



where volunteering
and community action
transform lives

Annual Report

2021-2022



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Trustees

Matthew Ayres – Chair

Matthew Hazell – Treasurer

Sue Annis

Viola Etienne

Phayza Fudlalla

Nafsika Thalasis – resigned May 7th 2022

Edmond Heng Kuen Yeo

Hilary Nightingale – appointed June 16th 2021

Halaleh Taheri – appointed June 16th 2021

Eva Fritz – elected September 8th 2021

Kim O'Donoghue – elected September 8th 2021



ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE 2021 - 2022

Introduction

Another year has flown past bringing with it further lockdowns and huge pressures on our local Westminster communities and the organisations we serve. The team have continued to deliver effective services against a backdrop of continued working from home and uncertainty.

Just after the period of this report, we were successful in our bids to secure our 2 key and core contracts with Westminster City Council to provide support services to Westminster Charities and for our work as Westminster's Volunteer Centre. This year has also seen a further extension in our work as a provider of Social Prescribers and Well-Being coaches. The SP and Coaching team is now our largest, and our work with NHS colleagues locally in Westminster and across NW London is also growing and taking up more of our time. We continue to deliver our core work and our smaller but equally important projects – supporting adults with learning disabilities into volunteering and matching volunteer befrienders with older citizens.

Our commitment over the year ahead is to continue to provide the evidence and to lobby hard for more resources to reach our vital voluntary and community sector partners.

As always, the Board of Trustees owe the whole team and our volunteers a huge debt of gratitude for their hard work and commitment to the organisation.



Paddington Recreation Ground - Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebration



Our Voluntary Sector Support Service (CVS)

During the year, the CVS team of Emma and Davide provided one-to-one support sessions to 42 registered VCS organisations in Westminster. This was provided through 83 email, online or telephone consultations. The team also supported applicants to a new North Westminster Fund which resulted in a significant increase in our work with new start-up small groups and charities (11 this year; normally 3-5), evidencing the impact local authority funding can have.

We ran 11 network events which were attended by a total of 285 people from the wider voluntary sector. Our over-arching Westminster Community Network (WCN) held three meetings; there were three Older People and four Health & Wellbeing Network meetings. These meetings were held online apart from one WCN in-person meeting at Grand Junction. Health & Wellbeing continues to be a major focus for all these meetings, as the sector struggles to support communities badly affected by the pandemic, by continuing cuts to statutory services and by the extreme housing crisis in Westminster.

We provided six Meet the Funders online meetings, attended by 78 people from Westminster VCS organisations – funders who attended were Lloyds Bank Foundation, Heritage Lottery Fund, the GLA (Untold Stories and Community Micro Grants), Childhood Trust, City Bridge Trust and Postcode Society Trust. The sessions were planned and organised by One Westminster, KCSC and Sobus – enabling VCS reps from the three boroughs to come together to hear from funders and ask questions. Funders have also welcomed this method of reaching a wider but still localised audience through tri-borough online meetings.

On behalf of the National Academy for Social Prescribing, we delivered four sessions of ‘Learning Together’ for 14 voluntary organisations from West London, including 7 based in Westminster. Organisations were clearly engaged and benefitted from the opportunity to learn about and discuss the opportunities for their work which Social Prescribing and new partnership-focussed structures within the NHS might offer.

CASE STUDY

Oleg was referred to us by London Plus. Originally from Ukraine, he is based in Westminster and together with his 10-strong team of volunteers has set up a website providing up to date information and resources for Ukrainians either already in the UK or seeking to come here: <https://uk.ukrainian.community>. He would like to set up a charity to be able to expand the project and make it sustainable by securing funding and employing some of the current volunteers. Oleg had previously met with charity lawyers, but he was not satisfied with the advice he was given.

During a couple of 1-2-1 sessions, we discussed the different options available to him and which one would best fit the project. After choosing to register as a CIO, we explained the process and requirements in detail and signposted him to templates and resources available on the One Westminster website, letting him know that he could contact us at any point during the process. We also explained the role and responsibilities of trustees, how to fundraise, grants available, resources and networks to connect to other organisations in the borough.

Oleg was very satisfied with our support and will be in contact with us after drafting the constitution for the charity.



Our Volunteer Centre Service

In response to the pandemic, we worked much closer with Westminster City Council over the year, running an Employment Support Volunteering Project and referring potential volunteers to Westminster Connects, the Council's volunteer programme.

Over the course of the year, Nigel, Samia and Peshang responded to over 600 volunteer enquiries. Our support to people interested in volunteering was mainly by phone and email, however, promotional outreach sessions were able to resume towards end of 2021.

Over 90 clients, particularly from vulnerable groups we worked with, attended the hybrid 'Introduction to Volunteering Workshop' held during the educational year, which is delivered in partnership with Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES).

Two gardening days were held in Westminster Parks with 35 volunteers helping to prune roses in Paddington Street Gardens and clearing leaves at St John's Wood Church Ground Gardens during November.

We hosted four Volunteer Coordinators Network meetings, with an average of 20 Westminster VCS groups attending each meeting. These included a talk from the DBS Regional Officer for Greater London and group discussions about the challenges and priorities facing Westminster Volunteer Coordinators and the ongoing support they would like from One Westminster.

Over 40 staff/volunteers from Westminster Voluntary Organisations attended two zoom Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers Workshop.

One Westminster carried out DBS checks for volunteers for Westminster Connects and One Westminster Projects, which included the Wellbeing Chat Service, Volunteer Employment Support project, Walking Companions Volunteer role and Afghan refugee volunteer roles.

Volunteer Employment Support Project

The Westminster Connects Volunteer Employment Support Project continued throughout the year. Its objective was to recruit volunteers to provide 1-2 hours weekly sessions for 6 months to an unemployed Westminster resident to support their progress into employment. We worked closely with existing key partners such as Westminster Job Centre and the wider Westminster VCS, which resulted in a high number of client referrals and self-referrals.

Overall figures for the year were following:

59 volunteers registered

38 matches - volunteers matched with unemployed residents

7 training sessions held – attended by total of 42 volunteers



CASE STUDY

Volunteer's Name: Jason Green

Time Volunteering: November 2020 – present day

I have supported a number of unemployed clients over this period.

The first client had not been in the work environment for six years due to ill health. She did not have a CV and had not used LinkedIn. As I started conversations with her, it was evident that we were going to start from “scratch” in terms of CV and professional profile. She was not aware of what routes to take in building a strong professional network of contacts or who to reach out to for sector specific recruitment agencies etc.

I was there to advise and guide so ultimately the decision was my clients on what she wanted to include in the CV. She was so committed and eager to learn and improve and as a mentor that was what I needed. For me to support her through the interview process and to see her grow in confidence, self-belief and most importantly self-worth knowing I had a part to play in her journey was heart-warming. To top it off, she was successful in securing a job in her sector.

The second client was a young person who was in a part-time role but wanted to progress and find a new challenging role. She had a great CV in terms of content and style and was making it to first interviews but not progressing further. I had to use my skills in listening and understanding people and ask probing questions to understand where it was not going right. She then told me she had Asperger's. I read up on the condition as I wasn't exactly sure what it was, but I wanted my client to tell me about it and educate me. This would also support her in confidence talking about it.

I told her we should celebrate it and use it to her benefit as her traits were some great skills that an employer would cherish. I did mock interviews with her and the objective was to bring it up in interview. Every mock interview became easier. Her confidence grew and her natural style of communication came across and was genuine. The next interview she went for, she got the job!

Giving up a few hours a week to support my clients was rewarding and although it sounds cliché, I felt more fulfilled and content in knowing I was using my skills to support someone else on their professional and personal journey.

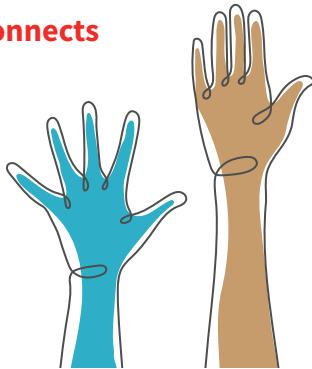


Our Time and Talents – Corporate Volunteering and Brokerage Service

This service, delivered by Paola and Quoc faced a particularly challenging year as a direct result of the on-going pandemic. Despite this, the team worked tirelessly with our corporate and government partners and in providing volunteering opportunities for the Westminster Connects newsletter.

Westminster Connects Volunteers

100 volunteers
deployed in
local projects



Westminster Connects Referrals

362 referrals
53 volunteering
roles at local
charities

Employee Volunteering

235 employees
7 employer partners
572 hours volunteered
25 charities supported
2000 beneficiaries

The team identified 179 volunteering opportunities which were supplied to 25 Westminster Connects newsletters, resulting in 123 local organisations being supported with their volunteering needs. During the year the team hosted 4 Charity Q&A sessions where volunteers could meet individual charities. 25 charities showcased 100 plus opportunities to 92 volunteers.

The team worked with 106 individual Westminster based businesses helping them with their CSR and Social value delivery.





CASE STUDY

Charity Hackathon

Time & Talents ran its first hackathon – an increasingly popular event where volunteers come together to solve problems collectively.

120 employees from procurement consultancy 4C Associates spent an afternoon utilising their wide-ranging professional skills and suggested innovative solutions to a variety of operational, financial and IT challenges faced by five local charities on issues including:

Improving the supply chain of a charity that distributes recycled school uniforms and reorganising data collection and management for a lung condition support organisation.

- Thought up a variety of ways to raise funds.
- As a high impact activity, employee volunteers made an immediate difference and enjoyed liaising with colleagues in a different way than they usually do at work.
- Corporate volunteers enjoyed learning about the various charity projects and gained insight into the tight financial constraints and the challenges that charities have experienced throughout the pandemic.
- In turn, the charities received useful expert advice on issues that had hitherto seemed insurmountable.

“Working with the time and talents team has been great. They have been very professional and clear - would 100% work with them again. Thank you!”

Edward Court, 4C Associates

“Great support to help us make a professional re-think on our current platforms.”

Tess Jelen, British Lung Foundation Support Group

“Great team and a great day full of ideas. We are excited to apply the new ideas to our social enterprise!”

Farah Mohammoud, You Press

FESTIVE SEASON COMMENTS:

“Your generosity and kindness were very much appreciated, the refugee families are not entitled to any benefits and live on £8 a week each, so your gifts meant more than you can imagine :) ”

Sharon Blake, Westminster Children’s Services

“We had a fun day today. Thank you for the opportunity to help out in the local community - Merry Christmas!”

Mehdi Ddloune, Zipcar

“A big thank you for all your support in helping us to get volunteers for our Christmas Project. Your success in finding us volunteers at short notice was invaluable. The team from Ignite Logistics were one of our superstar volunteers!”

Sandy Parianem, Age UK Westminster



Our Learning Disability Volunteering Report

Adults with Learning Disabilities have been some of those most negatively affected by the pandemic. We were determined to maintain contact with our ALD volunteers and ensured that all of them could access Zoom so that we could host regular group sessions. This continued, particularly up to the end of September, with regular face to face activities slowly beginning to return during the remainder of the year. The project is led by Maria, supported by Samia.

The popular zoom sessions helped to reduce isolation and importantly improve the health and well-being of all our Learning Disability Volunteers. At least ten LD volunteers attended the 30 sessions held during the year.

Highlights of the Zoom meetings included:

- Yoga teacher – doing a group online yoga session
- Online creative writing session
- Group singing session
- Help with finance and budgeting
- Nurse from St Mary's Hospital, focusing on importance of mask wearing, and other issues relating to Covid 19
- Fitness instructor – including zoom group stretching and various exercises
- Staff from Civil Service – talk included communication skills and importance of teamwork
- Talk about volunteer opportunities currently available, including group volunteering activities



With the covid restrictions starting to be lifted, we resumed providing individual and specific key support in helping adults find their ideal volunteering role with Westminster voluntary and community sector.

We were able to support and place 35 adults with learning disabilities into volunteer roles. This included individual volunteering roles in charity shops, foodbanks, museums and group volunteering gardening days in Westminster Parks.

Other group activities during the year included a summer picnic at Paddington Recreation Ground, attendance at a Christmas Concert at the Royal Albert Hall and the popular visit to Regent's Park Zoo.

“I enjoy volunteering at the Abbey Centre restaurant, it's easy work, no stress, people are nice and easy to talk to. I always attend all LD activities organised by LD team; I enjoy all the activities.” Raul



“I enjoy going volunteering at Two Temple Museum. It has given me back my confidence and helped with my mental health. Also, I like it there because I meet different people all the time. I enjoy all LD activities, I get to see my friends from LD and other people, enjoy going to the Natural History Museum and Sport Day.” Gary

“I enjoy going to Oxfam and being with people who are understanding because sometimes people get funny if they don’t know me. I love gardening activities.” James

“I love volunteering at Oxfam. It has given me my confidence back and the manager and staff are very supportive of my learning disability and health condition. My favourite activities are gardening and the Natural History Museum. LD team have been very supportive. Thank you.” Dea

Our Older People’s Befriending Project

Our project, delivered by Natalie, successfully supported 109 older Westminster residents, by matching them with a volunteer befriender for weekly companionship throughout the period April 2021 to March 2022.

As Covid restrictions lifted, the demand for in-person, face to face, interaction increased significantly. Whilst there are still some matches from previous periods which have remained in contact with their volunteer over the telephone, the service is now fully moving towards face-to-face contact with only two individuals opting for telephone befriending in the second half of the year. Many of the elderly people that the project supports have been able to slowly reintegrate back into their community by having a volunteer by their side to provide information, support and encouragement.

The strength of relationships formed with other health providers has been a vital element for the expansion of the project.

This year there has been an increase in service user referrals and a slight decrease in volunteer enquiries. This meant additional efforts were made to advertise for the volunteer role.

We had 93 new referrals this year with 109 active matches. 73 new volunteer enquiries resulted in 43 volunteers being recruited and fully trained with 4 awaiting training at the end of the financial year.

“I had a smashing time. I couldn’t believe we made it to Primrose Hill. It was the best day I’ve had in a very long time – thank you so much.”

(Telephone call, March 2022)

Another heartfelt example from ‘Wendy’: **“Hi ‘Coordinator’, ‘Simran’ is coming today as I have to go to the dentist. They will take me there and back. Now that the weather is better, ‘Simran’, is going to come on a walk with me and Sally (dog). We are also going to go to Joe and the Juice in Victoria. It will be lovely as I have not been able to do all those things for a while. Thank you for finding me a kind and helpful befriender volunteer!”** (Text message, March 2022)



Health and Wellbeing - Our Social Prescriber and Well-Being Coaches service

We are now at the end of year 2 of our role as employer of Social Prescribers and Well-Being Coaches. We are commissioned to deliver these services by CLH – The GP Federation in Central London, CNWL – the NHS Mental Health provider in Westminster and with some Government funding aimed at reducing Winter pressures on the NHS.

Our staff team, led by Concia, consisted of 4 x Mental Health SPs, 8 x SPs working in General Practise, and 1 x SP focussing on identifying community resources. Since April 2022 the team has grown further now have additional colleagues supporting people with their social needs that impact on their health. In each case, the team use a preventative approach, developing an ongoing extensive relationship using the “what matter to me approach” to tailor support to the individual. All clients supported are referred to the social prescriber or wellbeing coach via a GP, Mental Health or other health professional. Each Social Prescriber will hold a caseload of between 30 and 35 clients at any one time. On average people stay in the service from between 3 and 6 months with an average of 4 months.

The team worked with 1082 individual patients from a very wide and diverse range of backgrounds. The greatest demand for services came from Regents Health PCN. The key needs addressed were housing, mental health, welfare advice and debt and loneliness.

This year, students from Imperial College conducted a review of our work and concluded that patients were overwhelmingly positive about the support they had received and that more people should be told about the service.

“Thank you for a lovely afternoon today. Best day out I’ve had in ages. Best part was not a needle or doctor in site LOL – thank you.” Jason

CASE STUDY

One of my clients left me a voicemail today. He has health issues and restricted mobility. I referred him to the food bank and for a fuel voucher. This morning he was in the dark and cold, he was extremely thankful for our help, saying he now has light. SP

CASE STUDY

26-year-old female with a mental health diagnosis who is stable on medication.

Needs identified - social isolation, interested in volunteering, interested in part time employment.

Support given - Employment specialist, online social groups for women only. Walking group set up by our SP service with 5 other people who had a mental health diagnosis. Found a friendship with one person. One Westminster’s volunteer support programme.

On Discharge - Awaiting to start a mentoring role. Join an in-person event at the Women’s organisation she had joined online.



How we communicate with others



One Westminster's communications continue to be delivered by Nina with wonderful support from our volunteer Jonathan. As we emerged from the pandemic we continued to build on the boost in numbers and engagement that COVID-19 and the lockdowns had provided, using our three main platforms - the One Westminster website, Twitter and Mailchimp (for our e-bulletin).

Our website pages were viewed 110,000 during the year and we recorded circa 45,000 individual users, double of what we started with when we launched the website in 2018.

During the year, we published 19 e-bulletins running around 500 stories covering the latest local news, free training and events, funding opportunities, jobs and the latest research/resources on relevant subjects, including the key issues affecting our communities of poverty and poor mental health. We introduced a new occasional section: SMALL CHARITY to profile their activities and discuss issues of concern. This has proved popular.

The opening rates remain as high as those reached during the pandemic – in excess of 40% which is nearly double the average opening rate of non-profit e-bulletins. The click rates also remained high, scoring at least 10% per e-bulletin throughout the year, three-and-a-half times as much as the average for the non-profit sector.

We published around 300 tweets with information relevant to the sector and helped promote the activities of our Westminster Community Network member organisations. In total nearly 75,000 views were recorded and at the end of this period we had more than 2,500 followers.

FEEDBACK FROM READERS:

“Great newsletter! Lots of interesting stuff in there.”

“I’m amazed at how much info you pack in – and so many links to useful resources too.”



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Registered charity number: 295501

Company number: 02052268

