly integrated care, eg peer support, social prescribers, community development.

— bespoke development support to organisations wanting to engage in integrated services and work to embed the VCSE within the neighbourhood teams/Neighbourhood and Care Alliance.

— training for statutory sector partners in integrated working in the needs of specific communities (eg. refugees and migrants).

— mechanisms for the fair distribution of resources at a neighbourhood level which respond to needs identified by local residents, the local VCSE and public sector partners, ensuring communities and those impacted by inequality are in the lead.

For the local VCSE the outcome of this would be

— A co-produced cross sector outcome measures for wellbeing, utilising the Digital Referral tool – enabling many more organisations to evidence their impact.

— VCSE to be a core partner in delivery of care pathways, including enabling money through social prescribing to follow patients into VCSE interventions. This would enable the VCSE to carry out in-depth evaluations of interventions.

— The development of a cross sector commitment to defining and facilitating an asset based community development approach. This would build on residents skills and knowledge, existing resident led community organisations, and on the raft of existing community development work going on in the borough led by VCSE, Housing Associations and the Council alongside many locally based initiatives.

— Through the VCSE taking on leadership roles within the integrated care system in areas where it has special expertise – for example on co-produced service models, and developing social capital within communities – both volunteers and communities are empowered to innovate and participate in local solutions. Increasing respect within the community and strengthening notions of making a community contribution is an important part of what the VCSE does and how it works.

— Opportunities taken up with the Social Value Act and beyond to use VCSE resources more effectively and focus on the social, economic and environmental benefits that can be achieved through the way we work to achieve value for money on a whole life-cycle basis.

— New models of delivery (see Appendix B) based in collaboration and partnership across many sectors including health, education, housing and transport present the opportunity to maximise the overall benefit.

— Eight Neighbourhood VCSE partnerships that contribute strategically to the Neighbourhood planning structure, and facilitate the full integration of local organisations in the Neighbourhood model. An element of the Prevention Investment Standard funding is distributed to community organisations via neighbourhood partnerships based on local priorities and distributed in an asset based way with the principles of supporting and growing community organisations skills quality and offer of support to meet the needs in the neighbourhood.

— The VCSE input strategically to the East London Health and Care Partnership, particularly around the socio-economic determinants of health and workforce development issues. The next steps will be developing relationships with VCSE across the 7 boroughs both at an infrastructure level and in facilitating relationships between delivery organisations. In the future we see a VCSE leadership group that spans the East London Health and Care Partnership area.

For local residents the outcome of this would be

— People can **access support and advice** about their health and well being

— People have **access to the services** that they need

— People are **empowered and supported** to take action to improve their health and well being and live productive lives

— Local groups are supported and therefore able to develop **innovative solutions** to improving wellbeing for their own communities

— The VCSE is recognised as a full and valued partner and trusted and enabled to provide services that are **sustainable, evidence based, innovative and cost effective**.

Neighbourhoods meeting

What the VCSE has to offer

"The sector plays a vital role in maintaining strong local communities, reaching residents that statutory services may struggle to reach and empowering and supporting community and individual resilience."

London Borough of Hackney Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2019-2022

City & Hackney has a well-developed voluntary and community sector with a strong history of reaching into communities. This is recognised by statutory partners locally.

The local VCSE comprises a network of organisations which together are:

Accessible: Support individuals to access the services they need. Provide a bridge to 'hard to reach' communities and pick up people who 'fall through the net'

Trusted: Get to the heart of local communities who may be disengaged to understand their needs and build confidence in public services, particularly those representing marginalised or disadvantaged communities (race, gender, sexuality, age, faith, geography)

Values based: delivering more than what is written in the contact

Close to/embedded in the community: Understand the needs of communities through peer support networks

Responsive, innovative, flexible, agile: Find innovative solutions to social problems through co-production and trial new approaches which can be mainstreamed being a community change agent for the system

Able to Develop and realise community assets/ capital to build community capacity

Empower residents and communities: Enable people to look after themselves and prevent ill health, eg. through local support networks, health promoting activities, co-production

Needs and outcomes focussed, not money and targets: Prevent people needing to go to hospital, or more costly interventions, by providing support at an earlier stage

Provide individual service: provide a person centred service approach involving the individuals circle of support

The following case studies showcase the range and flexibility of the VCSE offer, these are just examples – there are many that illustrate the same points. A bank of case studies can be seen on the Hackney CVS website

The VCSE prioritises responding to unmet and changing need. Organisations are embedded in their communities, values based, often driven by leaders, staff and volunteers passionate about the quality of the service they deliver. Many are set up in response to urgent unmet needs, often with service users as part of the organisation, with empowerment a priority. Trust is at the heart of what they do. The pandemic has also provided an opportunity to demonstrate how many organisations have flexibly and rapidly adapted what they do to meet the changing demands in the pandemic.

Cool Down Café

Interview with Saqib Deshmukh, Head of Youth Programmes, Hackney CVS

The Cool Down Cafe at the Pembury Centre is in the process of launching an online service to look at young people's mental health and well-being. Young leaders from Hackney CVS who were previously involved in running the Thursday evening session are preparing content and developing methodologies with staff from the Centre and ELFT(East London Foundation Trust) BME Access service. This will also involve social media channels and using platforms like Zoom with breakout room facilities so young people can access support in a confidential way.

African Community School

Interview with Kome Owuasu, Managing Director

African Community School, winner of the the2020 National Association of Black Supplementary Schools Award for Cultural Education, is an Ofsted registered training and family support organisation, offering a wide range of courses from Saturday Schools, Family Learning Programmes, ICT and Sports Activities – to Confidence building for young people, peer education and peer learning

We have been working with families in Hackney since 2000, and now work with about 150 families a year, as well as all the adults on our education courses.

With lockdown, we had to suspend our courses. We are supporting families with multiple needs. Two days a week we deliver food parcels, for example to those who are not entitled to free school meals because they have No Recourse to Public funds. We are helping families in any way we can – with sourcing laptops for children to do school work, and with emotional support

We have a commitment to the families we work with because of the trust they have in us. For example this morning someone came in, concerned about his children – I could hear the emotion in his voice. Tomorrow I will have a meeting with the social workers, to see what I can do to resolve the situation. Another woman came in last week, she has 4 children and had run out of money, we gave her food parcels and help with her electricity. Many of our families are in temporary accommodation, we help them all we can. Adults, families, children – we keep going because we can see the changes we are making.

Because of their identification with service users, VCSE organisations will often go far beyond what they are funded to deliver. Often they work voluntarily to address needs, finding funding to support the service later.

Sistah Space

Interview with Rose Lewis

Sistah Space is a grassroots organisation set up following the traumatic murder of Valerie Forde & baby RJ ,a local woman and her child, responding to the need for space for African Heritage women experiencing Domestic Abuse.

The need was just there, women were saying it would be nice to speak to someone who looked like us, who knew our cultural heritage, our grassroots needs and wants. So we developed wrap around support for African Heritage women, responding to each woman's individual needs – including supporting women in court, with day to day emotional and support needs, and with practical settling in when a woman is placed in a refuge which may be far from her community. I would describe our service as fabulous, very hard work and frustrating. A lot of good things have happened, we see some services trying hard, but overall nothing has changed, we hear the same things from women time after time. There's a huge gap in terms of racism, sexism and classism. And with Windrush, a new level of mistrust.

Latin American Women's Aid

Interview with Fernanda Porto Alves

Latin American Women's Aid runs a Refuge, an Advice Centre, Counselling Service (10 counsellors speaking Spanish, Portuguese, English) and Wellbeing support for BAME people. The main focus of our advice service is Domestic Violence, but also advise on immigration, benefits and housing.

Alongside our refuge, counselling and advice work we have set up 2 groups in the Community. "Grow Together" is for older women in the Latin American community, promoting access to services, creating a community, and giving a sense of wellbeing alongside help with mental health issues. Language is one of the biggest barriers for this group.

The second group is "Change Makers", set up in Spanish, and now run in Portuguese too, is an empowerment group, about feminism and the role of women in society – helping women see themselves as actors in society.

Working through the pandemic, we are now supporting using video calls and phone calls. All our services have adapted.

We are motivated by fighting for a world where women are not victims, where people can get the help they need and feel part of society. Where they feel empowered, have realised their potential and feel part of things. We see good results with people leaving our services.

As they become established, voluntary and community sector organisations can become specialist providers, developing their services to both meet immediate needs, and to work on prevention and empowerment too.

Bikur Cholim

Bikur Cholim or "Beyond Duty" was established in 1979 in response to a local tragedy aiming to ensure that no-one should battle challenges of illness and disability on their own. They now provide a wide range of care and mental health services to the local Orthodox Jewish community, and stepped up rapidly to be involved in leading and coordinating the community response to COVID-19.

We have set up a Community COVID Helpline which provides advice, information and support. We have a Volunteering and Befriending service including shopping, and collecting prescriptions. Our helpline also offers Emotional Support and our IAPT service has been extended to provide single sessions of therapy for people who are suffering from Anxiety and Depression related to COVID. We have also provide Psycho-Educational Telephone conferences on timely topics eg Post Trauma following giving birth during COVID. We are working with Hackney Council on a Kosher Food box offer and our volunteers are packing and delivering 120 Kosher food boxes weekly for vulnerable older people. We also set up a Post Discharge Care Facility – for people recovering from COVID requiring additional support and care.

Embedded in communities, and identifying with communities, VCSE organisations offer expertise and reach to bring services to those that need them.

Age UK – agile humanitarian response to pandemic

Interview with Jane Caldwell, CEO of Age UK East London

Age UK works with older people across East London – including 2500 in Hackney each year – in hospital, in the community and in their own homes. Services range from taking people home from hospital and getting them back on their feet, Homecare, Advice and Guidance, Advocacy, Navigation, supporting the Older People's Reference Group and Community Connector Activities, like chair yoga.

With the arrival of the pandemic, we immediately reorganised and increased staffing on the frontline, based on the need to swiftly discharge people from hospital, and avoid re-admission. Given some people would be released early, it made sense that they would need to be supported for longer (we normally support for 4 – 6 weeks). Hackney was the quickest to start discharging patients and it helped that they included us in their re-organisation, forming a whole new unit.

Within 7 days we had a phone line giving advice. We were able to provide PPE from the start as we had some. We also had a good understanding of infection control

In the first week we set up a food centre – run by my chair and her family. They sourced all the food and packaged it. The handyman delivered it with the help of volunteers.

We are also supporting people who have been placed in hostels – people who are homeless, have no recourse to public funds or are fleeing domestic violence. We provided food for the first 2 weeks because we were able to mobilise so quickly while the council was putting systems in place. We provided people with whatever they needed – clean clothes, toiletries, phones.

To do all this we have been digging into our reserves and relying on the dedication of our staff; we did it because we could. It was a humanitarian agile response.

VCSE organisations can often respond rapidly to changes in circumstances, stepping in with emergency situations, adapting their expertise to meet the changed needs

Core Arts

Stepping in to provide Severe Mental Illness Triage during the pandemic

Interview with Paul Monks, Artistic Director, Core Arts

Core Arts, set up in 1992 promotes positive mental health and wellbeing through a college-like environment of creative learning. Providing quality education, training, employment and social enterprise initiatives that enable people who experience mental health issues to overcome barriers, fulfil their potential and participate fully in their community.

We realised that people with severe and enduring mental health problems are at risk of mental state deterioration during the pandemic with less community contact, social and physical restrictions and health concerns – some may be receiving no contact from services.

Sub-contracted by ELFT, we developed an extensive programme of remote access wellbeing activities for this group.

Text messages have been sent to the 6000 residents on the SMI (Serious Mental illness)register and/or with a diagnosis of personality disorder. Those not contactable by text will receive a letter. This puts people in contract with the ELFT crisis line if needed, and with Core's triage point.

We set up a new team who take calls and triage into a programme of online arts, sports, wellbeing, befriending and access to personal health budgets, as well as to services from other VCSE organisations and ELFT. The staff are also establishing a text based contract with service users who opt into the service. This service will continue for six months covering both full lock down and partial lock down

Mind in the City, Hackney and Waltham Forest

Building on expertise to help those most in need

Interview with Vanessa Morris, CEO Mind CHWF

Mind is well established in Hackney offering a range of counselling services, as well as leading the local Wellbeing Network, and running training, employment and welfare support services.

Our longstanding commitment to leading and developing collaborations led to the setting up of Rainbow Mind, responding to discussions with Public Health about increased rates of suicide in the LGBTQ+ community. Starting with Peer Support groups, themes emerged around sharing, not being your true self, and how exhausting it was being different. Building on our relationships with Mind in Salford and City University Centre of Wellbeing and Neuroscience, together we raised funds to develop a specific group intervention to support LGBTQ+ people called Radical Self Care. It's a group, compassion focussed and trauma informed – developed by people from the LGBTQ+ community and practitioners from BAME communities. Our trial groups proved this work highly effective particularly in building positive perceptions of self and reducing shame and pain of feeling different. The results are about to be launched in an academic paper, and celebrated by the Government Equalities Unit. We will be working with a range of voluntary and statutory partners both to continue to support LGBTQ+ work and to see how we might work with other groups.

Some VCSE organisations are specialist providers, and can pioneer services within their expertise to meet unmet needs in the local community

St Mary's Secret Garden

Interview with Paula Yassine, Director, St Mary's Secret Garden

St Mary's Secret Garden works predominantly with people with learning disabilities, long term health conditions and mental ill health, who are funded mostly through PIPs or by Social Services with a few with Personal Health Budgets. Our service users have a mixture of health needs, many are on the autism spectrum as well, and many have a dual diagnosis with mental health needs as well as a learning disability. We also work with people from diverse backgrounds including young people, older people with learning disabilities, adults with mental ill health, through our specific funded projects.

We aim to bridge the gaps in services, and ensuring accessibility and inclusion – everyone can access the garden, however frail they may be considered to be.

Many of our service users go out just once or twice a week, and choose to come to the garden. They get to do some physical activity, and this is somewhere they belong, where they have ownership. People come and buy their plants, school trips and visitors come in and enjoy the garden that they have worked on. These are the pluses that come out of the evaluations. Many have been to special schools, and are now living at home with elderly parents, and don't have other opportunities to feel the sense of pride and ownership they feel at the garden. This is where their work is, and where their friendships are.

During lockdown we have been phoning all our service users regularly, and providing plants and seeds to grow at home where possible or appropriate, as most of them are shielding for either age or disability reasons. We are currently planning how we can re-open safely. We have started trialling volunteers returning to help with garden maintenance, socially distanced plant sales two mornings each week and a very small number of service users returning on a one to one trial basis working with staff at a distance for reduced hours. It will be a long transition where we make sure we are working safely throughout.

Many VCSE organisations use imaginative ways to deliver services, tailoring them to provide an individual response, meeting each person's needs

St Mary's Secret Garden

Studio Upstairs

Interview with Zlatinka Hristova, Director of Studio Upstairs

Studio Upstairs is a specialist provider for local residents with enduring mental health needs, experiencing multiple disadvantages and able to express their talents through the arts. The service also provides support for carers. The Studio has a capacity for 60 people at any one time. Studio Upstairs has over 30 years of experience in offering unique, person centred approach combining therapeutic, educational and social support. The studio members benefit from the provision of arts facilities, materials and the positive routines created by attendance of a weekly studio group. Each slow-open group is facilitated by HCPC registered therapeutic professionals, also artists. The groups allow people to develop trusting relationships and reduce their isolation, develop a peer support network and to have meaningful creative self-expression on equal terms with the facilitators of the group.

After the current closure, E's learning disability and mental health condition left him not only completely isolated and afraid, but also unable to grasp the full risks of the current situation. For a while he was wondering about the streets despite the lockdown. The team called him regularly to make sure that he is OK and to continue to encourage him to create art and channel his feelings on the page. E usually works in clay but he was unable to order any online. We offered to send some to him, but he was concerned that it would be stolen in his accommodation. E was growing anxious and unwell by the day, so we ordered the materials and they were delivered to him by one of the team who lived closest to him. E was extremely grateful and happy and more importantly this helped to keep him safer and creatively occupied. E is supported by the local authority via direct payments which allows him to belong to this creative community and so for as long as this continues, we can be his lifeline.

Hoxton Health

Specialist complementary therapy provider offers community insight

Interview with Janet Cobill, Manager of Hoxton Health

Hoxton Health is a specialist complementary therapy provider, based at St Leonards Hospital and offering low cost osteopathy, acupuncture, massage, foot clinic and other therapies to the over 50s.

We have had to close since the lockdown because of the 1:1 nature of all the therapies. Volunteers are calling around all the patients to listen to their concerns, and signpost them to the help they need. It's been horrible, heart-wrenching, what is happening. Many patients live alone, and just want to talk. They are deteriorating, many missing acupuncture and osteopathy particularly – pain is the biggest issue, and then mobility, often as a result of pain. They say they will do anything to come back, wear masks, have practitioners in full PPE. It's the loneliness – some say their neighbours have been great, doing shopping etc, some we signpost for help. But they say that a day rolls past, and then another. All you do is get up, the day passes, then the daily Corona briefing is on, and that feels like the end of the day. At the start, patients were talking about the war spirit, they were scared of what was happening and of going out. Now they say "Is this what the rest of my life will be like?".

VCSE organisations, offering individual services, develop strong, trust relationships with their service users, enabling them to be able to provide community insight

Beersheba Living Well

Interview with Rosemary Jawara, Manager of Beersheba Living Well

Beersheba Living Well was set up to run support groups for people from BAMER communities living with Diabetes.

We found that people with other long term conditions also came to our sessions – stroke survivors, people diagnosed as obese. As we went on with the groups, and we talked, we found that many had difficulties in their families with members involved in gang activity. The feedback was that stress from this, alongside the impacts of poverty was impacting on participants' health. We talked about it; the service users did not know what to do.

We decided to do something as a community, to come together and say we have a problem, and look at what we can do. We needed a Heart to Heart – we had a small grant from the Council, and set up a big meeting, bringing together members of the community. It was very emotive, there were community leaders, social workers, ex-gang members and many, many local people. It felt like the start of a movement, we need to come together in forums like this – to be part of the delivery of change.

The VCSE can be where community leaders emerge, building on more traditional service provision to bring communities together to look for new solutions

The pandemic has shown the great value of the VCSE's capacity to engage local communities, particularly those the statutory sector finds harder to reach, those who are not online – where the VCSE has built trust relations over a long period, as illustrated throughout the case studies.

As well as the direct value of this work, there is also a contribution to the system comms and engagement. Hackney CVS links into the Integrated Commissioning Communications and Engagement Enabler Group, this will help the wider VCSE align to ICS ambitions, and provide evidence-based advice on VCSE and community communications and involvement.

Through its network structures, the VCSE also has a lot of communication channels, these are listed in Appendix A

The range of VCSE Services

The VCSE is often thought to work largely in prevention and additional services , in fact, the sector offers a wide range of services from hospital based services, through primary care and specialist community services, to the more traditional preventative services. Here is list of the services we know are provided by the local VCSE.

Preventative

Reducing the effects of adverse social and environmental circumstances that can lead to ill health:

Reducing loneliness and social isolation

- Eg. Befriending, lunch clubs, shared activities (sport etc)
- Early prevention of mental illness

Youth support

- Eg. young black men's group

Advice, information and advocacy

- Ethnic group specific, eg. Derman, Chinese & Vietnamese centre
- Language and literacy support

Housing support

- Equipment, eg. MRS
- Help/advice
- Accommodation, eg. Shoreditch Trust

Training

- Empowering and enabling people to be more involved/knowledgeable
- Increasing individual/community understanding

Carer support

Maternal and family support

Supported employment services

Volunteering programmes

'Specialist' community services

Mental health

- Specialist, eg Mind, Derman, Bitur Cholim, MH navigation
- Support innovation, eg Core Arts

Peer support groups for clinical and social conditions

- Eg. diabetes

Drug and alcohol services

Services supporting Primary care / Neighbourhoods

Public feedback

- eg. Healthwatch

Advocacy/translation services

- Peer support

Social prescribing eg. neighbourhood teams

Services supporting hospital care

Discharge support,

- eg.Take home and settle (Age UK)
- Equipment support

A&E liaison

- Eg. youth workers supporting victims of violence

Patient Support Groups

- SOLACE work with the Sickle Cell Service

We know that the VCSE offer is already making a high contribution to the City and Hackney Integrated Care system's agreed global outcomes. Much of it is not measured.

The sector has the potential to expand its role and build on the successful work already done to play a greater role in system change and working with communities to find effective solutions.

Community awards night

City and Hackney Integrated Care System Global Outcomes

1. Making sure all children and young people have a good start in life
2. Reducing inequity in health and wellbeing
3. Increasing healthy life expectancy, so that local people have longer lives and more years spent free of ill-health and disability
4. Tackling the causes of poor health and wellbeing earlier and ensuring better prevention
5. Creating more joined up and person centred services
6. Improving the mental health and wellbeing of the local population, including ensuring better access to mental health care
7. Helping local people to become resilient and empowered, with improved autonomy and self-efficacy to manage their own health

Current Infrastructure

Fixed Infrastructure

Hackney has a history of investing in VCSE networks which provides us with an easier starting point for creating the culture change needed than many other Integrated Care System areas. Across the East London Health and Care Partnership Hackney is in the strongest position to lead the way in developing a system that builds on and utilises the strength of its community assets.

This range of infrastructure organisations and networks aim to:

— Build relationships across organisations working in similar fields,

— Share good practice

— Agree development priorities that will support Hackney's residents.

These networks are the vehicles for co-producing and embedding the VCSE role in the ICS and provide a flexible framework for decision making, governance and organisational development. Shared values hold the system together and networks and organisations are mission-driven and focused on social value.

Through their networks the VCSE can reach into communities, whether of interest or experience, to support those communities in getting the right support and advice, and gain feedback from the organisations about local community needs.

Most networks in Hackney are administered by Hackney CVS or Interlink.

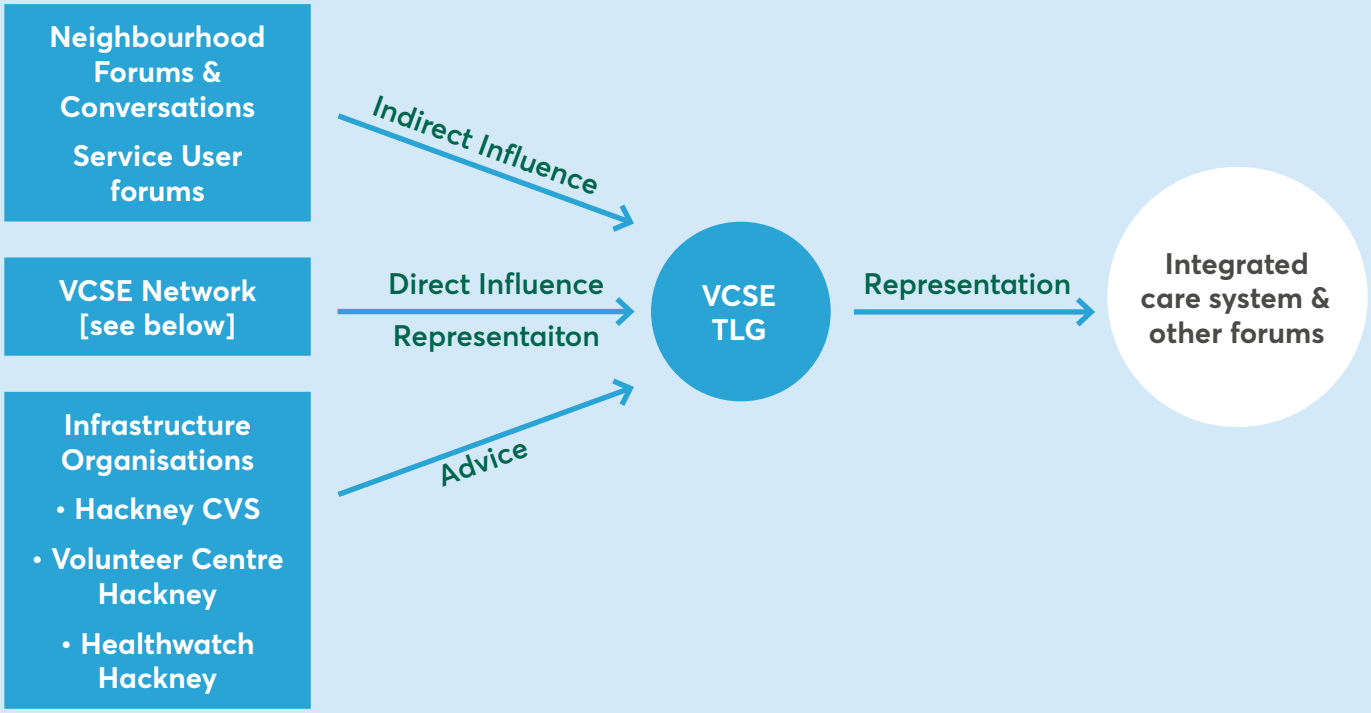
Networks have open membership; recent networks set up have membership from VCSE organisations and statutory sector providers eg (Sexual Health Special Interest Group which sits under the HSCF forum, Hackney Advice Forum; Supported Employment Network.)

Networks have been utilised to recruit VCSE strategic leads for the ICS and are the vehicles for co-producing the VCSE role in the ICS.

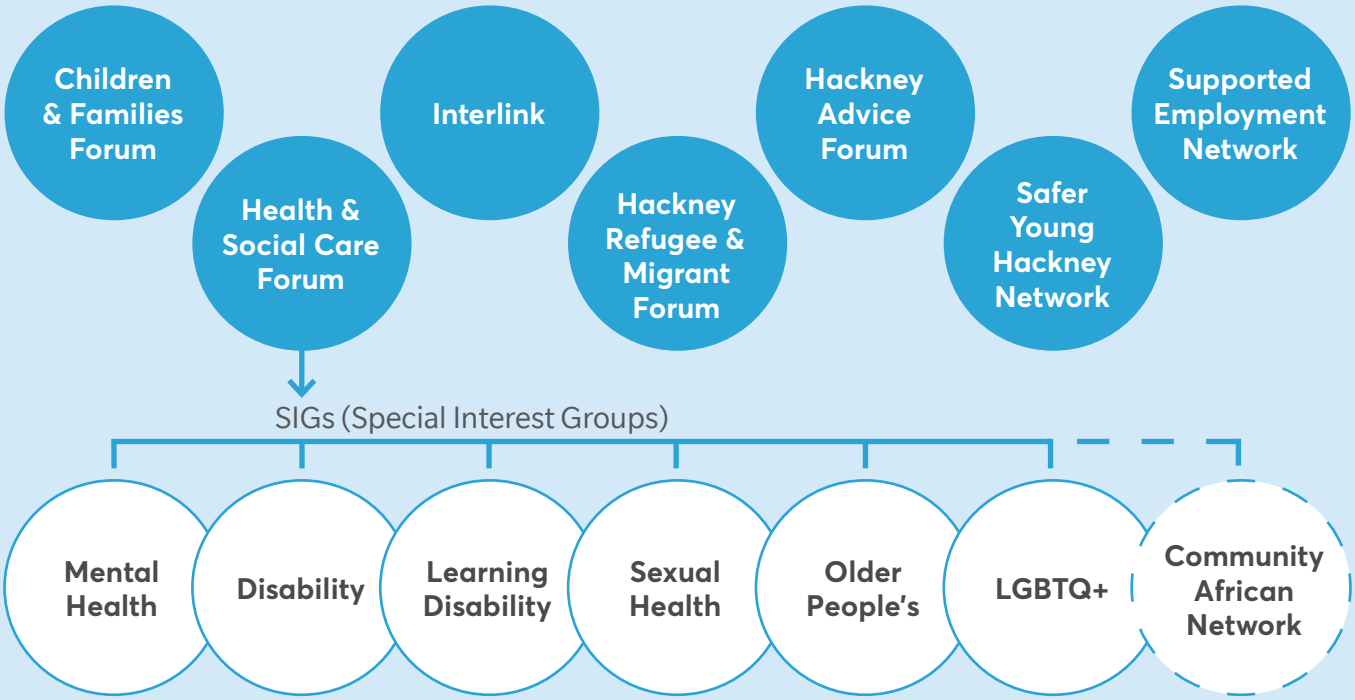
A list of networks is described in Appendix A

Connect Hackney meeting

VCSE Representation and Influence Structure



VCSE Networks



Good practice example

Co-producing Commissioning with Network ELFT (East London Foundation Trust) working with Mental Health SIG (Special Interest Group)

Interview with Nichola Gardner, ELFT Neighbourhood Director, City & Hackney

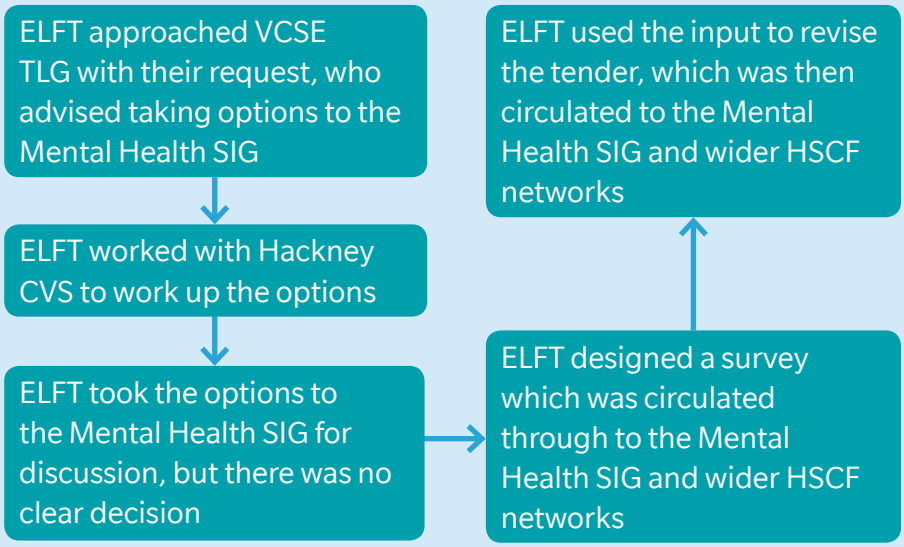
ELFT found accessing the Mental Health SIG and the wider VCSE networks invaluable in being able to co-produce the commissioning for our Community Connector services. It meant we were able to discuss our initial plans with a large and diverse group of voluntary and community sector organisations working with Hackney residents requiring mental health and well-being support. As a result of this input we re-thought our initial ideas about providing a befriending style service to one with a broader remit, focused on mental health coaching, group work and building connections with communities.

Continued dialogue with the Hackney CVS helped us to refine those plans at both the Wellbeing Network (delivery partnership) and the wider Mental Health SIG – and then later adapt them to be able to tailor a shortened process in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Investing the time in these discussions, building relationships and taking a flexible approach has meant we believe we have more realistic plans that will ultimately translate into a higher quality service, and one that has a greater capacity to meet the language and cultural needs of our service users, building on the strengths of their communities.

Example of how to work with VCSE Networks to Co-produce solutions

ELFT had worked with the VCSE and other partners to co-produce the Community Connectors programme to second VCSE staff into Neighbourhood teams, and were about to go out to tender.

With the arrival of the pandemic, ELFT wanted to step up and fast track the Community Connectors programme, but wanted to co-produce this with the VCSE.



Good practice example: Public Health – working with the Community Navigation System Design Group

Interview with Kate Wignall, Prevention Workstream Programme Manager

What is it and who is involved?

A network of City and Hackney community navigation organisations (those offering one-to-one non-medical person centred support connecting people to community based services, activities and support) established in July 2018 supported by the HCVS, clinical leads and resident representation. This joint Prevention workstream and Neighbourhoods project (Unplanned Care workstream) aims to develop a Neighbourhood community navigation model and strengthen partnership working across the health and care system.

What has been achieved and what impact has this had?

There have been a number of achievements most notably a comprehensive mapping of existing community navigation provision exploring gaps across City and Hackney. Currently there are 26 services, more than 75% are delivered by the VCSE and 70% are at least partially funded by the statutory sector. Insight from organisations involved has been paramount to the development of the work programme which has been based on the issues and frustrations from all partners involved. This initial work led to a solid foundation to build on and gained approval for dedicated Neighbourhoods programme part-time project manager from October 2019. Since this date, there has been progress towards the development of a logic model, common measurement framework and system wide training programme. The network were also key stakeholders in the co-design of the Integrated Social Prescribing and Community Navigation Service and enabled resident engagement with some key community groups. Since the Covid-19 pandemic has put a pause on plans, this network has been fundamental to the humanitarian response and quickly established the Community Navigation Covid Network so the Hackney Council coronavirus helpline could access a wider network of support for residents.

Partnership work with this network and the wider VCSE undoubtedly led to the smooth repurposing of organisations quickly and efficiently to respond to the emerging needs of our residents as a result of Covid-19. It is impressive that so much can be achieved when there is commitment to work collaboratively and flexibly when things really matter.

VCSE Transformation Leadership Group: Hackney CVS has been supporting the development of an Independent Strategic Leadership Group for the past two years. This group is accountable to networks. It is made up of transparently recruited representatives who sit on Integrated Care System workstream boards and enabler groups to represent the VCSE perspective. The group meets monthly to develop the VCSE role in the Integrated Care System.

Hackney CVS: (Council for Voluntary Service) is the infrastructure (also known as second tier) organisation for the Voluntary & Community Sector in Hackney, thus Hackney CVS offers training, organisational development and fundraising support to the Voluntary & Community Sector. In addition to the standard CVS offer of capacity building support and training, Hackney CVS bids to do pilot programmes that work to evidence the role of the sector (for example Information & Signposting / Peer support/ Bowel Cancer health champions / Mental Health First Aid work with community organisations) – and the model we worked to with the above programmes is to fund organisations to deliver programmes to residents and build in organisation development support alongside this. Hackney CVS is also promoting the community inreach model, encouraging statutory sector partners and larger mainstream VCSE organisations to deliver services from geographically or culturally specific organisations in order to reach people furthest from services.

In the past two years Hackney CVS has changed its membership structure to give free associate membership in return for data and is building up a data store of its interactions with VCSE organisations. It is in touch with 1500 organisations and has 390 actively engaged official associate organisation members (and 1054 individual staff members) with clear plans to continue to grow this membership. Hackney CVS administers networks and VCSE TLG. It has advisory (non voting) status on VCSE TLG. Hackney CVS provides communications to keep the sector up to date with policy changes and potential funding opportunities; workforce development support, support re safeguarding awareness and compliance.

Interlink: Infrastructure organisation for the Charedi VCSE Community – roles as above. Interlink has nominated a representative from its network to sit on the VCSE Transformation Leadership Group.

City and Hackney Together: Legal structure (Special Purpose Vehicle) with membership to hold consortia contracts on behalf of the sector. Currently a wholly owned subsidiary of Hackney CVS.(section 2 outlines proposed developments)

Hackney CVS

Interview with Jake Ferguson, CEO Hackney CVS

At the onset of the crisis Hackney CVS ran a survey into the impact of COVID 19 on the local voluntary and community sector which engaged over 150 organisations. The survey highlighted that many VCSE organisations had increased demand for their services and were needing to use their reserves to fund this additional work to support vulnerable residents. As Hackney CVS CEO, I worked with the ICS (Integrated Care System) Convenor, Cabinet lead for Health & Social Care and CCG Deputy Chief Officer to explore what investment could be made in the VCS. City and Hackney CCG has identified £300,000 to fund VCSE organisations over the next 12 months who can support the work of statutory health and social care services through the Covid-19 crisis and recovery. The Council also offered £30k match funding. Hackney Giving was identified as the best and quickest mechanism to distribute money fairly to local organisations and different sized grants (small and large up to £30k) will allow for a variety of different approaches to be funded. The learning from this will help the CCG, Council and others consider how best to invest in the local VCSE going forward.

Volunteer Centre Hackney: Volunteer Centre Hackney is the infrastructure organisation for volunteering in Hackney, and has been supporting over 1200 local residents into a diverse array of volunteering opportunities annually since 1997. It supports VCSO organisations to maintain best practice in recruiting and supporting volunteers, promotes volunteering to City and Hackney residents and employees, matches residents to volunteering opportunities; delivers specialist programmes such as their mental health volunteering and employment project , Volunteering in GP surgeries, and supporting place based social action/ community development projects on estates, enabling residents to share skills for the benefit of their local area. VCH sits on the VCSE Transformation Leadership Group in an advisory capacity.

City of London Infrastructure: In the City, Toynbee Hall, which has held a generalist advice contract from the City of London since 2011, has hosted a regular meeting for VCSE organisations. Initially this was for organisations delivering Advice, Information and Advocacy, but later widened and continues now as an open forum for networking and information exchange.

The City of London commissioned Age UK East London to host City Connections to provide wellbeing services in the City, and there is intention for this to be a voluntary sector hub, connected to VCSE organisation in the City. Age UK East London have mapped the local VCSE organisations and The City will give VCSE organisations their own portal to be able to connect.

Community awards night

Developing Infrastructure through the Neighbourhood Model

City & Hackney are putting in place a neighbourhood model of integrated working, this will see multi disciplinary team working, for the VSCE the neighbourhood model require us to:

— realign existing partnerships and networks to ensure integrated and seamless care.

— develop an infrastructure to support organisations to play a full role in the Integrated Care model

— ensure funding is available to set up and sustain the infrastructure

The VCSE was funded by the Integrated Care System to develop a pilot model in one Neighbourhood. The work was carried out by Hackney CVS, overseen by the VCSE TLG. The outcomes of the pilot was to set up

— An elected core Neighbourhood partnership group which interacts with the governance/ reference group for the full Neighbourhood model

— An open access wider Partnership Forum which will act as direction setters and as a consultation group

— A programme of training and funding support – including Neighbourhood based bids, as support for the VCSE and residents

The pilot was in Well Street, and the plan was to extend slowly into other Neighbourhoods. In response to the pandemic, the team have adjusted the plan and have set up "Neighbourhood Conversations" in the other 7 Neighbourhoods, and are now looking at what can be done to move these, and the interrupted work in Well Street Common, towards Neighbourhood Partnerships.

As remote working continues, the Neighbourhood Conversations are becoming a valuable resource, picking up local issues from VCSE groups, as well as looking at what can be achieved locally by joining together. The Neighbourhood Conversations are now supported by a core team, which alongside Hackney CVS includes Volunteer Centre Hackney, Healthwatch Hackney, the Council's Policy and Public Health teams and lately the CCG.

Next steps for the Neighbourhood Conversations are to open up the meetings to frontline staff from Neighbourhood teams, as these are set up, to engage in local priority setting, and to look to become more established forums.

VCSE groups providing essentials to residents during Covid pandemic. Tins with raised lettering for visually impaired residents

There is also work looking at how Neighbourhood Forums can support VCSE organisations to participate in Neighbourhood Multi-Disciplinary Meetings (MDMs). The VCSE role will be as referrer, potential supporter of a patient in the meeting, and as an organisation for the patient to be referred to for additional support.

Alongside this, work will happen with the Primary Care Networks and the system Neighbourhood Team to build a formal role for these forums in the Neighbourhood model.

As these structures develop, the VCSE will also be looking at how to

— Develop the capacity of borough-wide organisations to engage with Neighbourhood work

— Develop the Neighbourhood structure sustainably and across all Neighbourhoods

— Support local organisations where they need to remodel services to deliver at both Neighbourhood and borough levels

Dynamic Infrastructure

Alongside its fixed infrastructure, the VCSE continually innovates with dynamic models. Some become long term, some serve a purpose and dissolve, some are needed but cannot find the resources to sustain.

The VCSE is dynamic and creative – and always looking for new ways to deliver services. **Joint working** is essential to maximise the potential of the sector, **co-production** enables people to find solutions and to build social capital, and the sector strives to deliver services that are **value and quality driven**, **evidence-based and flexibly delivered** to meet needs.

New Networks emerge where there is need and opportunity. It is difficult for them to thrive, because of the need for infrastructure funding, but Community African Network have created a new model for this.

CAN (Community African Network)

Developing community specific infrastructure

Interview with Oladapo Awosokanre Programmes Coordinator for CAN

We started as a community network of nine African community organisations supported by Hackney CVS, who held a grant from the CCG for us to work on the low take up of bowel screening amongst older African people. We supported volunteers to go to GP practices and call patients from the African community who had not returned their bowel screening kits. The first year went well and we received follow up funding from the CCG. We were also part of a Public Health funded Information and Signposting project which ran for four years – we offered interpreting, helped people navigate the system, and accompanied service users to appointments. Our third contract was condom distribution, a scheme that ran in partnership with Brook, with our member organisations doing outreach and distributing condoms . Capacity building for the member organisations is built into every contract.

During this time we felt confident to work independently, and set up Community African Network as a limited company, and developed our own constitution and policies. Our funding was transferred from Hackney CVS to CAN, and we stand as the infrastructure body for many African Community Organisations in Hackney, able to coordinate outreach, engagement and service delivery through our members to communities from Somalia, the Congo, Guinea Bissau and across East Africa.

Now our contracts are coming to an end, we are all working with our communities – including those who have underlying health issues, and sometimes no recourse to public funds, to make sure they have food, prescriptions and access to the services they need.

Dynamic infrastructure is also created in local delivery partnerships in which the sector has a long history. Recent examples are the Wellbeing Network, One Hackney & City and Connect Hackney programmes.

Close partnerships, agreed principles of joint working, and connectivity between both formal and informal VCS organisations, and with statutory sector services, are essential to ensure that residents have a seamless, integrated experience of services.

Example of good partnership working with the statutory sector

Volunteer Centre Hackney – a new type of partnership

Interview with Lauren Tobias, CEO of Volunteer Centre Hackney

Volunteer Centre Hackney is the infrastructure body for volunteering in Hackney offering volunteering support across the borough, as well as running supported employment and placed based community actions projects.

The Council approached us two weeks before lockdown - they quickly set up an "I want to help" portal, to support us with the recruitment and deployment of volunteers to help the thousands of people who couldn't get food or prescriptions.

We quickly set up a new database. We needed a new brokerage system that would match by locality (which we had never done before), and there were new volunteer roles –so new processes and new screening procedures were needed including verifying identity by Zoom. Then there were new processes for deliveries, new volunteer agreements and inductions. And we had to redeploy all our staff. Within the first two weeks we had matched volunteers to deliver over 150 food parcels; and agreed to undertake all emergency, weekend and bank holiday food deliveries, and all the prescription requests. Working together with City and Hackney CCG, we devised a new protocol to ensure safe delivery of medicines; matched volunteers to 22 pharmacies fulfilling 350 prescription requests a week. So far we have delivered over 2000 prescriptions. The next development in our partnership with the Council is the telephone befriending service. We are training over 30 volunteers a week, who will be matched to people according to locality and personal interests, and given ongoing support and supervision. We are also building on all the social action, supporting residents and Mutual Aid groups to build community connections and deliver new initiatives, such as a pen pal project for care homes and a "guerrilla gardening" project for older people, which is vital for the new Neighbourhood structures.

"As part of Hackney Council's VCS Strategy, we recognise that collaboration and joint working has a key role to play in meeting the challenges of both scarce resources and developing innovative solutions to some of our most intractable problems."

Caroline Selman, Hackney Council Cabinet Member, Community Safety, Policy & the Voluntary Sector

Example of Partnership working between VCSE organisations as equal partners

Minik Kardes, Derman and Imece – working together in the Turkish and Kurdish speaking Community

Interview with Wendy Miller

Three organisations working together with Turkish and Kurdish communities locally joined in a partnership that enabled them to offer a more coordinated service. Minik Kardes runs 2 Children's Centres 1 in Islington and 1 in Hackney and community outreach , IMECE supports women affected by Domestic Abuse, and Derman is a specialist mental health support provider. Minik Kardes were limited to work with families with children aged 0–5.

What we found is that there were many issues that we could not support families with and therefore these families were being missed, many of the families we see have come from traumatic circumstances, either in their home country, or in their current life. There are multiple parenting issues, for example parents saying they are unsure how to deal with teenagers and concerned about their involvement in gangs and losing their culture- Hackney being such a different experience to when they grew up in their own country. We heard about children's own anxieties, seeing a need to give them coping strategies and support. We saw increases in domestic violence, issues with gambling , and a need for English classes but afraid going to ESOL classes.

We joined up with Derman and Imece on a Lottery funded partnership that offers much more extensive family support. Because we all work together we can introduce families to therapists and support workers who are not strangers, and where we know the quality of the service. Now we know we can get real issues sorted out. It means that parents can express themselves without feeling judged, because it is a safe environment. For example we've been able to hold a meeting about children with autism – something of a taboo subject.

Since lockdown we have been offering services remotely. For example Derman are running an ongoing group on Anxiety, and we held a Zoom call on Parental Mental Health and 28 parents took part – at the end of the meeting they wanted to carry on!

Example of partnership between VCSE organisations with lead organisation enabling small organisations to be part of bigger contracts

Growing Minds

Interview with Kristine Wellington, Head of Safeguarding, Children and Families, Hackney CVS

Growing Minds supports children and young people aged 9 to 25 of African, Caribbean and mixed heritage (ACH), is funded by the Department of Health, Hackney Council and City & Hackney CCG. It is a partnership between Hackney CVS, African Community School, Father 2 Father, Black Parent Network and Off Centre at Family Action.

Growing Minds is based on the belief that there are links between culture, heritage and identity and good mental health and wellbeing. Aiming to improve children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing during the important transition years from primary to secondary school and secondary school to adulthood, Growing Minds offers one to one culturally informed therapeutic support for 13-25 year olds and to the parents of 9 – 25 year old young people with challenging behaviour or mental health difficulties.

In response to the pandemic, the service has adapted to delivering virtually and widened its remit so parents and young people can access one to one support to cope with the hidden challenges in the face of COVID 19. It takes both self-referrals and professional referrals .

The VCSE also creates infrastructure through becoming a fundholder and commissioner itself, and providing infrastructure support to those it funds, and beyond. Here are examples of this on a large scale, and a small local community scale.

Connect Hackney

Interview with Tony Wong, Programme Director, Connect Hackney

Connect Hackney aims to improve the wellbeing of Hackney residents aged 50 and over by reducing or preventing loneliness and isolation. The £5.8m six-year programme (2015 – 2021) is one of 14 programmes across England funded by The National Lottery Community Fund's 'Fulfilling Lives, Ageing Better programme. They work with 24 local voluntary and community sector delivery partners across the diverse communities of Hackney to understand the different things that can help over 50s stay connected and active in ways that suit them.

In the immediate aftermath, delivery partners like many other frontline VCSE organisations juggled transitioning their service to an online / telephone support offer, as well as responding to the humanitarian crisis. As a programme team, we were acutely aware that many older people are digitally excluded, and were concerned telephone support would be limited to support to meet basic needs, and to talk about the COVID-19 pandemic, but that it was crucial that delivery partners also offered an escape from the crisis situation to maintain the mental wellbeing of their participants.

We quickly took to find out how widespread of the issue of the digital divide was across our network of delivery partners. As this isn't data our delivery partners routinely collected from participants, we asked them to find out or to provide best guess estimates. They reported that 40% of participants had email access, 75% had a mobile phone (not necessarily a smartphone), with 30% being able to be contacted with messaging services like Whatsapp. And only 17% able to join in online activities, for example through zoom. We quickly went to work to develop a range of ideas for providers to deliver for participants without online access, which was well received.

We have since worked with our network of delivery partners, and members of our Older People's Committee to understand the full impact of COVID-19 on being able to support older people, and for older people themselves. Key issues recorded through our intelligence gathering have included; challenges of delivering the humanitarian response, in terms of capacity, and knowing how to meet the needs of older people; the digital divide; disproportionate impact for Hackney's diverse communities, and the groups serving these communities; and supporting older people to not be 'othered' and included within the conversations about solutions; and understanding their fears and anxieties, mainly around lack of clear information, and non-compliance with any published guidelines by the wider community.

Connect Hackney Media Group

Connect Hackney

Wick Award

Interview with Polly Mann, Wick Award Community and Partnership Development Worker

The Wick Award is a Big Local programme with a lottery award of £1m. It is resident-led, with a Partnership Board of residents accountable for all the projects. There is one employee who manages the projects on behalf of the board. Early on in a large survey was carried out which identified 3 priorities for the programme –Creative Opportunities for Young People (co-ordinated by Hackney Quest), Improving the Wellbeing of All, and Building Community Connections.

Before lockdown we had contacted 58 isolated older residents, so we have re-contacted them immediately and have been doing shopping, distributing meals, and just chatting. Now we are seeing that people are going up the walls. They are losing weight, there's a lot of muscle wastage and anxiety. So we are developing some activities that they can get involved in, it's difficult if they are not online. So we are working with people in sheltered housing, where one person set up their device in the lounge so everyone can join in our yoga and chair disco classes. We've also got a local history club which we are setting up online to get people chatting. In summer we hope to move to socially distanced history walks.

Building connections underpins everything we do. The main element is the Community Chest which means we can put a small investment in things like the history tours, the chair disco, and Hackney Wick FC. The funds help little organisations get match funding – we try to make it easy access, for say a group of neighbours. It gives people a chance to trial a project, it's a scattergun approach.

We are so local, we've been able to support our local Mutual Aid - before the volunteering system was set up, we were able to give them advice on safeguarding, and a shopping float to help older people who weren't going out and couldn't get their pensions.

"I am also very, very grateful to the existing voluntary and community sector in Hackney, one of the strongest in the UK. These groups are rising to this challenge (the pandemic), and we are doing everything we can to support them."

Philip Glanville, Mayor of Hackney

Summary

The VCSE is one way in which City and Hackney is rich; from specialist providers to local resident run community organisations the VCSE is diverse, agile, and determined – with leaders and staff passionate about the quality of the person centred services they deliver.

With VCSE organisations working alongside public sector services, for example through the Neighbourhood Model, through partnership arrangements and funded referral routes, we have the potential for a joined up system that is responsive, integrated and provides wrap around care to those most in need.

Helping to bring about this holistic way of working is the aim of this description of what the VCSE sector has to offer and what we see as the challenges – and the opportunities.

There is no better time that this to bring this about with new types of partnerships emerging in the emergency response, and the prevalent need to protect the most vulnerable. Working together, and with our residents too, we can Build Back Better.

Appendix A

VCSE Transformation Leadership Group

Membership June 2020

Representatives on ICS boards

— **Alistair Wallace**, MRS Living Independent – IT Enablers/Health & Wellbeing Board

— **Jake Ferguson**, Hackney CVS – Integrated Commissioning Board

— **Jane Caldwell**, Age UK East London – Unplanned Care Board, Vision Sub Group and Reference Group/Anticipatory care lead/Care Navigation Strategy lead/NEL End of Life PlanningGroup/Chair of the NEL Bereavement Provider Network

— **Rev Joyce Daley**, Black Parent Community Forum (BPCF) – Children's Workstream – Children & Families Forum

— **Vanessa Morris**, Mind in the City, Hackney and Waltham Forest (Chair of VCSE TLG) – Transformation Board, Strategic Operation and Command Group

— **Zlatinka Hristova**, Studio Upstairs – Discharge Group

Network representatives

— **Yocheved Eiger** - Interlink – Charedi VCSE network

— **Rosemary Jawara**, Beersheba Living Well, Hackney Refugee & Migrant Forum

— **Nalan Cosar/Wendy Miller** – Minik Kardes – Hackney Refugee and Migrant Forum

— **Hackney Advice Forum** – rep to be identified

Advisors

— **Kristine Welllington**, Hackney CVS – Children's Workstream

— **Frances Haste**, Volunteer Hackney CVS

— **Lauren Tobias**, Volunteer Centre Hackney

— **Jon Williams**, Healthwatch Hackney

— **Katie Barton**, Hackney CVS – Neighbourhoods Programme

— **Jackie Brett**, Hackney CVS – Communities & Partnerships

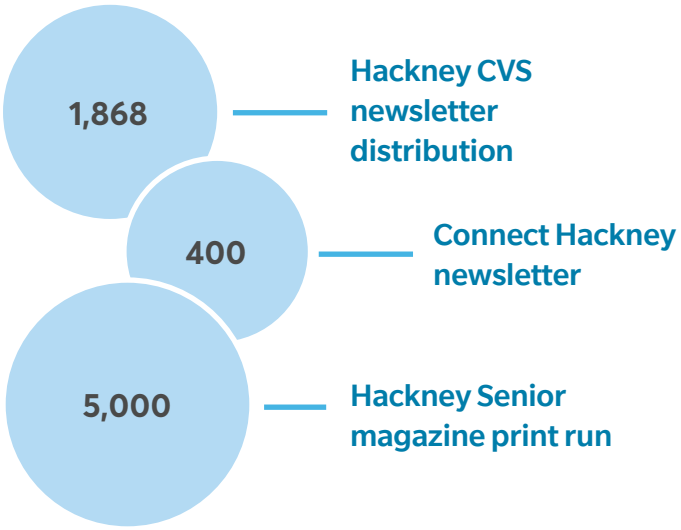
— **Liz Hughes**, Hackney CVS – Neighbourhoods and Covid-19 response

Appendix B

Network and engagement structures in Hackney

This briefing provides information about how local community and voluntary sector organisations come together through different networks and initiatives which are hosted by Hackney CVS.

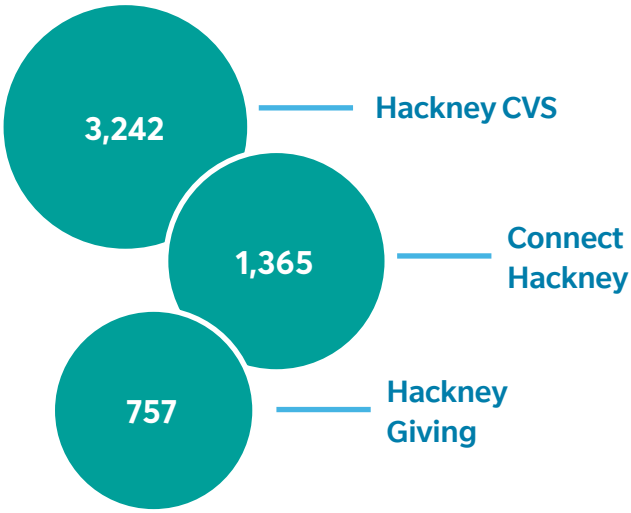
These are the main networks in Hackney, there are other networks, both in Hackney and in the City, but the following give an illustration of reach.



Communication channels

Hackney CVS engage the large local voluntary and community sector through our 4 newsletters (main newsletter 3 times weekly currently), our 3 websites, phone contact, 1-1 advice line and webinars, social media, WhatsApp groups (young leaders and older media group), Hackney senior, and of course our regular sector networks below:

Twitter followers:



Websites

www.hcvs.org.uk
www.connecthackney.org.uk
www.hackneygiving.org.uk

Network/partnership

Number of organisations/people

City & Hackney Health and Social Care Forum (HSCF) and subgroups: a network of over 600 local VCSE organisations working together to improve health, wellbeing and social care services for residents of Hackney and the City.

662

Web: www.hcvs.org.uk/the-health-and-social-care-forum/

Different parts of structure - special interest groups, main forum etc - are chaired by representatives from local VCSE organisations. VCSE Transformation Leadership Group brings together VCSE representatives from across the Integrated Health & Care system. These reps develop the VCS's strategic input to system thinking, crisis response and neighbourhoods approach. Will form basis of the planned VCSE Enabler Workstream.

— VCSE Transformation Leadership Group	18
— Hackney Advice Forum	430
— Community African Network	11
— Older People's Special interest Group	23
— Mental Health Special interest Group	59
— Learning Disability Special interest Group	28
— User Led Special interest Group	18
— LGTGQ+ Special interest Group	32
— Sexual Health Special interest Group	33

Connect Hackney, Ageing Better: aims to improve the wellbeing of Hackney residents aged 50 and over by reducing or preventing loneliness and isolation. The £5.8m six-year programme (2015 – 2021) is one of 14 programmes across England funded by The National Lottery Community Fund's 'Fulfilling Lives, Ageing Better programme

23 + 1

Web: www.connecthackney.org.uk

Structure includes: Strategic Partnership Board, 23 contracted providers (BAME provider subgroup) and 1 older people's media group.

Network/partnership

Number of organisations/people

The Connect Hackney senior media group is made up of Hackney residents aged 50+, with many aged in their 70s and 80s. Due to Covid-19 the group is now coming together through WhatsApp, email and phone calls. We also hope to introduce Zoom shortly, but not all members will be confident with video-conferencing. Currently we have 48 active participants (3 groups) and we have approximately 200 members - former participants who still join us for special events, talks and trips.

Media group members receive training in computers, photography, interviewing and writing skills and produce stories, photos, and audio for the Connect Hackney website and Hackney Senior magazine. Hackney Senior has a print run of 5,000 copies.

Hackney Lunch clubs: provide healthy and nutritious meals and social activities for residents aged 50+ at affordable prices. They are great for reducing loneliness and isolation and bringing communities together.

Web: www.hcvs.org.uk/lunch-clubs/

Youth Sector

Safer Young Hackney/Young Londoners Fund network – a provider network of 70 organisations working around youth crime, mental health & wellbeing, youth activities across Hackney and Islington

Network/partnership

Number of organisations/people

Neighbourhood conversations/partnerships:

Well Street Common Partnership: The voluntary and community groups working in the Well Street Common Neighbourhood have come together to share information, jointly fundraise and interact with the NHS and Council services locally.

Web: https://hcvs.org.uk/neighbourhoods-programme/

227 in Well St

- Woodberry Wetlands – hosted by Manor House Development Trust
- Clissold Park – hosted by Studio Upstairs
- Hackney Marsh - hosted by Hackney Marsh Partnership and Lola Akindoyin (LBH/Sport England)
- Shoreditch Park – hosted by Shoreditch Trust
- Well St Common – hosted by Hackney CVS. Fully established
- Springfield Park - hosted by Boilerhouse
- Hackney Downs – hosted by MRS Independent Living
- London Fields – hosted by Mind

Faith sector: The Hackney Faith Community Network was established in 2016 to celebrate the contribution of the faith community in Hackney, bringing their collective efforts together and identify areas of future focus.

Web: https://hcvs.org.uk/faith-forum/

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Children & Families Forum: The forum creates a platform to inform, influence and represent the diversity of the children and families voluntary sector at public sector level. Key areas of work are around health, education, and housing and employment and support for parents.

Web: https://hcvs.org.uk/children-families-forum/

476

Network/partnership	Number of organisations/people
Young People We deliver services to young people in the borough via three main projects: — **Politically Black** (Young Black Men's group – Inspirational Leaders 18-30 years) every Tuesday evening (remotely at the moment) — **Account** (Youth Independent Advisory Group) - 18-30 years a group of young people that monitors, researches and represents the community on policing issues (meets fortnightly every Monday) — **Cool Down Café** volunteers and youth leaders providing well-being and mental health support to young people at the Penbury Centre. Through our projects we empower young people to lead and affect change within their communities. Through their peer to peer work we engage with 80-100 young people on average per week We also work with BCU police youth engagement team, Integrated Gangs Unit, Hackney Young Futures and our young people input into the Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men Strategy. Web: https://hcvs.org.uk/young-people-projects/	31
African Heritage Parents organisations and parent champions – local organisations and individuals One project which focuses here is the Open Minds Alliance is a one year initiative which aims to address African and Caribbean Heritage (ACH) mental health needs. Adults from African, Caribbean and mixed heritage communities are disproportionately represented in mental health service provision. This is a common concern for the community, practitioners and policy makers. The Alliance includes frontline organisations from the youth sector, FHE, faith sector, fathers led organisations and African network members	168

Network/partnership	Number of organisations/people
Black Men for Change network A network of black led organisations, black professionals and community champions working together to improve outcomes for black families, delivering programmes and influencing policy, changing the narrative, online platforms. Leading a new programme for Violence Reduction Unit across Hackney, Haringey, Waltham Forest and Lambeth	43
Refugee and Migrant sector **Hackney Refugee & Migrant Forum:** The forum's main purposes are to raise awareness of the issues refugees and migrants living and working in Hackney face and to campaign on their behalf. Web: https://hcvs.org.uk/hackney-refugee-forum/ **Migrant Support Network:** work with a group of community organisations who are taking a leadership role on supporting refugees and migrants in Hackney. Web: https://hcvs.org.uk/migrant-support	60
Supported employment network: Supported employment services help disabled people to move towards or into employment of their choice. Web: https://hcvs.org.uk/supported-employment-network/ Includes – 15 voluntary sector, 6 statutory sector (network mailing list of 50, includes strategic leads)	50

Appendix C

Contractual models

There are three partnership structures we recognise locally as useful to enable lots of organisations to work together to tackle health inequalities and coordinate delivery at a local neighbourhood level.

The VCSE TLG has an ambition to reinvigorate the City & Hackney Together Special Purpose Vehicle and to develop it to be an independent entity with symbiotic relationship with Hackney CVS to manage contracts where there is no 'natural' lead or agreed lead to maintain the diversity of the sector.

The 'Prime Provider Contract' (Lead Provider)

A single organisation (lead organisation) takes responsibility for the day to day management of the service; the contract stipulates that the prime provider must also be a service provider.

The Alliance Contractor model

A set of organisations enter into a single arrangement with a commissioner to deliver a service; all the organisations within the Alliance share risk and responsibility for meeting the agreed outcomes, and all the organisations are equal partners with their own internal governance arrangements.

Prime Contractor (Consortium) or Hub & Spoke model

A single contract between the commissioning organisation and a single contractor who then sub contracts to several organisations to deliver specific services.

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