

## Impact Assessment

### **Stage one review of the proposed grants model – VCS Grants Funding 2019-23**

28<sup>th</sup> September 2018

<b>Detail of Assessment</b>
<p>This is an Impact Assessment of process changes for the Third Sector Commissioning Framework 2019-23 and its potential impact on applicants and prospective applicants.</p> <p>The Impact Assessment will not cover specific streams in the grants programme (i.e. Community Centres, Health and Adults, Children’s Services, Arts and Culture, Housing Services and Community Safety). However, it will consider the impact of loss of central government public health funding in general terms on vulnerable communities and those citizens with protected characteristics. More specific evaluation will be considered as part of a stage 2 review which will consider the outcomes of the initial grant assessment process and its impact at the level of organisations and the communities they serve.</p>
<b>What is its purpose?</b> <i>Is this a new service/policy or a change to an existing service/policy?</i>
<p>This is a change to existing application and assessment arrangements as well as some updates to funding priority areas. The previous four-year funding round for the voluntary and community sector took place in 2014 and was effective 2015-2019. A new round of funding will begin from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, and run until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.</p>
<b>What are its main objectives (of the new/revised service or policy)?</b>
<p>‘Model 2 – Co-production’ was the option recommended to and approved by cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018 as it is the model preferred by sector representatives and is a less prescriptive process to allow scope for innovation, discussion, accessibility for smaller organisations, service user input and joint working. The themes and principles below were evident from the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy, the development workshops, the consultation held by Ian Beever with 30 VCS organisations and the seven recent consultation events. They are as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(i) Co-production that underpins the design, planning and delivery of the service or project</li><li>(ii) Partnership and collaboration with other VCS organisations to form a fundamental part of project delivery</li><li>(iii) Work to support (funding, engagement, co-delivery, mentoring, development support) small groups is included in proposals</li><li>(iv) Commitment and evidence of maximising community assets (social capital – people, organisations, business CSR, money and buildings) in proposals</li></ul>

## Context

The annual grant available has decreased from £4,169,580 in 2015-19 to £2,923,430 for 2019-2023. This reduction had been plugged temporarily via use of government awarded Public Health funding and work had been undertaken via the Voluntary Sector Strategy to prepare the sector for a reduced local funding programme as well as a more hostile external funding environment with increased competition for reducing resources at a London-wide and national level. With the government's Public Health funding stream now restricted it is vital that the sector begins to work more collaboratively to focus resources on the areas of most need.

## Criteria

*Is this function designed to meet specific needs of groups with protected characteristics?*

Many organisations funded by the streams serve residents with protected characteristics. However, there are some areas where funding has a more specific focus on groups with protected characteristics.

### *Strategic Equalities:*

The 'strategic equalities' funding stream has the specific remit to support a range of communities in the borough with protected characteristics, including: Race and Faith groups; LGBT; women; disabled. The funding also has a provision for supporting 'new communities' in the borough.

### *Community Centres:*

Community centres provide a venue and affordable meeting space, office space or activities for people with a protected characteristic – e.g. Irish lunch clubs, Ghurkha community lunch clubs, Dementia care lunch clubs, older people's bingo clubs/tea dances/lunch clubs and drop-in centres. They also provide a venue for affordable activities, for groups including those with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and mental ill-health, as well as a safe and welcoming place to go for all residents.

### *Information and Advice Services:*

The budget also funds Information and Advice including: General Help, Debt and Money Management; Specialist Housing advice and Specialist Immigration and Employment and Welfare Benefits advice.

While detailed analysis of Equalities and Diversity data has not been undertaken of those accessing each of these services, the impact on the services available to residents will affect individuals with a protected characteristic, as well as those without. Taking into account vulnerabilities, there is potential for a significant impact on those with protected characteristics if they cannot access Information and Advice they need.

### *Infrastructure support: Volunteering and Capacity Building*

The funding supports organisations dedicated to supporting and strengthening the voluntary and community sector in the borough. These organisations work closely with organisations representing residents with protected characteristics.

MetroGAVS delivers regular forums specifically represent the interests of: BME groups; Children's Services; Health and Wellbeing (including older people and all HAS related work) and a Forum for all Voluntary Sector leaders in the borough. Volunteer Centre Greenwich delivers a specific programme to support people with learning disabilities into volunteering (e.g. its joint programme with The Camden Society), among other things.

#### *Hate crime*

The Safer Greenwich Partnership Strategy 2017-2020 identified tackling hate crime as a strategic priority and outlines the council's commitment to creating an environment where hate crime is not tolerated but challenged, reported and dealt with appropriately.

To support this programme of activity, the council is committed to funding a Hate Crime service which is particularly concerned with meeting the needs of hate crime victims. We want to increase their skills, knowledge, safety, resilience, confidence and self-esteem in dealing with the effects of hate crime, as well as for them to have a role in shaping policies and service-planning processes to improve outcomes for victims and their families/friends.

#### *Domestic Violence*

The Royal Borough's VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) Strategy 2018 focuses on four key areas: prevention, provision of services, partnership working and pursuing perpetrators. It aims to:

- encourage victims of VAWG to ask for help and make sure that they are safeguarded from harm and supported, whatever their situation;
- ensure that perpetrators of these crimes are held to account for their actions;
- work towards preventing VAWG in the long-term by challenging misogynistic attitudes and behaviour that can often lie behind these crimes; and
- ensure that all agencies working in the Royal Borough recognise that VAWG is everybody's business and promote this principle amongst their own staff and within the local community.

### **Outcomes of Assessment**

*Identify which, if any of the protected groups will be affected, including likelihood of impact*

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Caring responsibilities

Given the range of services outlined in the Prospectus and the service user groups supported by the VCS, all of the above groups are likely to be affected particularly given the extensive use of grant funding that supports groups working with those sections of the population with protected characteristics. However, the precise impact can only be assessed once individual applications have been received. It is the intention of the revised arrangements to encourage co-production and partnership working to reduce the impact on groups with protected characteristics. The period following award will allow the strongest possible service delivery plan to be produced that supports service users with protected characteristics.

An EIA screening document will be provided for this stage two assessment.

**What other risks/factors will be taken into account in the decision- making?**

*These might include national/regional/local factors.*

There are risks which involve and affect the Voluntary and Community Sector as a result of this significant reduction in funding to the VCS Grants Budget.

The proposed changes may have the following affect:

- Overall risk of provider failure as a result of a significant cut.
- Overall risk of reduction in services being delivered (days and hours that services are available).
- Overall risk that local jobs in local organisations are lost, including jobs undertaken by people with a protected characteristic.
- Risk to long-term sustainability of the 'Infrastructure' organisations which aim to support and build capacity in the sector overall, thus threatening the viability of VCS organisations in the borough.

Since the last funding round (2015-19), CST has reiterated to the current funded organisations that there was a risk of cuts in the next funding round 2019-23. The sector has long been aware of the potential for significant cuts, and there has been a focus on stressing the importance of increasing external fundraising.

The Council's VCS strategy 2017-2022 has also been a key document in discussions with the sector and for highlighting changes which need to occur in the sector, by the sector, to ensure sustainability. Realistic discussions about sharing resources, working in partnership and co-locating with other organisations are messages which CST have continually raised with groups.

**Mitigating risks**

*How will any identified risks be mitigated against?*

Discussions with existing services have started and will continue through the VCS Grants Funding process. These discussions will continue after final decisions are made. This includes the consequence and impact where an organisation may not be successful at getting funding.

This is so that wherever possible the impact on vulnerable adults and on organisations is as far as possible understood and mitigated against.

Specific mitigating actions include but are not limited to: -

*Information and Advice:* In the service outlines, no targets have been specified. This allows organisations to propose the level of service they are able to deliver with the funding available. Officers will work with service providers to set realistic targets – and will also ensure that access to services for those with protected characteristics are not disproportionately affected.

*Community Centres:* A development fund, provided to centres in June/July 2018, aimed to provide consultancy support to the centre managers/boards, to support them in strengthening their business plans, including sustainability and fundraising plans. Officers will work with centres to ensure this funding is used effectively.

### **Consultation**

How were groups/individuals consulted (in particular those groups identified as being affected)?

There have been on-going discussions but not 121 consultations with local VCS organisations. The exact figures pertaining to each funding area have been made public via the consultation events, and organisations have had sight of the overall funding table which shows the nature of the level of cut per Directorate. This table has altered as a result of feedback and ongoing work with the budget.

Concerns have been raised and incorporated at a wide range of consultation meetings organised by the local infrastructure organisation and RBG officers.

Consultation meetings were held with the organisations affected and the wider sector including:

Health and Wellbeing – 12<sup>th</sup> September  
Arts and Culture – 13<sup>th</sup> September  
BME – 14<sup>th</sup> September  
Community Centre Managers – 17<sup>th</sup> September  
Voluntary Sector Leaders Meeting – 17<sup>th</sup> September  
Open to All VCS Meeting – 20<sup>th</sup> September  
Children’s Services – 21<sup>st</sup> September

### **Impact Assessment**

Include different outcomes for all the groups identified as being affected. If there are differences, are these justified?

Residents with Protected Characteristics may be affected. All the organisations intending to apply for grants under the new reduced allocation serve vulnerable people, including those with Protected Characteristics.

At this stage the new model has an equal impact on all groups in the sense that the application process has been simplified and streamlined to enable applications from newer

and smaller groups. Support will be offered by phone and online. Hard copies of application forms can be made available on request. See appendix I for further details.

**Monitoring of Impact**

CST will look at mitigating the impact on residents with protected characteristics and organisations supporting those individuals or groups as far as possible.

The VCS Strategy recommended that organisations consider sharing premises and/or back-office functions where possible to make savings.

In addition, during the course of the VCS Strategy development, organisations were encouraged to consider areas for collaboration and partnership, including joint bidding for projects.

Organisations were also reminded of the relevance to consider mergers where possible to ensure financial sustainability, viability and on-going service delivery. It has been stressed that nationally and locally, the public sector and VCS are facing significant financial pressures, which means ‘spreading the funding more thinly’.

If necessary, CST will re-visit the Service Outlines to focus on a smaller number of priorities.

**Decision**

The VCS Grants Funding process 2019-23, includes funds for the VCS from across 4 Directorates: Communities and Environment; Health and Adults; Children’s Services and Housing (including Community Safety).

This stage one EIA mainly addresses the impact of the overall model. For stage two we will address the impact of potential grant recommendations. A stage three process will be conducted for the final recommendations made to cabinet on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019.

**Appendix I EIA screening**

	Likely impact			Brief explanation
	High	Low	None	
Age	X			Older People is a key adult client group across the four different service areas in CST. Any reduction and change in funding is likely to have an effect.  The effects can be mitigated but not eliminated by discussions with providers and mapping needs of older people.

	Likely impact			Brief explanation
	High	Low	None	
				<p>The new model involves co-producing the final service delivery plans which will help mitigate any impact.</p>
Disability	X			<p>This is a key client group across the four different service areas in CST. Any reduction and change in funding is likely to have an effect.</p> <p>The effects can be mitigated but not eliminated by discussions with providers and mapping needs of people with disabilities.</p> <p>The new model involves co-producing the final service delivery plans which will help mitigate any impact.</p>
Race	X			<p>Each of the four service areas serves a significant proportion of disadvantaged and protected groups.</p> <p>Any reduction and change in funding is likely to have an effect.</p> <p>The effects can be mitigated but not eliminated by discussions with providers and mapping needs of individuals from different race groups in the borough.</p> <p>The new model involves co-producing the final service delivery plans which will help mitigate any impact.</p>
Sex	X			<p>Each of the four service areas serves a significant proportion of disadvantaged and protected groups.</p> <p>Any reduction and change in funding is likely to have an effect.</p> <p>The effects can be mitigated but not eliminated by discussions with providers and mapping needs of male and female residents in the borough.</p>

	Likely impact			Brief explanation
	High	Low	None	
				The new model involves co-producing the final service delivery plans which will help mitigate any impact.
Sexual orientation	X			<p>Each of the four service areas serves a significant proportion of disadvantaged and protected groups, including residents from the LBGTQ community.</p> <p>Any reduction and change in funding is likely to have an effect.</p> <p>The effects can be mitigated but not eliminated by discussions with providers and mapping needs of the LBGTQ community.</p> <p>The new model involves co-producing the final service delivery plans which will help mitigate any impact.</p>
Religion or belief	X			<p>Each of the four service areas serves a significant proportion of disadvantaged and protected groups, including faith groups.</p> <p>Any reduction and change in funding is likely to have an effect.</p> <p>The effects can be mitigated but not eliminated by discussions with providers and mapping needs of different faith groups in the borough.</p> <p>The new model involves co-producing the final service delivery plans which will help mitigate any impact.</p>
Gender re-assignment	X			<p>Each of the four service areas serves a significant proportion of disadvantaged and protected groups.</p> <p>Any reduction and change in funding is likely to have an effect.</p> <p>The effects can be mitigated but not eliminated by discussions with providers and mapping needs of the transgender community.</p>



	Likely impact			Brief explanation
	High	Low	None	
				The new model involves co-producing the final service delivery plans which will help mitigate any impact.
Pregnancy & maternity		X		<p>Each of the four service areas serves a significant proportion of disadvantaged and protected groups.</p> <p>Any reduction and change in funding is likely to have an effect. Any reduction and change in funding is likely to have an effect, particularly to the Specialist Employment advice service and welfare rights service which may address some of the needs of women affected by pregnancy or maternity.</p> <p>The effects can be mitigated but not eliminated by discussions with providers and mapping needs of women who are pregnant or on maternity leave.</p> <p>The new model involves co-producing the final service delivery plans which will help mitigate any impact.</p>
Marriage & civil partnership (employment only)		X		<p>The effects can be mitigated but not eliminated by discussions with providers and mapping needs of affected adults.</p> <p>The new model involves co-producing the final service delivery plans which will help mitigate any impact.</p>
People with Caring responsibilities	X			<p>Any reduction and change in funding is likely to have an effect.</p> <p>The effects can be mitigated but not eliminated by discussions with providers and mapping needs of carers.</p> <p>The new model involves co-producing the final service delivery plans which will help mitigate any impact.</p>
Staff in VCS organisations	X			It is possible that some providers will not continue to receive funding from April

	Likely impact			Brief explanation
	High	Low	None	
				<p>2019. Those that have been funded in the past, and who are successful again will see the funding reduced by 33%. It is highly possible that this could lead to redundancies.</p> <p>It is not unusual for VCS organisations to employ people from the communities of interest they represent and hence it is likely that these redundancies will include a proportion of people with protected characteristics.</p> <p>The new model involves co-producing the final service delivery plans which will help mitigate any impact.</p>