

## Organisational Development: Our Offer

THCVS provides free information, advice support to voluntary and community organisations in Tower Hamlets. This document lays out the principles and values underpinning this work, who it is aimed at, and the way it is delivered.

### What is development work?

At THCVS we use the term 'development work' to talk about the advice and support we give to voluntary and community organisations. We provide these services to:

- Help local organisations to ensure that they are run safely, legally and effectively
- Help clients to improve and strengthen the services that their organisations provide
- Help organisations to develop and sustain their work over time
- Encourage mutual learning, support and development
- Support the voluntary sector to be an independent and active element of life of Tower Hamlets

Over the past 5 years our support has covered a range of topics, including:

- Governing documents, organisational structures and charity and company registration
- Start-up, including information about social enterprise, for very new organisations
- Project planning, budgeting and wider strategic and business planning
- Fundraising advice, including bid feedback and support with creating fundraising strategies
- Guidance on commissioning and partnership working
- Information and advice about the practical aspects of running an organisation including insurance, financial management, health and safety, data protection, safeguarding, premises and employment issues
- Support and advice for organisations facing crisis and/or closure
- Support and representation for organisations in dispute with the local authority or CCG

### Principles and values

#### We work for your clients

Although our clients are mostly organisations and groups, the **ultimate beneficiaries of the advice we give are the people of Tower Hamlets**. By helping voluntary organisations to become more sustainable and to operate safely and legally we hope to contribute to increased quality and sustainability of voluntary sector services for local people. We do not work with organisations simply for their own sake, but for the sake of the communities, places and activities they support.

#### We work with you

Development work is a collaborative process between the worker and the client organisation but the responsibility for making the change remains with the client. THCVS can work with you and offer advice, templates, guidance and support for as long as you need (and sometimes on a very intensive level) but we will not plan projects, write documents or manage money for our clients. This includes writing funding bids; we can help you but we will not write a whole application for you.

THCVS' development work is underpinned by our belief in –

### **1. Independence**

THCVS respects and supports the independence and autonomy of our development work clients and the support we give is offered on the basis that we believe it to be in the best interests of the client organisation and its service users.

### **2. Equality, diversity & inclusivity**

Our aim is to make our development work accessible to a wide range of organisations and communities. Where possible, we will do outreach work and targeted marketing work where we notice any gaps.

Our development workers will raise equalities, accessibility and inclusion related issues when working with clients, encouraging them to utilise local information and good monitoring and evaluation practices to help to ensure that the services they are offer are welcoming and inclusive. Where necessary we will challenge bad practice and develop resources and training, as well as links with specialist providers and networks.

### **3. Openness & transparency**

THCVS is committed to being open, honest, accountable, and transparent in all our transactions. In terms of our development work, this means that we will be honest in our appraisal of any bids, policies or other documents you ask us to review. We will be as neutral and open as possible when supporting you through organisational disputes or crises; the key consideration in such cases has to be the service users of an organisation rather than any particular individual or group of staff, volunteers or board members or the preservation of any particular organisational culture or status quo.

If we aren't able to answer your query or provide you with the support you need, either because of a lack of capacity, skills or knowledge on our part or any conflict of interest or other consideration, we will let you know and where possible refer you to another source of advice.

### **4. Respect and confidentiality**

Development work is most effective when there is mutual trust and openness between the client organisation and the development worker. Confidentiality, sensitivity and respect are key to this. Our development work is bound by THCVS' organisational policies, including Equal Opportunities and Data Protection:

- a. All development work case notes and additional documentation (draft and final funding bids, business plans, policies etc.) are stored safely on the THCVS system and are not accessible to anyone outside the THCVS staff team.
- b. The vast majority of notes, files and emails relating to development work cases are only ever viewed by the caseworker you speak to and/or meet with. In some cases two or more colleagues at THCVS may need to work on a case together or a development worker might seek a second opinion from a manager – details of the case are still kept confidential within THCVS.
- c. Our funders require us to report on the work that we do, including development work, so we may tell them that we have worked with your organisation. We will not share the details of your case in our written reports, however, and where reporting on issues covered (e.g. governance, fundraising, finance) we group these anonymously.

- d. From time to time our funders (including LBTH) may ask to see evidence of our development work in the form of case notes, action plans, or database records. In these cases we only share a small amount of information (e.g. 1 or 2 pieces per quarter). We never pass information on to our Monitoring Officer(s) and do not let them know the detail of any of our cases; information is shown during the course of monitoring visits and where necessary the names and identifying details of clients are concealed.
- e. We will only ever use traceable information from/about your organisation with your permission.
- f. In addition to protecting and anonymising your organisation's information when dealing with our own funders, we will also maintain the same discretion when speaking with other stakeholders (e.g. your own funders or potential funders, council departments, representatives of other statutory services) and the wider voluntary sector.
- g. The only time when we would deliberately breach an organisation's anonymity is in the case of illegality – i.e. when we are obligated by law to report wrongdoing

## Current Service Provision (2018-19)

Our organisational development runs across three projects:

### Support to Council Funded Organisations

This project is run in partnership with [Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets](#) and supports organisations funded by the council's Mainstream Grant programme to develop and improve the management, monitoring and evaluation of their MSG-funded projects.

If your organisation currently **has MSG funding** you can access this project in two ways:

1.) **By contacting us directly.** If you have any concerns about your MSG monitoring, would like us to look over a policy, plan or funding bid or would just like to get a second opinion on something, you are welcome to contact us directly.

2.) **By council referral.** Council MSG Monitoring Officers (and some other staff) are aware of this project and may encourage you to seek support. You can ask for a referral directly.

### Support to Local Organisations

This project is run in partnership with [Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets](#) and [Tower Hamlets Community Transport](#) and is open to all voluntary and community organisations (both registered and unregistered, including faith groups and social enterprises) in Tower Hamlets. You do not have to have council funding to access support and there is no official referral route.

The project can provide free support on a wide range of issues, including planning, fundraising, project management, finance, governance, charity registration, policies and procedures and staff and volunteer management. To find out more and get advice, contact Michael Dunlop, Development Manager ([michael.dunlop@thcvs.org.uk](mailto:michael.dunlop@thcvs.org.uk)) or Jane Bell, Development Officer ([jane.bell@thcvs.org.uk](mailto:jane.bell@thcvs.org.uk)) or call us on 020 8980 8427

Both projects aim to help local voluntary and community sector organisations to improve and develop their systems and processes around a wide range of issues, particularly:

- Project management
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Governance
- Staff management
- Quality marks and accreditations, including Investing in Volunteers and PQASSO
- Financial management
- Fundraising

### Partnership Development and support for Health & Wellbeing organisations

This is offered on a one to one basis and through a range of courses, events and mailings. Contact our Partnerships Manager, Alison Robert [alison.robert@thcvs.org.uk](mailto:alison.robert@thcvs.org.uk) to find out more.

All our work can take the following forms, depending on your organisation's needs:

#### 1. Demand-led/quick queries:

Our demand-led service is for first queries or brief questions, for example feedback on funding bids or queries about organisational structures. It operates mostly on an email and phone basis, though in-person appointments can be arranged if necessary. Service is generally provided on a first come, first served basis though we may prioritise our responses when demand is high.

## **2. In depth/intensive support:**

Sometimes we need to work with a client over a longer period of time in order to help them make real, sustainable changes to their organisation. Generally the support we offer will total 2 – 28hrs, depending on your case. This will typically include:

- A diagnosis/health check meeting to discuss your strengths, concerns, needs and goals
- Attendance at a board meeting and conversations with different staff and volunteers from your organisation in order to gain a holistic picture of your services and structure
- Priority setting/action planning resulting in mutually agreed plan with milestones
- Regular contact by email, phone and in meetings to check and support the implementation of action plans
- A review and evaluation of your organisation's progress to find out what has worked, what has changed and to agree on next steps

Sometimes it's hard to know how much help you'll need or what form it will take – we aim to be as accessible and as flexible as possible, so please feel free to contact us for a chat to find out what might work best for you.

## **3. Cohort work**

- Small group work around particular issues or for particular sub-sector organisations and in house training for boards of trustees and groups of staff

## **Eligibility**

Our development work is available to voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise organisations operating in Tower Hamlets.

a.) Organisations do not have to have a permanent base in Tower Hamlets to be eligible for support, but they must be providing or planning services for people who live work or study in the borough.

b.) If an organisation operates in more than one borough we will focus primarily on their work in Tower Hamlets. If, over the course of our working with them, it becomes apparent that the bulk of an organisation's work takes place in another geographical area we will refer them on to more appropriate sources of local advice in the relevant borough(s).

c.) An organisation does not have to be fully formed in order to access our services. We welcome queries from very new, developing organisations and from potential founders and social entrepreneurs who would like to know more about whether starting a new organisation is the right step for them and how to go about it.

d.) We do not give advice to purely profit-focussed, private businesses or to political parties. Trading organisations with social aims and campaign groups ARE however eligible for support; if you are unsure where your group fits on this spectrum you are welcome to contact us for more information.

e.) Whilst we recognise and understand that many people founding or joining voluntary organisations also hope to get paid work in the sector, if it becomes apparent that a client (whether an individual person or a whole organisation) is primarily interested in personal gain rather than in providing services to others, we will not be able to offer support.

f.) As with all THCVS services, our equalities and related policies apply to the provision of our development work. If an organisation's aims, activities or behaviour appear to be in conflict with our own policies and values we reserve the right to challenge them and, where deemed necessary, to withdraw our support