

Voluntary Action Harrow Co-operative

Impact Report 2015 - 2016



Foreword

We are very pleased to introduce our Impact Report covering the period from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016.

It is only when compiling a publication like this that we can truly appreciate just how far we have come over the past year.

As we approach our fifth anniversary, we are committed to measuring our impact in order to continue to build on our considerable knowledge and improve our services.

This means listening to the communities we support, learning about what works, and using those lessons to maximise the effectiveness of our practice.

This report provides an insight into the range and complexity of our work, and the difference it makes to Harrow. The statistics and case studies provided in this report offer an overview of what we have achieved so far in our priority areas.

Whilst we are proud of the work that we do, we are acutely aware of the challenges that still remain. We are determined to ensure the continued positive social change our programmes deliver.

We are proud of the progress that we have made over the past 12 months and look forward to pushing ourselves even further to deliver high quality programmes that continue to have an impact on the Harrow community.

Co-operative Members
Voluntary Action Harrow Co-operative

Introduction

Voluntary Action Harrow Co-operative works with the voluntary and community sector providing information, training and guidance.



Based in Harrow, we are a not-for-profit co-operative owned by our workers. We are all local residents of Harrow with in-depth knowledge of the local area and who's doing what. Collectively, our members have over 35 years' experience in the voluntary, community, and social enterprise sectors, specialising in capacity building in a variety of different organisational development areas.

We work with a diverse range of local organisations, from small community groups to regional and international charities. We also run, manage and co-ordinate projects working with local people and groups to help them make a difference in their local community.

Vision: The local voluntary and community sector has the skills, resources and support to achieve their objectives.

Mission and Purpose: To develop a strong, independent, purposeful and unified not-for-profit sector in Harrow, and support the growth of a successful co-operative movement in West London by providing information, training and guidance.

Values: Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Our Team

"Being fairly new, it's amazing to see all the work that goes on 'behind the scenes'. I'm really looking forward to next year as we have so many exciting plans."

Diara

"This year, the VCSE sector has really pulled together in addressing the local challenges faced. We've seen more partnership working and it's great to be involved in its co-ordination."

Rachel

"I've been lucky enough to work with some incredible groups over the last year. It has been a pleasure helping them towards their goals."

Alex

"Our support programme has grown by leaps and bounds. It's lovely to know the changes were so well received."

Asiq

"Looking back on the year, one of my highlights include bringing difficult subjects to so many diverse groups, faiths and cultures."

Sue



Danielle's Volunteering Story

One rainy morning I found myself scrolling through the 'Do It' website. What had brought me to be at home mid-week, mid-morning on this particular day is a long story of human emotion, medical science, motivation, second chances, reflection, forward thinking and a little bit of boredom.

Now, every week for three hours, I offer my typing skills, marketing knowledge, sartorial advice and general opinions. Volunteering with VAHC has offered a kind of freedom I had never experienced in paid work. I take pride in everything I produce, from the smallest administrative tasks to creating a social media strategy.

The team I work with have shown me nothing but compassion, unmitigated trust, and friendship while volunteering has brought me new skills, a renewed vigour for work, awareness of community issues, and a general sense of well-being and fun – most of all fun!



Key Achievements



Living Wage Accreditation
We became a living wage employer because we believe a fair day's work deserves a fair day's pay!



Young Harrow Foundation
Successfully established and co-ordinated a steering group from local youth organisations, which aided the charity's set up, strategy and aims.



Harrow Food Co-op Hackspace
Creating a community sustainable food project.

Harrow VCS Forum Membership & Co-ordination
In it's first constituted year, we helped the Forum achieve 56 members. On average, 19 organisations were represented at each of the 6 meetings.

PQASSO Quality Mark
We've been awarded the nationally recognised PQASSO Quality Mark at Level 1, after being externally assessed.



Tuberculous Grants Scheme
Co-ordinated health training and a successful grants scheme.

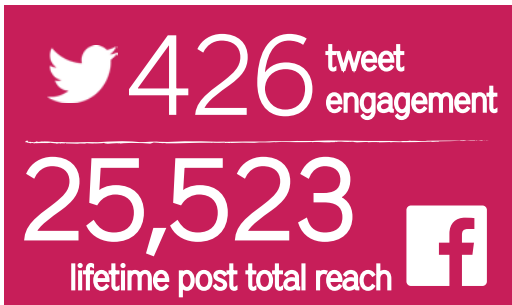
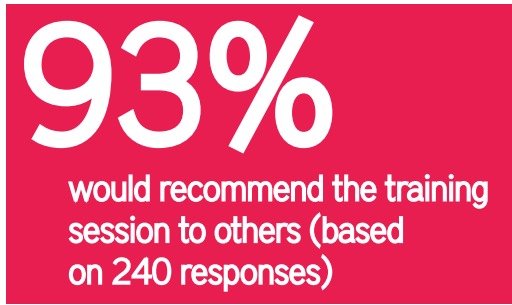
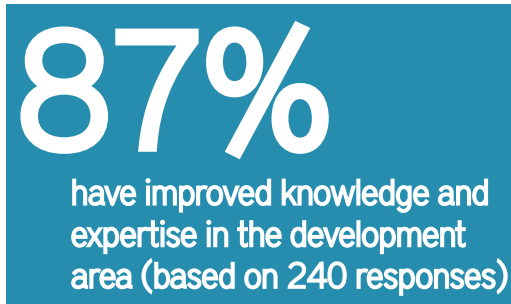


Harrow Community Action
Developed the second stage of membership, helped in the co-ordination of the Care Act bid and started delivery of capacity building advice service.

West London Co-operative Development Agency (WLCDA)
We launched a co-operative development service dedicated to increasing the number of co-ops in West London.



VAHC Outputs & Outcomes



Children & Young People Safeguarding

Throughout the year we have helped promote consistent best practice in safeguarding children and young people to over 100 voluntary, community and faith groups.

Feedback from 193 participants who attended training sessions has been overwhelmingly positive:

- 99% found the sessions informative
- 98% would recommend the course to a colleague
- 72% were confident in making a safeguarding referral

As a result of the advice and training some organisations have:

- Improved their policies making them more fit for purpose
- Ensured all staff are up to date with the latest best practice
- Implemented procedural change in line with new priorities
- Set up staff meetings to discuss any concerns and issues
- Improved their preparation for Ofsted inspections

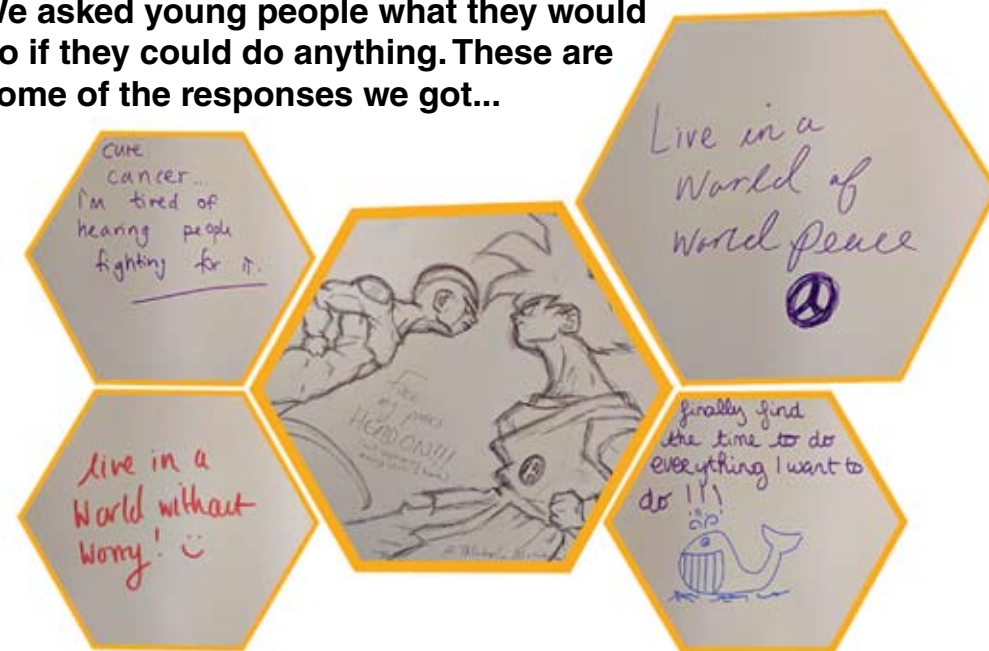
The Beehive: Youth Enterprise Hub

Launched in July 2015, the Beehive offers a monthly incubator hub, one-to-one advice, training and online resources to young people. It aims to help entrepreneurs start, develop or grow their own local community projects, charities or social enterprises!

We have been able to help hundreds of young people across West London to identify and learn the key skills necessary for enterprise development. So far, we have created four successful voluntary groups, led by young people.

Speaking about the support offered, one young social entrepreneur said “Extremely professional, informative and motivating. Alex has always been available to meet up and assist in what I need to do to get my organisation off the ground and how to go about it. Thank you Alex!”

We asked young people what they would do if they could do anything. These are some of the responses we got...



... we're building this into an art piece.





500

volunteers
brokered

392

opportunities
uploaded &
promoted

Co-ordinated...
1606 hrs
of voluntary
actions

Volunteering Programme

Harrow is a borough bursting with voluntary action! This year we have seen a 188% increase of volunteer opportunities with the number of volunteers brokered rising by 262%.

We were lucky enough to have expanded our volunteering programme in the last quarter by helping groups to think differently about how they can develop their opportunities.

Feedback from training showed an overwhelming majority felt better prepared to recruit, manage and develop volunteering roles. Groups also felt they had more ownership managing their own volunteer recruitment with 94% agreeing they were more aware of where to promote volunteering opportunities.

As a result of the advice and training, organisations have:

- Introduced new policies and procedures
- Set up an internal volunteering forum
- Created an incident log book to support front line volunteers
- Implemented new volunteer recruitment strategies
- Developed new volunteering roles, including micro-roles
- Developed more accessible and diverse volunteering roles
- Shared the knowledge and expertise learnt with colleagues

When asked what might have happened if they had not accessed this support, one respondent said "I would not be aware of how to do things better. Might be pulling my hair out."

Environmental Impact

We are dedicated to becoming more environmentally friendly. Here are a few things we did this year:

1

Implemented an environmental and green purchasing policy.

2

Maintained our recycling level of 66%.

3

Promoted good environmental practice through a dedicated online resource page.

4

Started negotiations to ensure the Lodge becomes more environmentally friendly.



What's Next?

Here are a few things we plan to focus on in the next year:

1

Kaizen
Continuous improvement
of working practices and
personal efficiency.

2

HR & Finance Support
Introduction of new
programmes for specialist
organisational areas.

3

Harrow Giving
Starting a small grants
fund for Harrow VCSE
groups to run projects.

4

**Volunteer Centre
Quality Accreditation**
To become a recognised
volunteer centre by
achieving the necessary
quality mark.

5

Community Assets
Upskill ourselves so we
can advise on community
asset transfer.




Thanks & Acknowledgements

A massive thank you to our funders, clients and supporters.
To list but a few:





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