



We asked: 'What 3 things would you want to see the most to create stronger voluntary, community and faith groups in Newham?'

47 organisations responded to this question, with a total of 119 responses between them. Responses that simply state the theme (e.g. better communication) are omitted. Occasionally responses straddle more than one theme and therefore appear twice. Responses organised by themes and sub-themes are presented below.

Theme 1: Collaboration between council and VCF sector (26)

Council working with the voluntary sector
Inclusion of faith groups in decision making
Involvement in planning
Continued meaningful involvement in planning and reviewing services
Consultation between decision makers and local people
Information sharing to VCS - to improve the quality
Joined up working together
Increased involvement of charities in localised regeneration decision making
Long term strategy
Dialogue/ collaboration with LA's service providers
Continued opportunities for dialogue with council to shape the future
Listening to each other
Shared vision
Shared focus on prevention
Long term funding for the VC&F groups for collaboration and capacity building

Culture Change

Transformational change in culture across LBN
Newham to let the VCS take the lead on new initiatives
The power dynamic needs to change. Too often, LBN superimposes stuff that ignores what the sector is already doing, rather than trying to work with what is already there, and/or sets things up on its terms and expects the VCS to adapt to the council's agenda. We love that the council is much more willing to work with us currently, but there's still more work to be done to achieve genuine partnership and mutual respect.
Real mutual partnership underpinning creative solutions to meet needs
Newham to consult with the VCS first before taking any action

Transparency

Greater transparency – the council tends to work with the usual suspects, people who shout loudest or those they first see when they look up. These aren't necessarily the only or best groups to work with. This also has an important diversity dimension – I suspect that a lot of the smaller, less formal, more innovative VC activity will be non-white led and a higher proportion of the more established organisations will have less diverse leadership. There must be better and more transparent processes in consulting with and partnering VCS.
VCS commitment to transparency and equal opportunities
Transparency of how funding for delivery plan is allocated
More transparency and accountability mechanisms to build public trust

Theme 2: Coordination within the sector (25)

Greater coordination – we would all benefit from more mapping and organised, accessible knowledge of who is doing what out there, who we can hook up with, who we can refer to, etc. Better relationships between different groups.
A more coordinated response from council and voluntary groups.
Help in establishing where to direct our resources.
Working with the smaller organisations as to their needs.
Shared resources/ good practice.
Commitment by all funded VCS organisations to adult and child safeguarding

Partnership working

Encourage partnership working
Partnerships with larger neighbouring organisations
Sharing information and partnership working
More opportunities to discuss joint working

Systems/resources to enable connection

Funded voluntary sector coordination
Better signposting to each other's organisations
Increase the connection between LA & VCF groups to do things
More open free capacity and networking opportunities
A good central system/website (easy to access) details about the organisations and projects in Newham
Connective Forum
A directory
A central volunteering system
Interfaith Forum
Volunteering channels
Connecting provision with greatest need (referrals)

Theme 3: Communication (12)

Regular updates.
Better communication about what groups are achieving.
List of services available.
Councillors at the forefront.
Continued info sharing about services.
Up to date information and periodic sessions.
Strengthening the flow of reliable, timely information.
Cultural sensitivity and understanding

Theme 4: Recognition (7)

Recognition of the incredible work that the voluntary/faith sector does in Newham to help the community
Genuine recognition of the unique contribution of the VCF sector and its importance
Celebrating achievements of voluntary, community and faith groups
That voluntary organisations will be considered first before the local authority commissions the same services elsewhere after the hard work that the voluntary organisation has put in and this will also mean that their service will not be duplicated and the borough will save money and still get effective work done

Theme 5: Resourcing (21)

More council funding

Direct funding from Newham Council to support our services.
More contracting opportunities
Increase grant support

In-kind resourcing

Providing opportunities for such organisations to obtain better discounted community hall hiring for fundraising events
Business/Corporate tariff to feed into partially funding VSO services in Borough
Access to LA-led resources, e.g. venues for activities, office space, etc.
Affordable venue options for groups who don't own buildings
Use of buildings that voluntary/faith sector could use to make a difference in the community
Increased funding-support in kind
Sharing resources

Access to funding in general

Easier access to funding
Long term funding for the VC&F groups for collaboration and capacity building
Support grants
Sustainable funding (not just on Covid relief)
Increased funding opportunities
Grant funding to ensure all VCS can engage

Funding for specific services

Funded Disabled People's Organisation delivering services
Funded housing advice centre
Resource initiative to provide low cost core services for VSOs (Accounting; HR; office space; Marketing; fundraising)
Financial support for people struggling

Theme 6: Support (13)

More capacity-building support – Newham’s VCS has been undervalued and underinvested in for a generation. Ultimately, it’s Newham’s people who lose out as a result.
To support small organisations
Greater support for small unincorporated bodies
The council need to support groups like mine we are in great need of a place to operate from.
Opportunities to give more support online.
An overall support body providing mentoring advice to organisations.
Training by the Council for all the voluntary, community and faith groups in Newham, e.g., Safeguarding, GDPR, health & safety, fire safety, first aid, management/ supervision, finance management, bid writing/ fundraising, training for volunteers.
Training.
Active support from Newham Council.
For the Council's help not to wane.
Council to keep working together and providing support.
Helping organisations improve their outreach and communications
Community officers

Theme 7: Other

Lessen the grip of the faith sector.
Compassionate communities
That if the borough feel that things have eased up that without duplication of services between the voluntary sector, that selective groups with valuable services will be kept on.
Support for the socially isolated.
Equal opportunity for all organisations
Accountability
Chain access would have helped us before now and would still be useful for us