

E-bulletin November 2011

Welcome to the November issue of the THCVS e-bulletin. Our apologies for the lack of a bulletin in October; from now on we're going to try and send something out toward the end of every month, and will also be putting out a printed newsletter soon.

Anything you'd like us to add?

We are always looking for news items, announcements and features from voluntary and community groups in Tower Hamlets. If you have anything you'd like us to put on our website, send round in a bulletin or write up as a case study, then please contact us at info@thcvs.org.uk or give us a call on 020 8980 8427

News

Tower Hamlets Mainstream Grants (MSG) Update

The CVS has been informed by the Council's Third Sector Team that they are working towards publishing the application form and guidance for the Mainstream Grants Scheme (MSG) by early January 2012. However, depending on the outcome of the Council's internal decision making process, they may be able to launch the programme earlier.

The CVS has expressed the voluntary and community sector's concern over the delay and we have been assured that ample time will be given for organisations to submit applications after the Christmas and New Year holidays. We will continue to ensure that the interests of voluntary and community groups are taken into account during the application and decision making processes.

LBTH Budget Congress – vital survey, please act now!

Tower Hamlets Council will be holding its Budget Congress in December 2011 and January 2012 to consult the community during its budget setting process. Partners of Tower Hamlets Partnership, including the CVS have been asked to present on 13 December 2011 details on how the cuts have been affecting their sector.

The CVS will cover the following in its presentation:

- Overview of financial challenges facing the third sector
- The impact of the first year of saving on the third sector
- What the opportunities and challenges are for the second year.

This will be followed by a brief workshop addressing lessons from year 1 for consideration and how can we maximise opportunities and reduce the impact of cuts in year 2

In order to inform our presentation, the CVS is requesting organisations to complete the following survey, based on the annual Big Squeeze questionnaire of London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC).

The information you provide will be essential for our understanding and presentation of the impact of cuts to voluntary and community organisations. The survey should take you about 20 minutes to complete, and we need the results **as soon as possible**, so please follow [this link](#) right now and fill in your answers.

Deadline to complete the survey – 2 December 2011

Thank you very much for your support.

Khadiru Mahdi
Chief Executive, THCVS

Tower Hamlets Infrastructure Partnership; our plans

The CVS led the Infrastructure Partnership bid that was submitted to the Big Lottery at the end of October. We applied for just over £399,000 to develop the following services for front line voluntary and community organisations:

- **Volunteering Governance Brokerage Service** – Building on the generic volunteering support and training provided by Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets, this is a new service that will provide effective support and opportunities linking prospective volunteers to organisations.
- **Expanding the Local Funding Base** -Led by the proposed merger of St. Katharine & Shadwell Trust and Isle of Dogs Community Foundation, this project will provide business engagement to generate cross sector partnerships, in-kind support and funding. It will also support organisations to maximise income through Local Giving and other online and social media methods.
- **Organisational Development** - Account 3 and Early Years Network integrating their payroll services leading to expansion and economies of scale. The payroll, community accountancy, HR, pro bono legal advice and shared IT back office services will improve recruitment and employment policies and practices, financial management and quality assurance.
- **Commissioning Consortium and Suppliers Cooperative** - The consortium will increase opportunities for local organisations to compete successfully to deliver public services, achieving value for money and maximising culturally specific benefits for local and health authorities and government sub-contracts. The Suppliers cooperative will provide quality goods and services, reduce cost and increase efficiencies for local organisations. A Suppliers Co-operative will trade stationery and office consumables, and services (telephones, utilities etc.), providing efficiencies and reducing costs for infrastructure and front line organisations.
- **Community Asset Management** - THCVS and partners in collaboration with the local authority and RSLs providing a range of support services – exploring co-locations, improved lease agreement, increase access to affordable and better managed premises and facilities through multi-agency solutions to community needs.

These services will be underpinned by cross cutting themes of equality , sustainability and creative innovation for IT solutions, marketing, promotion and fundraising .

Forums and networks covering issues including Premises, Social Enterprise, Health & Wellbeing, Employment & Training and Leadership will improve advocacy, peer to peer support, information

sharing & learning. The Leadership Forum will bring together CEOs, Directors and Senior Officers of infrastructure and front line organisations to provide peer support and seminars led by external specialists from the private, public and academic sectors.

Help spread the Digital Switchover Message

You will have noticed the posters, TV and radio adverts popping up in the last few weeks letting you know that London is going Digital.

East London CVS Network in partnership with Tower Hamlets CVS is providing support to voluntary and community sector organisations so you can help spread the digital switchover message to vulnerable people in the community and people who traditionally don't respond to advertising campaigns, but will turn to a trusted community voice such as yours.

Get paid to spread the Message

If you have an event taking place between now and the end of March 2012 and can dedicate at least one hour during the event to inform your clients and service users about digital switchover get in touch now.

Training and Grants

- We can provide you with free training about the Digital Switchover
- Promotional literature and information to make the event fun and exciting
- Small grants of between £100 - £500 to contribute towards the cost of catering, room hire or staff time [the average grant awarded is £150].

Get in Touch

Contact the Digital Switchover Project Officer [Katarzyna Zagrodniczek](#) for more information about the training and small grants. – Katarzyna Zagrodniczek – 075 2297 2302.

Increased reporting of serious incidents to Charity Commission

The Charity Commission's new annual report on compliance and investigations work shows a dramatic increase in the numbers of serious incidents being reported by charities. However, the regulator believes these are still under-reported, and hopes that charity trustees will learn from the report and avoid the problems that have led other charities into serious difficulties. To find out more read their [news item](#) or go direct to '[Charities Back on Track 2010-11](#): Themes and lessons from the Charity Commission's investigations and regulatory casework' (also available as a pdf).

Government support for advice services

A new [Advice Services Fund](#) from the government and managed by the BIG Fund will open for applications by the end of November. To be eligible, not-for-profit advice providers in England must provide advice in at least one of the following priority areas: debt, welfare benefits, employment and housing; and provide evidence of public funding cuts of at least 10% in 2011/12.

Events and Training

Civic Enterprise Clubs Co-operative

Tuesdays and Thursdays 2-4pm and 6-8pm at the Bishopsgate Institute and the Guildhall [Civic Enterprise Clubs Co-operative](#) offers training and support for new and existing enterprises and social enterprises. From business proposal, optimised website, simple book keeping, and street market trading to sales mastery, corporate governance, and the wider strategic agenda.

To book text your name, business name, and email address to 074 3236 3765, or email your name, business name, and phone number to jed.keenan@civicenterprisecclubs.org

How the London Assembly Works

9:00 -12.30, Wednesday 14th December 2011

London's Living Room, GLA, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London SE1 2AA

The purpose of this event is to provide an opportunity for voluntary and community sector organisations to hear about the work of the London Assembly in its role as watchdog for London. To find out more and reserve your place visit [London Civic Forum's website](#).

Forum meetings

There are a range of forums for voluntary and community, faith and social enterprise organisations operating in Tower Hamlets. Some elect reps to attend meetings of Community Plan Delivery Groups and Boards in order to ensure that the voluntary sector perspective is represented at a strategic level, whilst others provide a chance for colleagues from different organisations to meet, share information and form useful working relationships.

Tower Hamlets CVS facilitates a number of forums, and we're trying to gather information about all of them. If you'd like us to advertise your forum or network and/or to let people know where to find your notes and agendas online, please email nasrin.patel@thcvs.org.uk, or call Nasrin on 020 8980 8427.

Premises Users Forum

14:00 - 16:00, 8th December 2011,

Business Development Centre, 1-15 Greatorex Street, E1 5NF

This forum, facilitated by THCVS, is for voluntary and community organisations interested in issues around the usage, maintenance, management and allocation of premises. Attendance is open to all, and if you can't make this meeting you can sign up to a mailing list to receive information about dates. To register your interest and get information about the agenda, please email khadiru.mahdi@thcvs.org.uk

Social Enterprise Network

10:00 – 12:00, 9th December 2011

Business Development Centre, 1-15 Greatorex Street, E1 5NF

This forum is for new and established social enterprises, social entrepreneurs, and non-profit organisations who generate (or are hoping to generate) some of their income by selling goods or services. To register your interest and let us know you're attending, please email khadiru.mahdi@thcvs.org.uk

Voluntary & Community Sector Leaders Forum

9.30 – 11.30, 21 December 2011

Anson Room, St. Margaret's House, 15 Old Ford Road, E2 9PL

The Leadership Forum aims to bring together CEOs, Directors, senior managers and coordinators of voluntary and community organisations, large and small, in Tower Hamlets. The Forum will give sector leaders opportunities for information sharing, action learning and peer support. The inaugural meeting is designed to facilitate networking and for sector leaders plan future sessions, including seminars and specialists workshops by external experts. Please confirm your attendance or register your interests by emailing khadiru.mahdi@thcvs.org.uk

Resources

Volunteers, interns and the minimum wage

Updated official guidance has been produced on the payment of the National Minimum Wage for work experience staff and interns, Business Link's [web pages](#) also cover volunteers and voluntary workers in relation to the minimum wage.

Lawworks– free legal advice for voluntary organisations

LawWorks is a charity that provides free legal help to individuals and community groups who cannot afford to pay for it and who are unable to access legal aid. Community groups looking for a volunteer legal advisor can visit [their website](#) and find out more about how to make an application. For quick and simple legal queries, they offer an [electronic service](#) where you can email your questions and get fast responses back from a volunteer from one of their member law firms.

Registration bulletin highlights need to recruit and train trustees

The Charity Commission has produced its first [registration bulletin](#), which analyses data on new charities joining the register by looking at factors including location, aims and incomes. This edition of also reports on the findings of a trusteeship survey conducted with over 100 new applicants to the register and highlights that many of these organisations were not providing any training to new trustees. See this article on The Guardian's [Voluntary Sector Network](#) about trustee recruitment and support for more information.

How to write job descriptions and person specifications

A useful [set of resources](#) from Knowhow Nonprofit. You can see the full selection of their how to guides [here](#).

Third Sector Knowledge Portal

The Third Sector Research Council has developed Third Sector Knowledge [Portal](#), an online database of material specifically related to the voluntary and community sector, to make identifying and accessing research easier. It includes a range of reports you might find interesting or useful, including [Below the Radar](#), research into smaller unregistered community groups which are often overlooked.

Getting started with Freedom of Information requests

Freedom of Information requests can be an effective tool for a range of purposes, but many charities seem hesitant to take full advantage. So says a good starting point on the subject 'The Freedom of Information Act: a few tips for the voluntary sector user' on The Guardian's [Voluntary Sector Network](#).

Guidance on Data Protection from the ICO

The Information Commissioner's Office produces a range of useful information around the practical and legal aspects of data protection for organisations and individuals. Their guidance for charities is [here](#), and their whole site is well worth a look.

The London Deanery's official 'Inspired by London 2012' project: Team Up

The Deanery is responsible for training doctors and dentists in the Capital. Their Team Up project will see doctors, dentists and other health professionals in training volunteering to spend time with community organisations to improve the health, wellbeing and fitness of their members or the people they work with.

Their hope is that the projects we get involved with will lead to wellbeing benefits that last through 2012 and beyond as well as enduring partnerships with community organisations. To find out more and to apply see their [website](#).

Finding the funds

We regularly update our website with news about grants and send out announcements about new funding to our members as we get it. To help you identify and apply for sources of funding, here's a short guide to fundraising resources available online and in print:

[Tower Hamlets 4 Community](#) is an online database hosted on the Tower Hamlets website and a great place to start your search. Use the [search page](#) and the tabs just above it to identify funding for different types of work.

- You can also access [GrantNet](#) via the Tower Hamlets site. Registration is free and fast.
- The Council's Third Sector team produces and distributes a regular Funding Information Bulletin, as well as posting up information about funding distributed by agencies within the borough. Find out more on their [community grants pages](#) and download the latest Bulletin [here](#).
- [Funding Central](#) from [NCVO](#) is easy to use, frequently updated and can help you to narrow down your grants search in order to find the most appropriate sources of funding
- [J4b funding information portal](#) offers free access to a range of searchable grants databases
- [Fundinginformation.org](#) isn't free to subscribe to, but you can sign up for a free temporary password in order to have a look around
- [Grantsnet](#) offers a very simple keyword search, much like Google

Online fundraising resources and other useful information

The [funding and income section of the KnowHow NonProfit pages](#) offers a great accessible overview of issues like fundraising, commissioning and trading. Their '[how to write an application to a charitable trust](#)' page offers some useful pointers, and their [how to fundraise in tough times](#) article is particularly relevant at the moment.

- The [Information about Fundraising](#) pages from the Institute of Fundraising contain a huge amount of information, from tips on getting started, to advice on data protection and raising money at events
- This [Guide to Income Sources](#) from NCVO's Sustainable Funding Project lays out and links to a wealth of useful information
- The main pages of [Funding Central](#), also from NCVO, provide useful resources and regular email updates about what grants are available
- [Funding Fundamentals](#) is a concise online guide from the (now closed) Finance Hub; still useful and relevant now
- [London Funders' E-gateway for fund seekers](#) is a brief guide to information sources on funding for London's voluntary and community sector. Their [Jigsaw guide](#), in addition, is aimed particularly at groups working with children and young people
- [5 Steps to Funding Success](#) from j4bcommunity is a neat and clear starter guide to the key things you need in order to access funding

- Grantfinder is a subscription based grants database, but their site also offers some free information, including this useful guide to [Writing a fundraising strategy](#)
- [Advice on Applying to a Charitable Foundation](#) is a brief but readable guide featuring some useful links from the [Association of Charitable Foundations](#)
- The Directory of Social Change publish a range of guides to [fundraising techniques](#). [The Complete Fundraising Handbook by Nina Botting and Michael Norton](#) is a good place to start.

If you need help with fundraising or other organisational development issues, please contact our Development Officer, Gemma Cossins – gemma.cossins@thcvs.org.uk

About THCVS

THCVS is an independent membership organisation for voluntary, community faith and social enterprise organisations in the borough of Tower Hamlets. We are a registered charity (no 1137143) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (no 07251141) with a voluntary Board of Trustees elected from our membership

We offer:

- Information and resources for voluntary and community organisations
- Training courses on a range of organisational and strategic topics, including fundraising, commissioning and sustainable IT
- Free organisational development work support for organisations working in Tower Hamlets
- Networking, representation and information sharing through a range of themed networks
- Strategic representation and policy work; helping organisations to communicate the concerns and needs of their clients to the One Tower Hamlets partnership and other key strategic bodies
- Support in understanding, promoting and using ‘Working Together’, the Tower Hamlets Compact agreement between the statutory and voluntary sectors
- Events and conferences on relevant issues, bringing organisations together to learn and take action

Our team:

Chief Executive: Khadiru Mahdi Khadiru.Mahdi@thcvs.org.uk

Information and Admin Officer: Nasrin Patel Nasrin.Patel@thcvs.org.uk

Development Officer: Gemma Cossins Gemma.Cossins@thcvs.org.uk

Why have I received this bulletin?

You have been sent this bulletin because you are on our extended mailing list. The list we use contains hundreds of addresses gathered from a range of sources, and also includes our 149 members. We try to keep our information as up to date as possible but we are aware that some of the addresses we have might no longer in use, or belong to people who might not want to receive this bulletin. If you would like to stop receiving these bulletins or would like messages sent to you at an alternative email address then please let us know as soon as possible.

To find out more about Tower Hamlets CVS, catch up on news in between mailings and find information about how to sign up as a member, please see our website at www.thcvs.org.uk