

Welcome to the City and Hackney Togetherness Conference

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Civil Society
Consulting



VCS Leadership Group
Tackling health inequalities
together in City & Hackney



Sponsored by:



Agenda

Part 1 (10:30 -12:50) The Importance of connection

- **Welcome from the Mayor of Hackney**
- **Why does connection matter:** Short talk by Natasha from Civil Society Consulting on the links between loneliness, cohesion and community resilience; explaining the 32 Steps resource and project.
- **Ice-breaker activity**
- **Showcase** – Case Study from a local VCS organisation
- **Plenary discussion / Interactive exercise:** What do we need in order to build connections within and between our communities in City & Hackney?
- **Panel discussion:** Based on how we, as human beings, connect, how can we collaborate in the professional arena?
- **Lunch / networking**

Part 2 (13:30 – 16:00) Co-production workshops

- **Part 1 Recap, and introduction for Part 2**
- **Breakout workshops:** (1) *Fostering the conditions:* How can we foster the conditions for collaboration?
(2) *Establishing shared goals:* Brain-dumping exercise of the most urgent and pressing issues in City & Hackney
(3) *Identifying complementary strengths*
- **Plenary feedback**

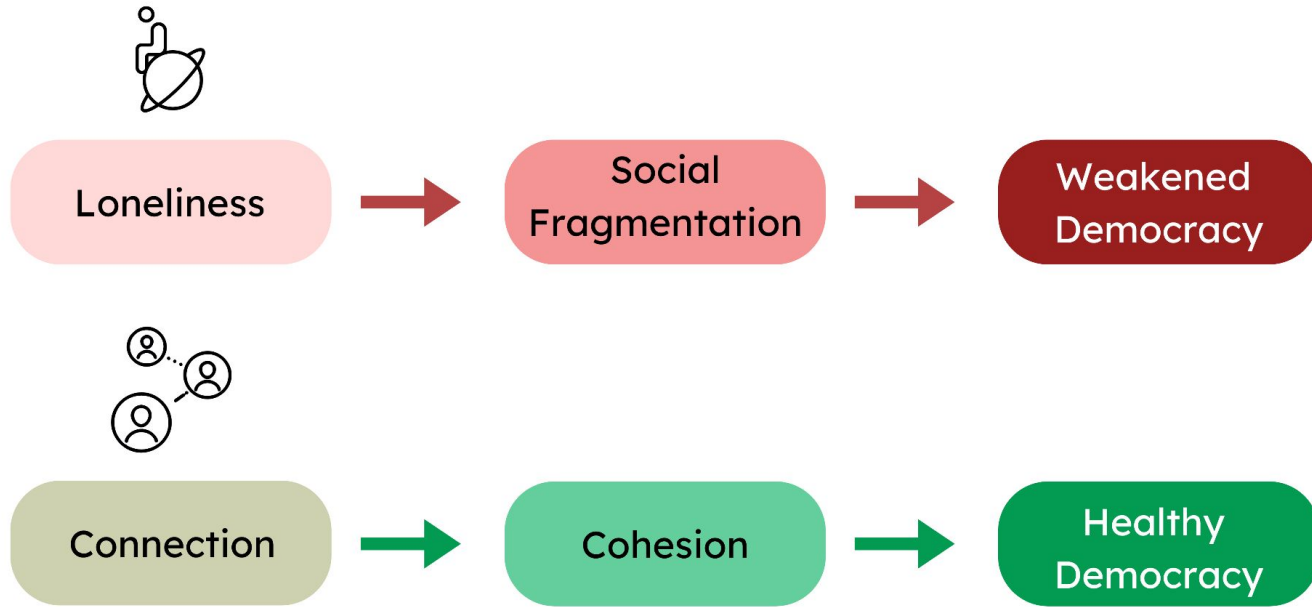
Mayor Caroline Woodley

- Caroline Woodley was elected Mayor of Hackney in November 2023, becoming the borough's third directly elected Mayor and first woman Mayor.
- The directly elected Mayor provides leadership and direction to the borough and the council and has overall responsibility for council policy and the delivery of services.



PART 1

Why does connection matter?





Steps to Togetherness

Scotland & England

-5²-

- Think Well:

1. Assume the best
2. Accept other points of view
3. Be honest with yourself
4. Make peace with awkward moments

- Change Your Habits:

5. Say hello
6. Use TV and screens as an opportunity to connect
7. Be aware of how you influence yourself by choosing who to follow on social media
8. Go somewhere you wouldn't normally go, or encourage others to

- Help Out:

9. Volunteer for a cause that you care about
10. Get involved with youth initiatives
11. Socialise with older people
12. Help out at a food bank or food poverty project

- Join Something:

13. Join a club
14. Join a class
15. Start a book group or film club
16. Visit a place of worship

- Be A Great Neighbour:

17. Lower your boundaries with your neighbours
18. Share food for your neighbours
19. Ask for and give help to your neighbours
20. Use seasonal holidays as an opportunity to connect

- Open Up Your Workplace:

21. Make sure your team is diverse
22. Encourage connections between your team
23. Broaden your reach
24. Unionise or join a professional body

- Support Your Local State School:

25. Help out at your local school
26. Involve school children in community action
27. Ask about school linking
28. Encourage your local school to teach civic participation

- Get Political:

29. Write to your local politicians
30. Write to your representatives in Parliament
31. Use your vote, and vote with your wallet
32. Understand the politics of all your social interactions and share these ideas

#32Steps

#MakeRacismHistory



Case Study: Effective Cross-Sector Collaboration

Working Together for Improved Quality of Life
Readability Project

By: Neima Macfoy
Huddleston Centre

Project Aim:

To provide easy-read support for people with learning difficulties, disabilities and autism.

Partners Involved:

The local authority, NHS, 3 small charities and their users



LB Hackney
Adult Services



NHS



Huddleston
Centre



St Mary's Secret
Gardens



Visionability



Key Implementation Activities

- **collaborative planning and development**
- **training sessions for users, staff & volunteers**
- **creation of easy-read materials (data bank)**
- **workshops & support sessions -small groups**
- **continuous feedback & improvement process**



Outcomes and Impact:

01

improved social
inclusion and quality
of life for users

02

positive feedback
from the users and
their parents/carers

03

increased awareness
and understanding of
learning
disabilities/difficulties
and autism

04

statistics on
engagement and
satisfaction rates

05

plans for sustaining
the program.



Thank you

Neima Macfoy

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PART 1



Connection and community resilience

Why does disconnection make communities less resilient?

PART 1

What do *you* need in order to connect with others?

Scan the QR
code to submit
your answers



PART 1

Panelists



Dawn Carter McDonald
Chief Executive, Hackney
Council



Neima MacFoy
Director, The Huddleston
Centre



Chaya Spitz
Chief Executive,
Agudas Israel Housing
Association



Rosemary Jawara,
Founder, Beersheba
Living-Well



Lauren Tobias
Chief Executive, Volunteer
Centre Hackney

mishon

Chippy Fiohr,
Manager, Mishon

1. Based on how we, as human beings, connect, how can we collaborate in the professional arena?

2. What, historically, have been the barriers and enablers of collaboration?

3. How does the new context pose further/different barriers? (And new enablers?)

PART 2

The conditions we need to connect (and therefore collaborate) as statutory and VCS professionals

- **Trust and opportunity:** time, capacity, invitation, space, resources.
- **Information:** knowing what you bring, knowing what you need.
- **Warmth:** fun, enjoyable, kindness, friendliness, feeling comfortable and safe
- **Individual capacity**
 - Bravery
 - Openness
 - Honesty
- **Curiosity:** willingness to learn and listen
 - Care
 - Self awareness
- Shared purpose, Common ground
- Complementary strengths

A Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy for Hackney

July 2024



A Place for Everyone 2019- 2022

- VCS Strategy agreed by Cabinet in 2019. Within a year we had ‘locked down’
- The pandemic and subsequent Cost of Living Crisis led to a shift in focus away from delivering the strategy but enabled the implementation of the aspirations it contained
- Principally this was about how we shaped and supported new ways of working together
- Activity undertaken during the Pandemic and Cost of Living Crisis has provided a better understanding of what coproduction can look like and what it can achieve.
- The relationship between the Council and the VCS became more relational and we valued collaboration, what we were learning, how we could best mobilise our shared assets and resources



The current context

- The Council has so far has been able to protect the grants programme from any savings
- Between 2020/21 to 2023/24 we distributed over £17m in grants to the sector.
- We have invested £1.6m in Discretionary Rate Relief over the last three years
- Provided annual subsidy to voluntary sector organisations occupying Council buildings, estimated to be £400,000 based on the difference between market rent and rent payable.
- Commissioned spend with the sector is in the region of £20m



The current context

- Our refreshed Equality Plan 2024 sets out how Hackney is becoming a more unequal place, with more marked racial inequality and homelessness.
- Despite this reality we will have to make very difficult decisions about budgets and services over the next few years.
- Our recently published Transformation Strategy sets out how we need and want to change as an organisation to meet the challenges we face.
- We know that we will need to do this with significantly less resource - both within the Council and, unavoidably in the funding we provide to the sector.



A refreshed Strategy

- In the autumn we will be engaging with colleagues in the sector to develop a refreshed VCS strategy
- We will work with our second tier support partners HCVS, VCH and Interlink to ensure that colleagues in the wider sector have the opportunity to shape the refreshed strategy
- A series of workshops to engage with the sector are planned for the autumn that will be promoted and published through the Council's Community Partnerships newsletters and through partners communication channels



PART 2

Workshops

1. Fostering the conditions: How can we foster conditions for collaboration?

- What can the Council do?
- What can the VCS do?

2. Establishing shared goals: Collective brain-dump of the most urgent and pressing issues in Hackney)

3. Identifying complementary strengths:

- What are the challenges you face in your role?
- How can each sector help the other's challenges?

PART 2

Thinking of your role, and everything you've discussed today, what can you do differently tomorrow?

Reflections box

