

# **North East London Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (NEL VCFSE) Collaborative**

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## **Representatives NEL VCFSE Collaborative 2025 - 2026**

## About the NEL VCFSE Collaborative

The North East London (NEL) Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) Collaborative works closely with [NHS North East London](#) to provide strategic input and representation for the VCFSE across NEL. The NEL VCFSE collaborative currently meets monthly and aims to ensure a two way flow of communication from VCFSE to ICB.

In June 2025 we appointed our representatives which include seven place-based representatives and five thematic representatives. Together they'll provide strategic leadership and work closely with the ICB and wider partners to ensure parity in collaboration and further advocate the VCFSE in its role in addressing health inequalities and supporting health and wellbeing across NEL.

The NEL VCFSE Collaborative is committed to our five values:

1. Equity and inclusivity - Championing compassionate, collaborative, and inclusive multi-professional leadership.
2. Collaborative – Meaningful integration with the ICB as a coordinated VCFSE voice.
3. Innovative – VCFSE sector contributing expertise in an equitable manner in commissioning, service design and improvement processes.
4. Transparent – Building trust across sectors and ensuring the VCFSE is a valued partner.
5. Person and community focused – Strengths-based approach by championing our people and communities.

## Background

Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) were set up on 1st July 2022 in order to improve the health and wellbeing of people across a sub-regional area and comprise an Integrated Care Partnership and an Integrated Care Board. They exist to support integration and partnership with health & social care organisations to improve population health, build greater equity and reduce health inequalities.

NHS England guidance for the implementation of ICS requires the establishment of a 'VCSE alliance', and targets to enable this have been set:

*“By [July] 2022 integrated care partnerships (ICPs) and the ICB are expected to have developed a formal agreement for engaging and embedding the VCSE sector in system-level governance and decision making arrangements, ideally by working through a VCSE alliance to reflect the diversity of the sector.”*



### **Peter Laing – Newham representative**

Peter has over 30 years' experience working in Newham across local government and the voluntary, community and faith sector. He is Chief Executive of the [Newham Community Renewal Programme](#) - a charity supporting over 3,500 people a year through housing and homelessness services, immigration advice, adult learning, food and energy support, young carers services, and community wellbeing programmes. He is also a long-standing board member of One Newham, the borough's council for voluntary service (CVS). Peter's career began in 1991 at Newham Council, where he held a range of youth focussed and project management roles. Since 2003, he has worked in Newham's voluntary sector, including for Bonny Downs Community Association, Ascension Community Trust, and West Silvertown Foundation, with a focus on community-led responses to inequality and poverty.

Peter is passionate about tackling the social determinants of health. As Newham's VCFSE place-based representative, Peter is committed to ensuring the voice of local people and community organisations helps to shape health and care strategy in the borough.

Email: [peter.laing@renewalprogramme.org.uk](mailto:peter.laing@renewalprogramme.org.uk)



### **Shelley Hart – Havering representative**

Shelley Hart, a dedicated figure in the voluntary and community Sector since 2001, began her journey with Victim Support Havering. It was there that she first witnessed the remarkable contributions volunteers make to an organisation's success.

In 2014, Shelley joined HAVCO (CVS for Havering) as the Volunteer Centre and Quality Manager and later founded the [Havering Volunteer Centre](#) (HVC) as an independent charity.

Her passion and determination have been pivotal to the HVC's growth and reputation. Under Shelley's leadership, the organisation has embraced strong community values and a positive, "can-do" ethos. She has fostered robust partnerships with statutory bodies, including the local authority and health services, who have turned to the HVC in times of crisis for vital community support.

Most recently, Shelley played a key role in developing the Health and Wellbeing Hub at St George's Centre, highlighting the crucial role the voluntary sector in improving health and wellbeing.

Email: [shelley.hart@haveringvc.org.uk](mailto:shelley.hart@haveringvc.org.uk)

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### **Carrie Hirst – City & Hackney representative**

Carrie is passionate about connecting people, ideas, and sectors – usually over a good cup of tea!

Rooted in the values of the voluntary sector, Carrie has worked across London leading community health programmes within the voluntary sector; redefining how NHS patient & public engagement is delivered across West London and spearheading Public Health's Covid-19 community engagement in Tower Hamlets.

Currently Director of Health Transformation at [Hackney CVS](#), Carrie drives collaboration across sectors to strengthen the voice of local charities & community groups, creating spaces for joint solutions to health and care system challenges.

Email: [carrie@hcvcs.org.uk](mailto:carrie@hcvcs.org.uk)

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### **Vicky Scott – Tower Hamlets representative**

Vicky Scott is Chief Executive of [Tower Hamlets CVS](#). She joined in January 2023 from neighbouring Hackney CVS where she was Head of Operations and helped to steer the organisation through COVID. During the pandemic she was inspired by the powerful leadership of community groups and is an advocate of equitable partnership working.

She believes in the crucial role of CVSs to empower the hundreds of local charities and community groups to create real and radical change and to reduce health inequalities.

With many years' experience of charity governance, both in the arts and the voluntary & community sector, her experience includes all aspects of running charities including creating organisational change and building engaged and enthused teams. She is also Interim Chair at Lewisham Refugee & Migrant Network.

Email: [Vicky.scott@thcvcs.org.uk](mailto:Vicky.scott@thcvcs.org.uk)

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### **Jenny Ellis – Redbridge representative**

Jenny Ellis is Chief Executive Officer at [Community Action Redbridge](#), an infrastructure organisation supporting strong and resilient communities where people lead happy, healthy, and fulfilling lives.

She has a background in participation and social enterprise, and previously held leadership roles at Peter Bedford Housing Association and Elfrida Rathbone Camden. Jenny brings over a decade of experience of building strong and effective partnerships across the voluntary, public, and private sectors.

She is passionate about the power of community and has a particular interest in health creation - a concept that shifts the focus from treating ill-health to actively creating the conditions for good health by addressing the root causes of preventable illness and health inequity.

Jenny currently serves as Acting Vice-Chair of Redbridge Place-based Partnership.

Email: [jenny@communityactionredbridge.org.uk](mailto:jenny@communityactionredbridge.org.uk)

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### **JJ Khun – Workforce and Volunteers representative**

JJ Khun is the founder of [WIILMA](#), a creative health organisation in East London that exists to reduce loneliness & isolation and increase community cohesion through shared world music, arts, crafts, heritage and culture. WIILMA innovates different intergenerational, experimental approaches and also has a particular interest in issues faced by people of all ages with seen and unseen disabilities.

JJ has been volunteering since the age of 9 across multiple sectors, and his professional career outside of WIILMA has spanned across multiple charities, sectors, funders and the central government level, including health.

JJ is passionate about promoting the value of volunteering to individuals, communities and organisations.

He is also a charity ambassador for the British Library, supporting the relationship between charities, businesses, communities and the public sector.

Email: [jj@wiilma.org](mailto:jj@wiilma.org)

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**Vanessa Morris – Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism representative**

Vanessa is the NEL VCS representative for Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism. She's lived in North East London for many years, and worked here for over 10 years, working with people with mental health, substance use, homelessness and other challenges. She has used services to support her own enduring mental health needs for over 30 years.

She is the CEO of [Mind in the City, Hackney and Waltham Forest](#), a local charity seeking to reduce health inequities and to make sure that anyone with a mental health difficulty gets both support and respect.

Email: [vanessa.morris@mindchwf.org.uk](mailto:vanessa.morris@mindchwf.org.uk)

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**Ora Johnson – Babies, Children and Young People (BCYP) representative**

Ora Johnson is the [Head of Fernbank Children's Centre](#), a Postgraduate Early Years Teacher and also the co-founder and Director of [Hula 4 Fun CIC](#), a community-led initiative in Hackney which promotes physical activity and mental well-being through the joy of hula hooping.

With over 15 years of experience in Hackney's early years and community sector, she is a passionate advocate for babies, children, and young people (BCYP) and deeply committed to equity and amplifying underrepresented voices.

Born and raised in Hackney, Ora's leadership is grounded in lived experience and is a trusted voice for marginalised communities. She has served as a professional and community ambassador and was appointed by the Department for Education as an expert mentor supporting nurseries and children's centres across London.

As the Babies, Children and Young People (BCYP) NEL VCFSE Collaborative representative, Ora focuses on outreach, co-design, and systemic change. Her work ensures that community working, prevention, and accountability are rooted in the needs, rights, and dreams of babies, children, and young people throughout North East London and beyond. She looks forward to working collaboratively with communities and partners to help create lasting and inclusive change for children, families, and the systems that support them.

Email: [hula4fun.cic@gmail.com](mailto:hula4fun.cic@gmail.com)





### **Jeremy Simmons – Faith representative**

Jeremy is Policy and Programme Manager at [FaithAction](#), working to raise the profile and voice of the faith-based sector in a range of settings, both nationally and locally. FaithAction is a national network, with “feet on the ground” in North East London, and Jeremy connects with faith networks and inter-faith fora across this footprint.

He leads FaithAction’s programme of work with the Department of Health and Social Care, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and NHS England, and is passionate about ensuring grassroots faith-based perspectives shape policy and service delivery, having their voices heard in a changing health and care landscape.

Email: [jeremy.simmons@faithaction.net](mailto:jeremy.simmons@faithaction.net)