

Impact Report

2024



#Fairer Society
hackney
cvs



Executive summary

Amid a tumultuous year, 2022-2023, the City & Hackney voluntary and community sector (VCS) found itself grappling with the profound impacts of COVID-19 and a burgeoning cost of living crisis. It was against this backdrop that Hackney CVS stepped up as the local VCS infrastructure body, playing a vital role in supporting and empowering community organisations and seldom-heard communities.

At Hackney CVS, our mission is clear – to ensure that the VCS has a strong voice in shaping and influencing local decisions, and to be recognised as an equal partner within the local health and care system. We believe that by empowering community organisations and enabling them to be agents of change, we can create a more inclusive and resilient society.

The year 2022/23 was rife with challenges, as the sector continued to recover from the devastating impact of the pandemic. Demands on VCS organisations soared, while their resources remained strained. It was in this landscape that Hackney CVS proved its worth, making a tangible difference and demonstrating the true value of the VCS.

This Impact Report is a testament to our collective achievements. It highlights the incredible work we have done to support the sector and showcases the profound impact we have had on the community. From developing channels that amplify the voices of the unheard to ensuring that

VCS organisations have the capacity and resources they need to deliver essential services, Hackney CVS has been at the forefront of change.

In this report you will discover the stories of resilience, innovation, and collaboration that have defined our year. Together, we will celebrate the triumphs and acknowledge the challenges, all while recognising the crucial role of the VCS, and Hackney CVS as the local infrastructure body in creating a brighter future for City & Hackney.

Are you ready to witness the true power of the VCS? Let us take you on a journey that will leave you inspired, empowered, and convinced of the incredible value that Hackney CVS and the VCS bring to our community.

Tony Wong

Tony Wong
Chief Executive Officer, Hackney CVS

Overview of Hackney CVS

Our history

Through collaboration and innovative initiatives, such as our Hackney Giving partnerships and grants programme, we have significantly expanded our impact and extended our reach into the heart of the community. We believe that no one should be left behind, and our relentless efforts reflect that belief.

At the core of our mission is the fight against racism. We understand that true equality can only be achieved when systemic barriers are dismantled. That is why we have a longstanding history of championing racial justice, working tirelessly to ensure that every individual, regardless of their background, has an equal opportunity to thrive. We have been instrumental in shaping local and national anti-racism strategies and have led local responses to the tragic murder of George Floyd, demanding justice and igniting conversations that spark real change.

As the voluntary and community sector faces pressing challenges, such as the enduring impact of COVID-19 and the growing cost of living crisis, Hackney CVS remains a steadfast advocate. We are unwavering in our commitment to address these urgent issues, ensuring that the voices of the most vulnerable are heard and amplified.



Each year we run community and youth awards for Hackney and the City

In 2021, we convened City & Hackney's first-ever VCS Assembly, a momentous occasion that brought together passionate individuals and organisations to tackle the pressing issue of emotional wellbeing. Building on that success, a second Assembly was held later that year, focused on the vital topic of anti-racism. These gatherings sparked a wave of activities in 2022/23, including our dedication to securing equitable funding for Black and Global Majority-led VCS organisations and our resolute efforts to reduce school exclusions, ensuring that no child is left behind.

Looking forward, our vision remains clear. We are dedicated to combatting discrimination, advancing the anti-racist agenda, and creating a fairer society for all. Through dynamic partnerships, unfaltering commitment to social justice, and a fierce determination to dismantle barriers, Hackney CVS will continue to be a beacon of hope and a catalyst for change.

Join us as we forge ahead on this transformative journey. Together, we can build a future where every individual can thrive, regardless of their background. Let us stand united, shoulder to shoulder, and create a society that embodies the principles of fairness, justice, and equality.



Hackney lunch clubs cater at our annual community awards events

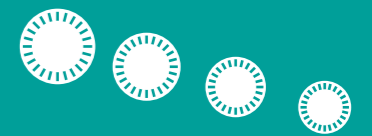
Voluntary and community sector profile



There are **2,627** registered charities across **City & Hackney**.



Across City & Hackney, **82%** have an income of between **<£10k-£1m** (65% of users report an annual income of less than £500k, with 22% with an income of less than £25k).



Almost half (47%) of our users report a **reduction in their organisational income** following the COVID-19 pandemic.



59% of our users told us they had been required to **use their financial reserves** within the last 12 months.



45% of our users told us they have **under 3 months reserves**, with **29.4%** reporting having **no financial reserves**.



70% of our users have **10 or fewer members of staff**, with **64%** having between **1-5 members of staff**.



77% told us that **digital exclusion remains an issue for people** who use their services.

The top five services are:

- Education and training
- Poverty reduction
- Religious activities
- Advancement of health or saving lives.
- Arts/culture/heritage/science

The top five groups served are:

- Children/young people
- Elderly or older people
- People of a particular ethnic or racial group
- People with a disability
- Other defined groups

Our structure & programmes



Hackney Giving

Our local giving programme secures funds to distribute as grants to the VCS to fund activities that address local issues.



Organisational development

Tailored support delivered to VCS organisations and community groups to support development, growth, and sustainability.



Youth programmes

Through our youth leadership model, we deliver peer-led youth-focussed programmes, in partnership with the youth VCS sector, tackling local issues impacting young people. We ensure evidence and learning are used to influence policy and practice.



The assembly helped us talk because we talked about our challenges with the people there. We built relationships with funders which put us on the map. It was the first time I had spoken in front of people in England, and about our work. It was a big opportunity for us. We could ask for help. It opened our minds... and gave us the courage. We were stuck before; we didn't see the way forward.

HACKNEY CONGOLESE WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP



Health transformation

We deliver the **VCS Enabler Programme** that supports VCS organisations, through networks and forums, to collaborate with statutory partners, around health and care strategic priorities.



Our **VCS Neighbourhoods Programme**, delivered in partnership with Volunteer Centre Hackney, and Healthwatch Hackney, facilitates neighbourhood forums for collaboration and solution development between residents, VCS organisations, and statutory partners around neighbourhood-level priorities.



Our **Lunch Club Network**, coordinates 12 Hackney-based lunch clubs for residents aged 55 and over, supporting good nutrition and positive wellbeing.

Vision, mission, and strategic Goals

Our vision:

A resourced and resilient voluntary and community sector, able to meet local challenges and tackle inequalities.

Our mission:

To support City & Hackney's voluntary and community sector to engage and collaborate, and local decision-makers, and to be respected as equal partners within the local health and care system.

Our strategic goals:



1. Stronger Voice

Collectively empowering all community organisations, and seldom-heard communities, across City & Hackney to inform, shape, and influence the long-term transformative decisions affecting residents.



2. Effective Bridge:

Developing the channels that enable local VCS organisations themselves to be the agents of local change.

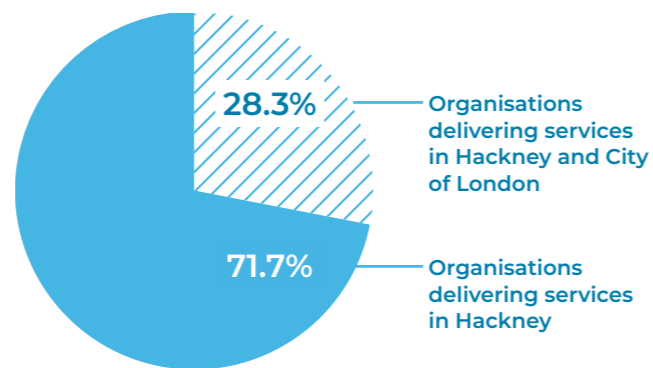


3. A Thriving VCS:

Bringing VCS organisations in City & Hackney together to address social inequality, and ensure they have the necessary capacity and resources.



Our impact



Our reach

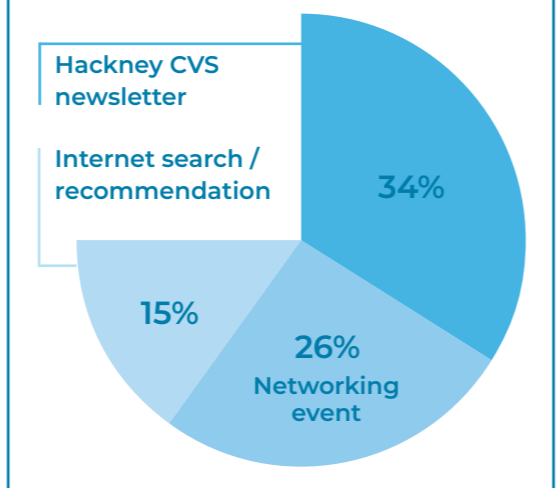
60 newsletters, with 1,344 subscribers

34 standalone newsletters on key topics

25,326 individuals visited our website: www.hcvs.org.uk

6,240 social media followers

Top routes VCS hear about Hackney CVS



Engagement

540 individual organisations provided with infrastructure support e.g. training, networks, forums, and assemblies.

34 network meetings, with 297 individual attendees.

24 neighbourhood forums with 286 individual attendees

4 lunch club network meetings attended by the 12 lunch club providers.

6 coffee mornings with 107 individual attendees

Around a quarter (24%) of VCS organisations surveyed report engaging with us over 10 times or more in the last 12 months.

Money leveraged into the VCS

£1,492,887 invested across City & Hackney VCS

£881,138 distributed in grants by Hackney Giving, including 43 cost of living grants that supported 4,467 households

93 grants made to **71** VCS organisations including 30 organisations that we had not funded previously.

Organisational development

37 training events delivered, with 472 attendees

52 1:1 advice & development sessions

3 key events including the Meet the Funders open day

Our top-utilised services

- 72%** have applied for funding through Hackney Giving
- 60%** have attended a Hackney CVS Forum
- 40%** have accessed Training and Education
- 40%** have accessed support around safeguarding
- 40%** have accessed fundraising support and advice

Most popular forums:
 55% Health & Social Care
 45% Neighbourhood
 38% Hackney Refugee & Migrant
 35% Children & Families

Most popular training:
 38% Safeguarding
 26% Bid writing and Financial Planning
 26% How to Apply workshop, Hackney Giving
 22% Monitoring & Evaluation

How are our services/programmes rated by our users?

- 97%** of those that have attended our training rate it as high quality, with 94% confirming the training was very useful in supporting their organisation, and 100% confirming they would recommend the training to other local organisations.
- 97%** of those who have attended our forums rate them as high quality, with 93% rating the content as very useful.
- 94%** rate the information and advice they received from us as high quality.
- 94%** say our staff are very friendly.
- 92%** say they would recommend Hackney CVS to others.

Learnings and reflections

2022/23 was largely a positive year for us:

- We further developed relationships with statutory partners to deliver much-needed funding support to VCS organisations on the frontline still responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and emergent cost of living crisis.
- We expanded the Neighbourhoods Programme, delivering community forums across all eight neighbourhoods, bringing residents, VCS, and statutory partners together to improve local health pathways.
- Through our VCS Enabler programme, we coproduced a set of anti-racist commissioning principles to tackle inequitable funding for equity-led organisations.
- We continued to call for change in local policing to respond to community concerns around the disproportionality of the policing of African heritage communities, leading to a deepening mistrust within the community towards the Metropolitan Police.
- We delivered Tree of Life in schools through our Youth Leadership Model, with our Youth Leaders leading the way in tackling the mental health crisis facing our young people.

But for all our successes, 2022/23 brought its challenges:

- We experienced increased demands from local VCS organisations, as 88.7% reported an increase in the need for their services (60% reported a drastic increase).
- Like all charities, the cost of living has increased our operational costs, which is further compounded by fundraising challenges.
- With COVID-19, the cost of living crisis, and the move to the North East London ICS arrangements, our capacity is stretched. In response, we have needed to reimagine how we work and look for opportunities to better align our activities and services.
- Delayed confirmation of contract extensions continued to hamper our ability to resource plan, and to give assurances to staff about job security, resulting in the loss of dedicated staff.

Key stakeholder testimonials

“ Hackney CVS is a vital organisation that makes the link in Hackney between the hundreds of grassroots organisations that support our diverse communities and the larger anchor institutions like the council and the NHS. Their current work on anti-racist commissioning is a perfect example of how their work helps ensure that in making that link we all work together to make Hackney residents' lives happier, healthier, and fairer.”

COUNCILLOR CHRIS KENNEDY, CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH, ADULT SOCIAL CARE, VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND CULTURE

“ Relationships and trust are key to collaboration and innovation. Over the last year, the Hackney CVS team have been working closely with partners to bring fresh thinking and stronger relationships to address the challenges we have keeping our communities well. They've shown leadership in bringing partners together to face challenges together, and there is a genuine team spirit and hope in the work we're doing as a sector.”

VANESSA MORRIS, CEO OF MIND IN THE CITY, HACKNEY AND WALTHAM FOREST, AND CO-CHAIR OF THE CITY & HACKNEY VCS LEADERSHIP GROUP

“ My passion is to engender good working relationships between the health system and City and Hackney VCS to improve access for small and grassroots organisations, amplify the voice of lived-experience and address entrenched problems through community-led solutions. Considering the stark impact of COVID-19 on Black and Global Majority people, serving as co-chair of the VCS Leadership Group affirms my historical rites as an older Black woman in leadership. Co-creating a greater space for grassroots organisations is an important role that Hackney CVS is best placed to deliver, and I feel a sense of duty to my community to be a part of this life-changing process.”

ROSEMARY JAWARA, CEO BEERSHEBA – LIVING WELL, AND CO-CHAIR OF THE CITY & HACKNEY VCS LEADERSHIP GROUP

Case study

Hackney Giving Cost of Living Case Study, March 2023

Thanks to generous donations from businesses and individuals, Hackney Giving was able to make four grants this winter to help residents to deal with the increased cost of living.



Funding from Hackney Giving contributed to the cost of **Shepherdfold Ministry's after-school club** for children and young people, increased provision at **Hackney Cypriot Association's lunch club** for older residents, funded **Ozer Umagen** to buy food for families who are struggling and went towards sessions about cooking on a budget at **Hackney Young People's University**.

Because of this funding, Hackney Cypriot Association was able to open its doors an additional day per week, enabling people to get a hot meal on a Friday as well as Tuesday-Thursday. Cemile Goksan, Manager, said, "We are seeing new faces at the centre. Our members are bringing their neighbours, friends, and relatives. We know that service users are happy to be at the centre because they are asking when are we going to open on Mondays as well?"



The team at Ozer Umagen also told us the difference their grant is making:

"This project has made a huge positive impact on both beneficiaries of the packages and our team of volunteers. We have thankfully succeeded in reducing the impact of the cost of living crisis on beneficiaries, providing them with food security, and allowing them to use their tight budget to cover other essentials.

Beneficiaries have reported feeling supported and cared for by the community. Our team of learning-disabled volunteers have thrived. They have made friends with one another, are picking up amazing skills such as communication skills and working as a team. We are very grateful to Hackney Giving for enabling us to make such a powerful difference to the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in our community."

In addition to these four grants, Hackney Giving has worked with Hackney Council to distribute a further £240,000 to projects to mitigate the increased cost of living.

Partner testimonials

Hackney Giving cost of living crisis grants

"Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! I had been walking around sick with worry about how we will manage it all and this just feels like a great big hug!"

SERVICE USER AT IN TOUCH/KIDS UNITED

"The past few months have been incredibly stressful. Thank you for lightening the load"

SERVICE USER AT IN TOUCH/KIDS UNITED

"I appreciated that I did not need to humiliate myself. I produced the voucher and got what I needed without being demoralised. None of the other shoppers were any the wiser".

SERVICE USER AT TIKVA

"More painful than the breast cancer and radiation and Chemo and all surgeries, was not having enough to feed the children. It is a huge relief that my two girls get their dinner at Butterfly Club."

QUOTES FROM A PARENT USING LEV ECHOD CANCER CARER'S CLUB

Organisational support

I just wanted to share our good news - that we were successful in being awarded funding (Hackney Council grants for Children and Young People), for our "STEAMLabs Clubs for All" project. Thank you so much for your help with this application. Hopefully we can be in touch again with ideas for future projects!

Hackney CVS's Organisational Development support contributed massively to our fundraising efforts as well as helping us to address the key development needs of our organisation. Starting from providing advice around good governance, they helped us with our funding application from start to finish.

HACKNEY CONGOLESE WOMEN SUPPORT GROUP

The VCS Assembly and networks

Assembly is a great place to hear updates, it helps VCS overcome silo working, helps get in the know and helps stop you overlapping ... It's inclusive & dynamic.

[VCS]

Hackney CVS brought key people and organisations together to address the issues around racism and specifically the challenges with funding smaller VCS organisations. Their meetings and events encouraged an open dialogue.

A really great way to get to know diverse organisations, residents, projects, and issues relating to needs and issues across the borough.

[LOCAL AUTHORITY]

I've never, we've never, worked so well or so much with the VCS before, as in the last couple of years, as a result of this network.

[HEALTH PARTNER]

The training helps us to know better what we need to know, and we get the certificate for the training we done and it helps a lot.

[VCS]

"The lunch club and support from the network forms the heart of what we do to support older people in the community. From this base we 'pick up' on some of the other challenges of ageing they are facing and are developing a programme of work to include local partnerships and cross-cultural opportunities."

HACKNEY CARIBBEAN ELDERLY ORGANISATION

Nice to feel contributions from people like me are listened to and valued.

[SMALL FRONT-LINE VCS GROUP.]

"This was the best thing I've done, it was exactly what I needed. It's expanded my knowledge of the community."

VCS ORGANISATION TALKING ABOUT A COFFEE MORNING NETWORKING EVENT.



Hackney CVS, registered charity number 1069736.

Address: The Adiaha Antigha Centre, 24-30 Dalston Lane, Hackney, London E8 3AZ