

Voluntary Action Camden

Annual Report

2017 - 18



CHAIR'S ADDRESS



"As ever, challenge and opportunity were the flavours of our year, not least the political uncertainty of Brexit and evidence of increasing fragility and instability in our society.

In the midst of these challenges, VAC has stepped up to lead and participate in vital programmes and projects that demonstrate the best of civil society in meeting the needs of Camden's people, especially the most vulnerable.

We stand with the many community groups and voluntary organisations who are doing their utmost to serve and inspire.

My heartfelt thanks to our dedicated staff, volunteers, trustees and funders who contributed to VAC making the most of every opportunity for positive change in Camden."

Julie Christie

VAC'S MISSION

'TO WORK WITH LOCAL RESIDENTS, COMMUNITY GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS TO DEVELOP AND SUPPORT A VIBRANT CIVIL SOCIETY THAT UNDERPINS A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE IN CAMDEN AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS.'

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- * To support and empower individuals, groups and communities to become actively involved in civil society, particularly those that are socially excluded.**
- * To develop opportunities to share good practice and provide access to high quality resources to maximise the efforts of individuals, groups and local communities to achieve their objectives.**
- * To coordinate the diverse voices of individuals and civil society organisations to enable them to lobby and campaign and have a positive impact on wider agendas.**



VAC MISSION & OBJECTIVES

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VAC PROFILE

VAC is an independent charity that has been operating in Camden in one form or another for over 100 years. We are known as a 'Council for Voluntary Service' or 'CVS' for Camden. CVSs up and down the country are a special type of charity known as infrastructure organisations.

In VAC's case, this means working with residents, community groups, charities and social enterprises, alongside other sectors and stakeholders, to help make Camden and the surrounding areas a better place for all who live, work or visit here.

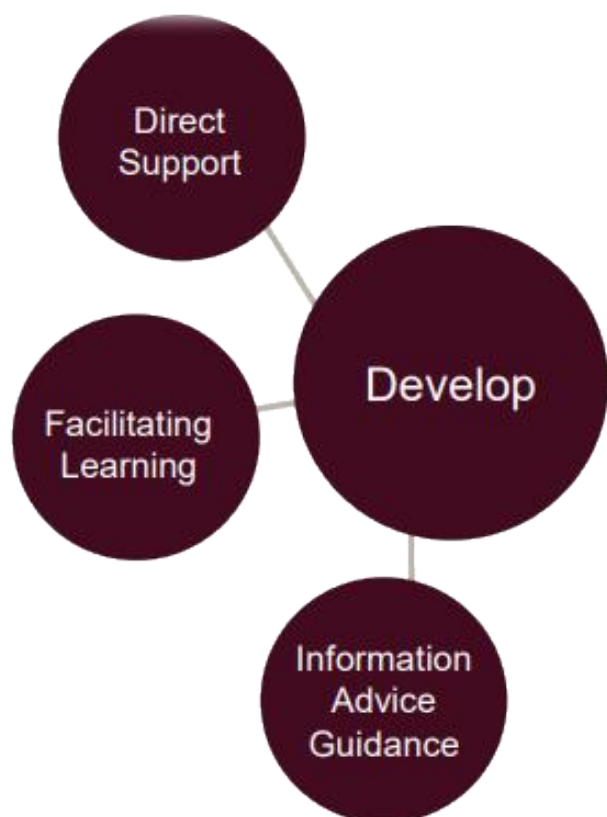
To achieve this VAC's core work wraps around three main themes:

VAC also embeds these key themes through its work with local communities and other cross-sector organisations (e.g. private sector, council and NHS) to run projects that address local need. This includes research projects, training programmes and innovative pilot schemes in areas such as safeguarding children, health inequalities, environmental justice and neighbourhood development.

Developing local people, community organisations, community projects and partnerships through direct support, training and providing and sharing timely information, advice and guidance.

Connecting: local people, communities, community organisations and partnerships to support and work with each other and other sectors through networking, collaboration and brokering opportunities.

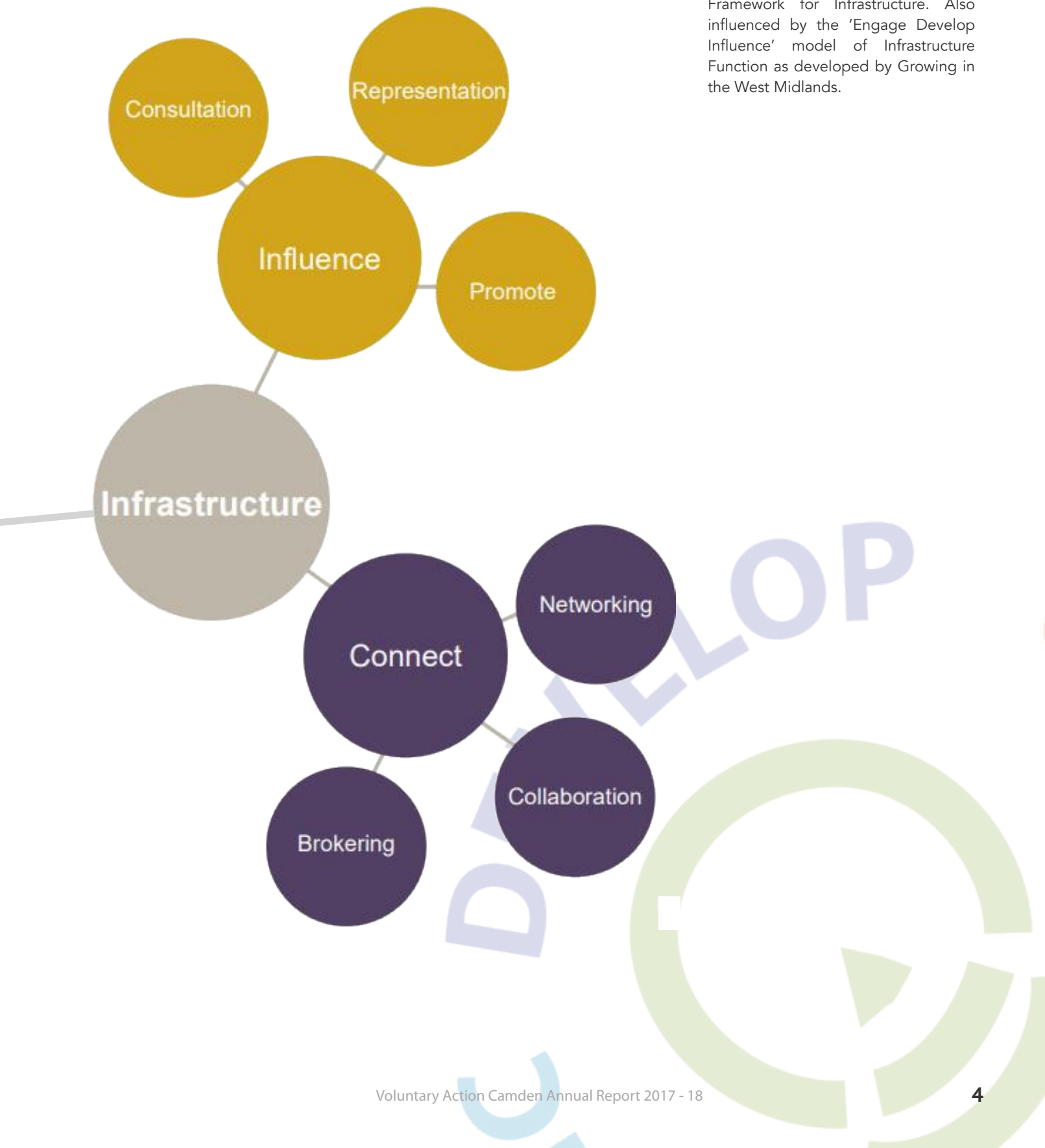
Influencing: enabling and supporting local people, communities and community organisations to shape their life chances and opportunities by influencing civil society and proactively participating in social action, policy development, the design and delivery of services and general debates about community matters.



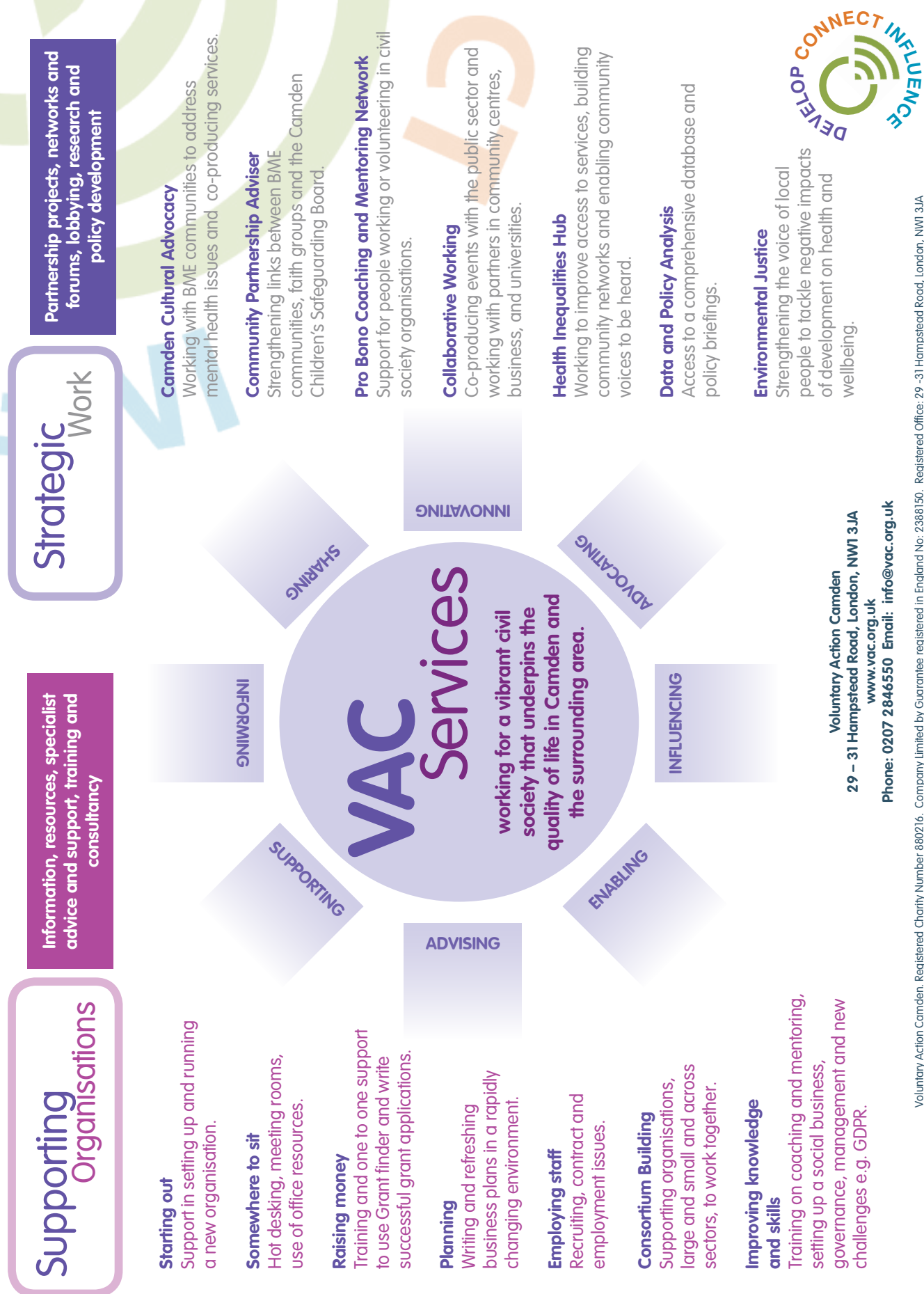
INFRASTRUCTURE FUNCTIONS

The functions map has been developed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations for the Infrastructure Programme.

It is based on PERFORM: the Outcomes Framework for Infrastructure. Also influenced by the 'Engage Develop Influence' model of Infrastructure Function as developed by Growing in the West Midlands.



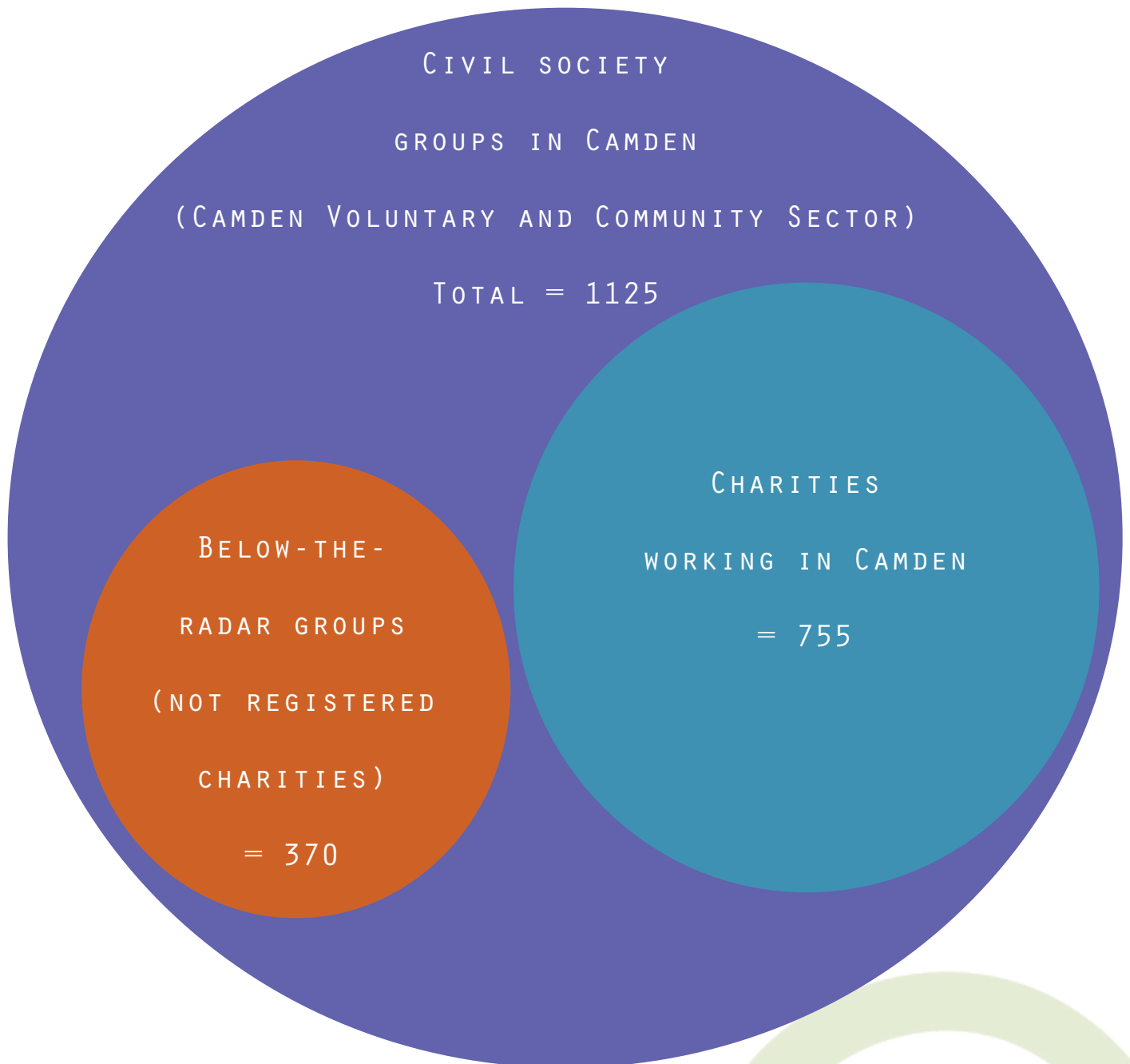
VAC SERVICES



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VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR PROFILE

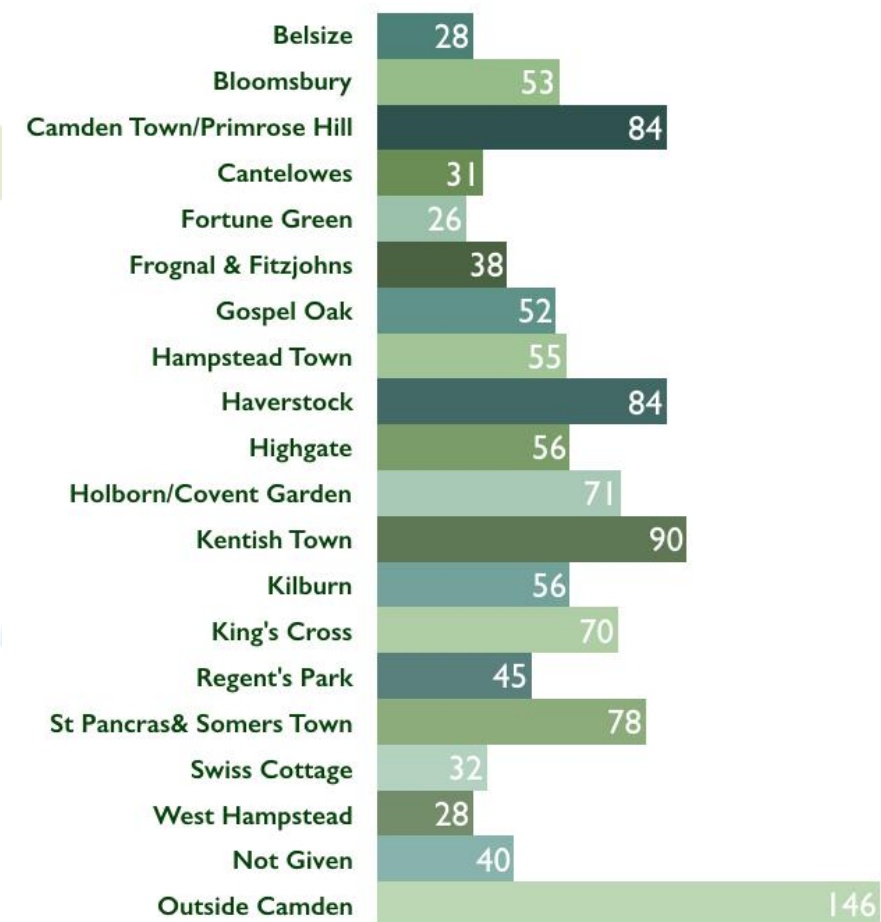
Size of the Sector



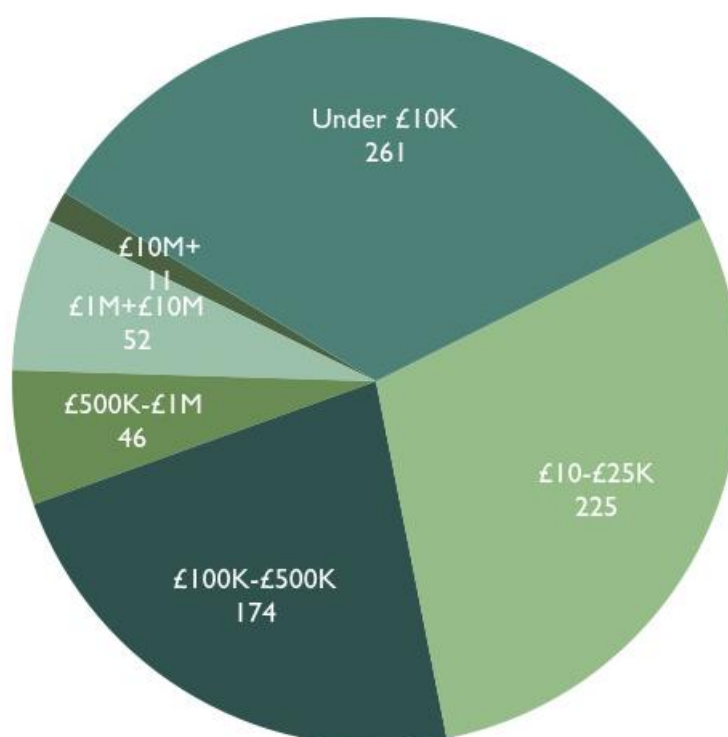
2500 + estimated charities registered
with address in Camden

VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR PROFILE

Civil Society: Location



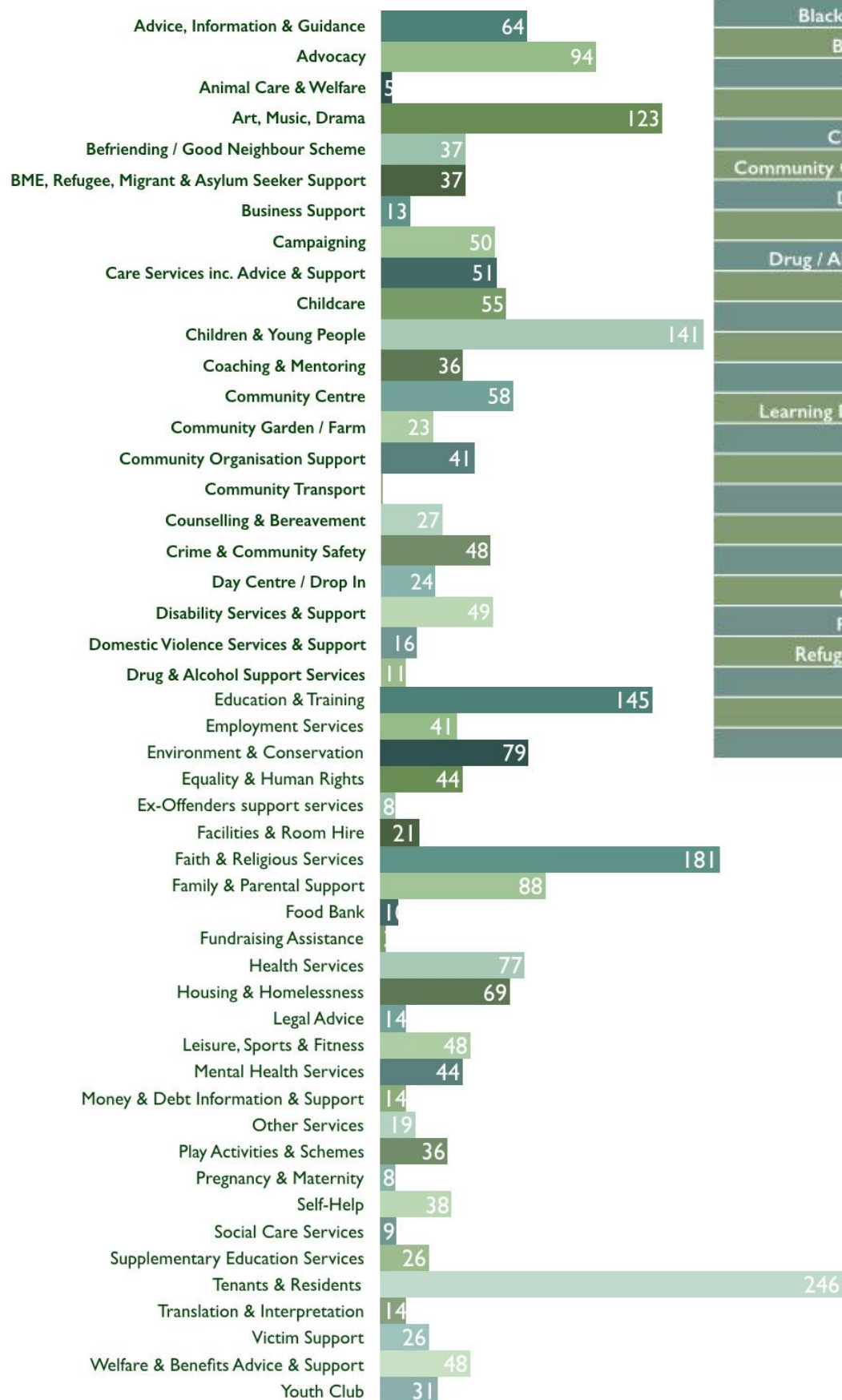
Grand Total: 1125 Civil Society groups



Charity Income Profile

Beneficiary Profile

Civil Society: Services



Beneficiary Group	No.
All People	361
Animals.	4
Basic skill needs	33
Bereaved People	9
Black, Asian, Minority, Ethnic	123
Blind / Visual Impairment	12
Camden Residents (all)	407
Carers	30
Children & Young People.	184
Community Groups & Organisations	46
Deaf / Hearing Disability	8
Disabled people	40
Drug / Alcohol / Substance users	15
Ex-offenders & families	16
Families & Parents	101
Health Conditions	64
Homeless people	51
Learning Disabilities & Difficulties	36
LGBTQI People	15
Lonely & Isolated	53
Men	21
Mental Health needs	69
Older People	103
Other beneficiary group	3
People in deprived areas	54
Refugees, asylum seekers and	77
Tenants & residents	242
Unemployed people	38
Women	88

Civil Society Service Profile

SUPPORTING THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

SETTING UP AND DEVELOPING COMMUNITY GROUPS

Camden has a diverse and vibrant Voluntary and Community Sector where charities, social groups and business, clubs, associations, residents – and all other elements of civil society - come together to tackle the borough’s challenges and help make Camden a better place for all who live, work or visit here.

For over 100 years as an infrastructure organisation providing support to front-line organisations, VAC has guided and supported Camden residents and community groups through the process of setting up and expanding their organisations: enabling them to get on with addressing the issues they were set up to tackle in the first place.

A key area of focus for VAC in 2017-18 was the set up and development of Camden Disability Action (CDA) and the Centre for Independent Living (CIL).

Following the collapse of DISC (Disability in Camden) in 2014 - which left over 3000 disabled Camden residents with limited access to specialist advice on welfare and independent living - VAC and partners led on the setup of a new disability organisation to allow the crucial services DISC delivered to continue. CDA is now run and controlled by disabled people and seeks to provide a voice for all disabled people in Camden and enhance the independence of all its members and those who it works with. In September 2017, CDA was the organisation chosen, with its voluntary sector partners, to run the new Centre for Independent Living that is being built at Greenwood Place.

This year we helped 40 groups with:

VOLUNTEERING AT CDA FULFILLED A DREAM

“My name is Iyiola and I work for Camden Disability Action (CDA). My journey as Information and Guidance Lead at CDA started when I started volunteering at VAC supporting the CDA development worker at the time. I have always had a soft spot for CDA because the organisation represents the resilience and determination of disabled people who came together to start the organisation after the demise of a previous user-led organisation which supported and empowered disabled people for close to 40 years.

When I heard VAC was supporting another organisation to replace DISC, I got in touch and was invited to have a chat with Len who was helping CDA as its development officer at the time. I soon started volunteering and must say it was as pleasant as anything I have ever experienced volunteering. The VAC team took me like a member of the family and supported me with all their resources to make me very comfortable. I soon learnt new skills and made good friends. The most important skill I gained as a volunteer was professionalism. Thanks to VAC I am now fulfilling my dream.”

Iyiola Olafimihan, Camden Disability Action

- DEVELOPING COMMUNITY GROUPS**

Setting up
Registering

Securing premises
Advising on rent

Effective governance
Policies, procedures and legal duties

Finding and Managing staff, trustees, volunteers

Digital development online, GDPR, web, database guidance

Writing a business plan

Budgeting
Finance

Collaborating with others

FUNDRAISING

STRATEGY AND BID WRITING

Most civil society groups rely on some form of funding to carry out their activities, but for new and smaller groups, the grant-writing process can be daunting. VAC steers these organisations through the fundraising process: helping to set a strategy, find suitable funding and provide 121 support through the bid-writing process. We also help groups think about how to diversify income generation so they are not wholly dependent on grant funding visit here.



SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

Aside from 121 support, this year VAC also delivered 6 funding seminars and workshops to 107 Camden residents, community organisations and other civil society stakeholders who had the chance to meet with Camden and London funders to discuss programs and priorities, and / or attend a 2 day workshop on how to write a successful grant application.

This included a Funders Fair in September 2017 and a Meet the Funder's event with the City Bridge Trust and Trust for London.

The funding seminars proved really popular with 100% of attendees agreeing or strongly agreeing that the course met their needs and was well planned and organised.

"DEMYSTIFIED THE PROCESS
OF BUDGETING FOR A FUNDING
APPLICATION"

"THE COURSE TUTOR REALLY
KNEW HER STUFF"

"NEED MORE COURSES
LIKE THIS!"



34

groups supported with income generation

Hampstead Summer Festival

13

assisted sessions to use the Grantfinder funding database

3

groups supported with crowdfunding

18

groups helped to write funding applications

Secured funding for groups worth over
£362,000

some spanning over several years



FESTIVAL FUND

Every year, VAC coordinates the administration of Camden Council's Community Festival Fund. This annual grant scheme adds brightness, culture and diversity to all areas of Camden, thanks to the local communities that work tirelessly to put these festivals together.

Together, VAC and Camden Council shortlisted the applications, which were then put to a community panel, including 2 Camden residents, for a final decision.

Out of 48 applications received for 2017/18, 44 were successful and each received a share of the £35,000 available (plus £1500 left over from the previous year) to put towards the festival costs.



Primrose Hill Festival



Marchmont Street Party

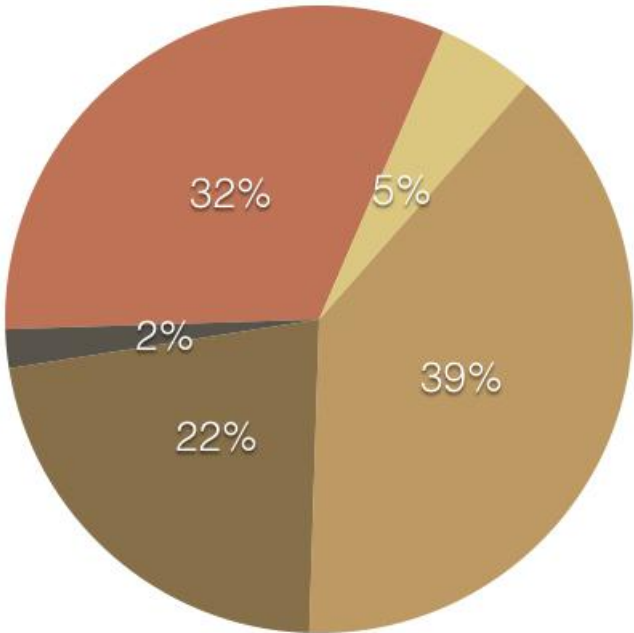
INCREASING KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING IN CIVIL SOCIETY

As a CVS, a key role of VAC is helping residents and community groups understand how political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental changes will impact on the work they do and their beneficiaries. VAC achieves this in a number of ways.

SIGNPOSTING

Through signposting, VAC is helping to increase awareness of the range of support available to civil society in Camden. This year we dealt with 147 signposting enquiries, for example, from people looking for volunteer opportunities; or groups looking for premises, funding or other groups to work with collaboratively; or help understanding the impact of new policy or technology changes e.g. GDPR.

Resolution



- Referred to I2I support
- Referred to website
- Resolved without any onward referral
- Referred to one off specialist advice
- Referred to external organisation

Signposting	%
Volunteering	12
Funding	12
Premises	10
Training	9
Policy	6
Employment / HR	6
Find a Group	5
Other	5
Collaboration / Partnership Working	3
Legal Structures	3
General assistance	3
Events	3
Governance	3
Campaigning	3
Data protection	3
Annual report	2
Legal advice	2
Setting up a group	2
Facilities management	1
Finance	1
DBS check	1
Procurement / Purchasing	1
Business planning	1
Conflict Resolution	1
Impact / Monitoring	1
Commissioning	1
Insurance	1
Planning law	1
IT and Technology	1

NEWSLETTER

Every Friday, VAC emails its newsletter to around 1500 Camden subscribers. The readership represents a broad cross-section of voluntary sector organisations as well as the public and private sectors and other interested residents and individuals. The

bulletin is a useful way of sharing local and national news, offers and resources from across the sector, briefings from VAC or other VCS groups, funding sources, jobs and volunteering opportunities in Camden, and much more.

POLICY BRIEFINGS AND SEMINARS

Local and national policy is fast-moving and complex and can be incredibly difficult for civil society groups and residents to get their head around and understand the impact this will have on the work they do.

To try and remove some of the time and headache of understanding what these changes mean for the sector, VAC produces a special briefing on a specific policy issue which we email out to our newsletter list. These are typically followed by more focused seminars which delve into the issue in more depth. This year we produced 9 policy briefings and delivered 11 policy seminars to 265 Camden residents and civil society employees.

The seminars were positively evaluated with 97% of those who completed an evaluation form agreeing or strongly agreeing that the seminar had increased their knowledge and understanding of the policy issue.

Evaluation across all seminars:

89% felt seminar was relevant for their work
 97% agreed or strongly agreed that training had increased their knowledge and understanding
 89% had increased their confidence to apply the learning
 88% felt better able to do their jobs

POLICY BRIEFINGS:

- EARLY INTERVENTION & SOCIAL PRESCRIBING
- THE WAY AHEAD STORY
- HEALTHY WEIGHT, HEALTHY LIVES
- ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
- MUTUAL AID
- POLICY SEMINARS
- SOCIAL PRESCRIBING
- RISK ASSESSMENT X 2
- HEALTH & SAFETY
- MUTUAL AID
- ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE X 3
- GDPR X 3



TRAINING

Despite a significant reduction in the resources available, VAC remains committed to offering Camden residents and civil society employees the skills and tools they need to lead and manage successful organisations and projects that address the needs and challenges of their community.

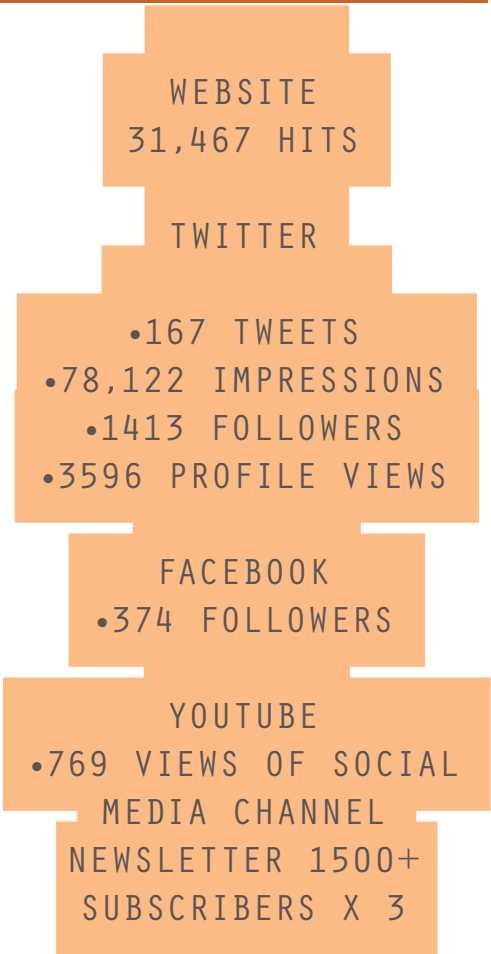
This year, in partnership with Mary Ward, VAC delivered training on Project Management

(Starter & Accredited), Governance in the Voluntary and Community Sector and Business Start up (with a focus on social businesses).

The launch of a new Coaching and Mentoring Network stimulated a lot of interest in this type of support. In response, working in partnership with the Mary Ward Centre, VAC developed and delivered an introductory course and a level 2 accredited course. Both proved very popular with 8 people securing the qualification.

COMMUNICATIONS

Whilst 1-2-1 support is still the most favoured form of communication by civil society groups, VAC has continued to expand its digital offer to a wider audience through social media and online resources.



STRATEGIC REPRESENTATION AND ADVOCACY

A less well known area of VAC's work involves representing Camden's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) at a strategic level. This involves raising awareness about what the sector can offer, connecting the sector with key strategic stakeholders, representing the sector

to influence borough policy and strategy and ensuring that the sector is not excluded from decision-making process or overlooked as a delivery partner in the provision of community based services and projects that meet the needs of local people.

This year, VAC was involved in the following strategic initiatives:

Maximising Community Resilience Conference

Mutual aid is about sharing, exchanging and building networks, resources and support between individuals and communities.

Over 100 people drawn from the public and private sectors and civil society attended. The conference enabled participants to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the broad range of activities, assets and behaviours which support mutual aid and how to use mutual aid to bridge social capital, build community resilience and reduce social isolation.

Camden Clinical Commission Board (CCCGB)

VAC continued to take an active role on the CCCGB and the Camden Local Care Strategy Board (CLCB) promoting the role and contribution of the voluntary and community sector and building links between the sector and the NHS.

Policy & Strategy

London wide and national policy impacts on the work of the sector in Camden. To keep the sector informed of the opportunities and challenges facing the sector, VAC continued to take part in the work and discussions of the London wide CVS Director's Network and the National Association of Voluntary and Community Action, as well as participating in the London Funders led review of infrastructure in the capital.

Social Prescribing

Social prescribing is a phrase that means different things to different people. During the year, VAC organised a seminar to initiate debate about the development of a social prescribing model that fits the Camden context. This work will continue in the coming year with the launch of a social prescribing network.

Coaching and Mentoring

2017-18 was the year in which VAC, working in partnership with local residents and businesses, launched the Camden Coaching and Mentoring Network. This offered up to six free sessions to people who were involved in the voluntary and community sector in the borough.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

The project work VAC is involved with brings together all elements of the infrastructure function of Developing, Connecting and Influencing. We do this by helping to setup and develop community groups through capacity building, and then bringing them together and with other partners to deliver projects that have the power to influence strategy and shape policy across the borough.

CULTURAL ADVOCACY PROJECT

The CAP is a joint venture between VAC and Mind in Camden. The CAP works with different BAMER communities through the organisations they attend and utilise, to reduce the sense of isolation they feel; raise awareness of mental health and well-being including stigma from a cultural perspective; enable individuals to access services and support in a timely way. Between December 2017 and March 2018, partnership arrangements were made with community organisations working with

Bangladeshi, Black African and Caribbean communities to co-produce peer support groups, undertake 1-1 work and run a workshop/event.

By the end of that short period, 7 co-production community partners were in place agreeing to 22 peer support group sessions each and 400 hours of 1-1 engagement work between them with users that require more personal support and counselling. They also agreed to run a total of 14 community events between them promoting mental health and well-being.

THE FUTURE

The 7 partner organisations, with guidance and support from VAC and Mind in Camden have formed a consortium, with an application to the Big Lottery, to build on and sustain the good work they have been doing with their community groups in 2018-19.

The CAP will be working in similar vein with Chinese and Irish communities in 2019-20.

THE CULTURAL ADVOCACY PROJECT

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP ADVISORY

Currently in its 15th year, the Community Partnership Advisory Service (CPAS) aims to support, promote and reinforce good practice in Child Protection and Safeguarding culture within Camden's diverse and vibrant communities.

Funded by the London Borough of Camden, the project aims to embed safeguarding culture within the fabric of service delivery; improving awareness and increasing understanding of child safeguarding issues.

Formally headed by Asha-Kin Duale, the project was relaunched in July 2018, offering a comprehensive range of introductory, advanced and customised safeguarding training courses all written, planned and delivered by VAC's new CPAS Lead Dianne Carlton-Ogunyemi.

Since October 2018 over thirty BME community organisations, charities, faith groups and supplementary schools have already benefited from a range of workshops and courses, including "Forced Marriage, FGM (Female Genital Mutilation), Safeguarding Disabled Children, Online Safety, Child Exploitation and Grooming".

Through signposting, training and consultation the project continues to improve outcomes for young people, ensuring that children remain the central focus of care when planning and delivering services.



HOW WE WORK

Our team will hold an initial consultation with members of your organisation to discuss your specific needs and experiences of your community.

We will then co-produce services and approaches with you that will make a difference for individuals and your community.

We offer financial assistance for one year to help you run activities as well as ongoing support and coaching.



HEALTHY MINDS

VAC is working with MIND in Camden and other local partners organising activities and information sessions to help people manage their health and well-being.

The Healthy Minds programme offers local people a wide range of free activities to support Camden residents rediscover their interests and uncover different community resources. For those who need a helping hand to find what's right for them, a navigator or sports buddy is there to help.

39
Grand
Total

5
each of:
Hand Massage
Shoulder Massage

3
Little Village

7
Aromatherapy

2
each of:
Middle Eastern Dance
Monday Yoga in Hpod
Third Age Project

1
each of:
Art Session
Dance session info
Tri Yoga session
WEP Choir info
Table Tennis session
information
Women's only
Dance Session
Boxercise
ACL
Other belly dance
info

Number of Sessions



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The purpose of the project is to strengthen the voice of local people who want to address the negative impacts of construction and development on their health and well-being. The information generated by this project is of value to communities who are affected by intensive building development.

In the Euston Area, the emerging Action Plan reflects a determination to influence policy at local and London level (in particular addressing poor air quality), facilitate legal protections on green spaces, and ensure that cumulative impacts of development are transparent and managed so that community health improves.

- Supported residents in Euston Area to work with professional experts and academic researchers and influence local policy.
- Supported community action through skills and knowledge development, networks and new collaborations.
- Residents' voice strengthened by academic research and environmental and legal expertise.
- New collaborations between residents and professional experts to draft policy proposals.
- Evidence on impacts of development contributed by over 1000 participants across 4 neighbourhoods.
- Delivered 3 peer-led Environmental Justice Inquiry events. Debates chaired and led by residents for residents in the Euston Area. Total 94 local residents participated.
- Research and studies from EJI influencing air quality assessment and policy.
- Influenced developers and decision makers to look cumulative impacts of building development on health in Euston Area.

Evidence examined includes health, environmental and air quality studies, community research, community consultation responses, comments on planning applications, alternative development proposals, and your Witness Statements.

The Analysis, presented as **Community Evidence** to candidates in the lead up to local council elections in May 2018, will be used to promote initiatives that alleviate the impacts of construction and new development. Suggestions include Access to Natural Green Space Standards (ANGst), tree planting and greening, rigorous health and environmental impact assessments in neighbourhoods with poor air quality, and influencing planning gains like Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy.

HOSTED BY: Environmental Law Foundation, Somers Town Neighbourhood Forum, University College London and Voluntary Action Camden.



SOCIAL PRESCRIBING SERVICE - COMMUNITY, CARE NAVIGATION AND WISH PLUS

VAC, working in partnership with Age UK Camden and Wish Plus, is delivering a social prescribing service in Camden. The work is funded by Camden Clinical Commission Group Board.

VAC's role is to recruit and train local people to volunteer in Camden GP practices.

These Community Health Advocates promote community-based services and activities that contribute to a healthier lifestyle. The project is helping to increase local knowledge (including GP knowledge) about prevention and health improving activities delivered by local organisations.

Our long-term aim is to develop the Community Health Advocate role in social prescribing and local NHS commissioning.

In 2018 the work contributed to a review for a social prescribing model for the borough.

Working with Camden NHS and the Council this has developed in to a Care Navigation and Social Prescribing collaboration with Age UK Camden and LB Camden's Wish Plus which began on October 1st 2018.

15 NEW COMMUNITY
HEALTH ADVOCATE VOLUNTEERS
REGISTERED

•16 VOLUNTEERS IN GP SURGERIES

•9 GP SURGERIES PARTICIPATING

•7 VOLUNTEERS TRAINED
IN RSPH
(ROYAL SOCIETY OF PUBLIC
HEALTH LEVEL 1)

•793 REFERRALS
TO VARIOUS ACTIVITIES/
SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS.



THE FUTURE

VAC moved from Euston to the Charlie Ratchford Centre in Chalk farm at the end of March 2018 and in partnership with the council we are making best use for community groups of the building in the last 2 years of its life.

Our social prescribing work has continued to go from strength to strength with a major expansion in October with a project with Ageing Better and Wish Plus to extend the

Health Advocates project supporting a wider age range across more of the borough.

VAC is currently looking to the future, working together with other local support organisations such as the Volunteer Centre and the Community Centres Consortium and others to make support for the sector sustainable.

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