



Voluntary Action Harrow

Impact Report 2011 - 2013

"VAH has been patiently and encouragingly guiding our group on the steps towards being able to function as a better organisation"

David Phelps Chair of Harrow Community Choir

"VAH have been excellent at identifying our group's needs, legal requirements, recruitment of volunteers, training needs, health and safety, seeking funding and signposting to other supporting agencies. The identification of our needs and the help we got was priceless"

Satish Parmar Chair of Saathi

Our Vision: To see a strong, independent, purposeful and unified not-for-profit sector in Harrow and the growth of a successful co-operative movement in West London.

Our Mission: To support the not-for-profit sector to be proactive, stronger and work together for local communities in Harrow and support the growth of the co-operative movement in West London

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LOTTERY FUNDED





Key Summary Outputs

- 400 hours of trustee board capacity building support sessions provided
- 40 trustee governance health checks and action plans developed
- 65 organisations using DBS (CRB) service with over 350 DBS checks processed
- 53 volunteer management and recruitment advice sessions provided
- Two volunteer recruitment fairs held which were attended by 23 organisations
- Organised and facilitated six trustee networks attended by 55 individuals
- Organised community wide capacity building conference attended by 51 trustees and volunteers
- Four trustee roles and responsibilities training sessions attended by 27 individuals
- One volunteer management workshop delivered
- Four bespoke in-house trustee training workshops
- Reviewed 48 policies, updated and wrote 30 policies for eight organisations
- Wrote four constitutions for new unincorporated associations
- Recruited and centrally managed four volunteers for other organisations.



Other achievements

- Raised £39,977 income in our first two years
- Voluntary Action Harrow have been involved in setting up Harrow Community Action, a new voluntary sector consortium and Community Interest Company
- VAH member: Sarah Kersey elected a Voluntary Sector Representative
- VAH members: Anila and Sarah passed PQASSO mentor training
- Sarah Kersey director of Association of Volunteer Managers 2010 - 2011
- Robert Range passed Certificate in Fundraising Skills, accredited by Fundraising Skills
- Employed eight sessional workers
- Recruited and managed 12 volunteers for VAH
- Working in partnership with Hawaii Pacific University and a worldwide team of website developers to create an online database for Harrow's Voluntary Sector



Key summary outcomes

(based on collation of feedback surveys)

- 53 volunteer managers have increased knowledge of how to recruit volunteers
- Nine volunteer managers are more aware of inducting volunteers
- Nine volunteers have increased their employment skills
- 40 trustee boards have increased their knowledge in governance good-practice



Volunteer Services

Our volunteer consultancy and training service is run by volunteer managers who have over 15 years' experience managing volunteer led organisations.

Volunteer Management: This service provides advice and guidance to help with strategic and operational issues relating to volunteer recruitment and management.

Volunteer Management Training: A series of training sessions for volunteer managers including "How to retain, reward & recognise volunteers" and "Recruitment and Induction of Volunteers"

Volunteer Management Mondays: Opportunity for groups to visit the office, telephone, tweet or e-mail to ask volunteer management related questions.

Volunteer recruitment days We have organised two volunteer recruitment days in Harrow to promote awareness and to recruit volunteers for voluntary and community organisations. Each were held in Harrow Town Centre and over 50 people enquired about volunteering during these two events.

Team London: In 2012, we were awarded a micro-grant (£1,000) to support sports groups and organise and deliver a sports volunteer recruitment fair. We successfully recruited 18 volunteer-led sports clubs to attend the fair and they recruited eight volunteers. We supported 20 sports groups with recruitment and management of volunteers providing information, advice and support for a number of months before the fair and space at the volunteering fair for them to showcase their sport and advertise to members of the public.



VAH volunteers: We recognise and appreciate the value and commitment of our volunteers. We value their contribution wholeheartedly and endeavour to provide a positive environment where they can develop their skills. Each of our volunteers are passionate about the work they produce to support us in achieving our aims. We provide opportunities for our volunteers to develop new skills and experiences in return for their hard work, energy and enthusiasm.

Disclosure & Barring Service

VAH is a registered umbrella body with the Disclosure and Barring Service (formally CRB) and offer a local comprehensive DBS checking service. In addition we provide advice on the process, safeguarding as well as keeping organisations updated with the changes in the system.

Trustee Development

Build your Board

Through the Build Your Board programme we are improving the infrastructure of Harrow's voluntary and community sector organisations by providing trustee development support individually tailored, to 40 voluntary and community sector organisations in Harrow. We provide:

1. Governance health check
2. Trustee skills audit
3. Consultancy to support trustee board in creating positive change

Build Your Board is part of the West London Transforming Local Infrastructure project, Collaborating for Change (C4C). In Harrow we are working in partnership with Harrow Equalities Centre, Harrow in Business and Carramea.

Trustee Network: A support forum and networking opportunity for Harrow's local voluntary and community organisations to share ideas, experiences and discuss current topics important to the voluntary sector.

Feedback from attendees at the trustee network
Quote: *'It was a pleasure to attend and all staff and participants were of great help and approachable.'*

'I learned a great deal about organisations that others are involved with, about which I had no idea before.'



Trustee Training: Roles and responsibilities training offered three-four times a year for individual trustees and bespoke training to trustee boards.

Feedback received:

'thought provoking'

'very beneficial training'

'very informal and helpful'

'very approachable, having a small group worked well'

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C4C mini-conference

In 2013, along with our Transforming Local Infrastructure project partners, we organised a free mini-conference with the aim to help local VCS groups access the free services on offer.

Trustee2b: We are piloting promoting trustees opportunities, recruiting and matching trustees to local groups.

Financial 1:1: Through a partnership with Charity Fiscal Solutions we provided one-to-one financial surgeries for local groups.

Research, Monitoring & Evaluation Service

From market research and discussions with funders carried out at the end of 2012 we have developed a new service to offer organisations and Harrow a independent option for gathering research and evaluating services and developing monitoring systems.

Research: we are working with organisation on carrying out market research for funding applications and business plans. This has involved; online & postal surveys, phone interviews, focus groups, vox pops, analyzing research and presenting to trustee boards.

Monitoring & Evaluation: we have conducted services users feedback through; online and postal surveys, focus groups analyzing the results and presenting to trustee boards.

Case Study

For Harrow Community Transport (HCT) we carried a consultation with 250 HCT members, the public and key stakeholders

Outcome: HCT increased their understanding of their service users. Alan Voda, Director of Harrow Community Transport said "The VAH research service has helped us pinpoint our users needs which has helped us to develop a realistic business plan and demonstrate the extensive need for community transport in Harrow"

Marketing Service

Social Media: We have set up and are managing two groups' Facebook accounts ([HCT](#), [HCRFM](#))

Press release: We have been visiting groups, taking photos, writing press releases and getting them published (volunteer week 2013). Harrow Community Transport 30th celebration.

Websites: We have created a website for HCRfm <http://hcrfm.org> and given advice to Lighthouse Bar, Wish Centre & Harrow Agenda 21.

Trustee week - our trustee week You Tube clip was featured on [Civil Society](#) website.

Bloggs written by VAH members on subjects including social media, recruiting new volunteers and young trustees.



Co-op Development

When VAH decided to set up as a co-operative realised that there are no Co-operative Development Agencies in West London. Having become interested in the co-operative movement we decided we wanted to promote the co-operative as a model and support local organisation to set up as a co-operative. To develop this work we have:

- Set up West London Co-operative Development Agency to offer co-operative development in partnership with Co-operative Assistance Network, Red Ochre and Ealing Business Solutions.
- Run an introduction to Co-ops in Harrow.
- Run a workshop at Hammersmith & Fulham Funding fair 2012.
- Celebrated Co-ops Fortnight
- Become members of London Co-op Development.



Supporting Harrow Voluntary & Community Sector

Harrow Community Action

VAH has been an active member of the steering group which has been supporting the creation of a Harrow Voluntary & Community Sector Consortium.

Voluntary & Community Sector Forum

In April 2013 Sarah Kersey was elected as a Voluntary & Community Sector Representative.



*What particular experience and qualities do you feel you are able to offer to the role?
I am well networked with activists and groups in Harrow. I have skills in developing projects, services, committees and forums. I enjoy helping people have their say and building consensus. I have led discussions, reviews and development of plans. I have my own experiences of using voluntary services in Harrow. (Sarah's candidate statement).*

Looking to the future

Volunteer Services: We have secured a small grant from Harrow council for a pilot project to evaluate volunteer programmes. We are devising a supported volunteering project, applying for funding to offer a supported volunteering programme and to explore the history of volunteering within Harrow through the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Harrow community network: In summer 2013, we will be launching [Harrow Community Network](#), a database of local voluntary and community sector groups. The aim of the website is to improve the access of knowledge of local services and events for the public and to enable partnership work, identify needs and avoid duplication of work for voluntary and community sector groups.

PQASSO mentoring: Anila Ramanlal and Sarah Kersey passed their PQASSO mentor training in June 2013. Charity Evaluation Service (CES) accredited mentors will guide organisations through the PQASSO quality mark process, present to trustees, complete PQASSO self-assessment and a lot more.



Marketing Support: A service to deliver effective marketing communications through strategic development and measure the impact of marketing efforts.

Website / Graphic Design: We will be able to design and create a range of marketing materials specifically to meet your needs. Including: WordPress websites, brochures, leaflets, banners, display boards, letterheads, business cards and more.

Co-op Development: We will be offering support for individuals and organisations wanting to learn and develop cooperative enterprises.

About VAH



Strategic Objectives

1. To listen, analyse and respond to community needs
2. To raise awareness of the need for organisational good governance, accountability and good volunteer management
3. To source local skilled trustees and match them to organisations that need them
4. To provide co-op development support in the West London area
5. To create a central information resource for the not-for-profit sector
6. To promote a stable environment in which the not-for-profit sector can operate.

Voluntary Action Harrow (VAH) was set up following the demise of the previous infrastructure support services organisation in Harrow two years ago, and in recognition of the on-going need to provide these services to the local voluntary & community sector – a vibrant sector of over 280 large and small organisations and groups.

The founder members set up a Workers Co-operative, starting from scratch with no income, no office base, and relying on support from other voluntary and community sector groups, combining with the energy and commitment from a largely volunteer team. By spring 2013 we are a team of eight; five members and three working towards membership of the co-operative, either working as volunteers or as a combination of paid sessional work and volunteer hours (5,789 recorded volunteer hours to date). Thus, our first two years have been a significant challenge with all of the team working entirely as volunteers whilst being employed elsewhere – to make ends meet! This means that we've not been able to do as much work as we would have liked but we believe much has been achieved and our impact is discernible and growing.

This report aims to highlight our recent achievements and demonstrate our impact and effectiveness so far, and as this is also part of our learning so that we can better understand how and where we can improve the services that we currently offer.

We have carefully built up our reputation as being reliable, knowledgeable and a supportive capacity building organisation in Harrow through advice, training and ongoing support in fundraising, co-op development, trustee development, volunteer management and recruitment.



We have, combined, 60 years of experience of working in the voluntary and community sector and extensive knowledge of both small and large local voluntary organisations in Harrow. Our team have held numerous roles in voluntary and community sector organisations, such as Trustees (including Chair), directors, chief executives, managers, development workers and volunteers.



Our Team

Sarah Kersey

With a wide variety of experience in the social sector, Sarah is passionate about good governance and efficient volunteer management. At her previous job she more than doubled the amount of volunteering opportunities available in Harrow from 329 to 784.

Today, she collaborates with members and local groups to create strategic plans to ensure VAH's core values coincide with Harrows' needs.

Robert Range

Robert has had a particular interest in social care. Initially wanting to become a social carer, he then decided to focus his career on project planning and fundraising. Robert has a particular interest in empowering people with mental health issues and learning disabilities to seek volunteer opportunities. As well as researching fundraising options, he regularly writes for our blog.

Rachel Wright

Rachel has extensive experience of project coordination and a strong background in developing effective systems and structures within the voluntary and public sector. She's responsible for quality systems, finance, running our DBS service and operational business development. Rachel has been extensively involved in a small, volunteer led international charity taking on a number of roles including; trustee, director, secretary, recruitment co-ordinator, website developer and newsletter editor.



Anila Ramanlal

Anila has supported, advised and trained trustee groups throughout the London Borough of Harrow since April 2010. She is an advocate of trustee development through education, continuous review and policy making. Her well of experience includes the development and implementation of quality assurance systems and the transition from charity status to a company limited by guarantee.

Sue Bush

With over 36 years' experience within the voluntary sector, Sue's previous and current roles and responsibilities make her a fountain of knowledge (which she is only too pleased to share).

Alex Buckmire

Foremost an innovative and imaginative individual with vast experience in marketing and brand strategy. Alex's experience and sense of aesthetics have been invaluable in creating, developing and implementing our marketing strategy.



Maria Llera

Originally from Spain, Maria has advised and assisted organisations to achieve environmental and health & safety requirements whilst implementing quality and environmental management systems. Currently responsible for enforcing quality standards, her role involves improving and implementing operational proceedings. Maria's experience, strong focus and attention to detail have been valuable assets in improving our standards.

James Wright

A writer and fundraiser, he does his level best to make people aware of the great work that Voluntary Action Harrow does with all the clarity and economy he can muster. As he comes to make sense of the countless acronyms associated with the voluntary sector, James is taking on responsibility for the health, wellbeing and quality of VAH's written output.

