

## Voluntary Sector Forum

7 September 2021, 10:00 – 11:30

### Microsoft Teams

#### *Notes of the meeting*

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#### Welcome

Cllr Michael Wilson (Spokesperson for Communities, Equalities and the Voluntary Sector) welcomed attendees to the Voluntary Sector Forum and provided the following updates.

- Richmond Council has joined the Government's Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, reconfirming its commitment to help Afghan families resettling in London. Further information is available on the Council website: [https://www.richmond.gov.uk/refugee\\_resettlement#donations](https://www.richmond.gov.uk/refugee_resettlement#donations). Richmond CVS also has information about how people can support Afghan refugees: <https://richmondcv.org.uk/supporting-afghan-refugees/>. Multicultural Richmond announced that they are developing a package of support for Afghan families coming to the UK. Contact them for more information: [hello@multiculturalrichmond.org.uk](mailto:hello@multiculturalrichmond.org.uk)
- The Finance Committee is set to renew Richmond CVS's contract to provide support to the Voluntary and Community Sector over the next 4 years from 4 January 2022.
- The Council has written to the Chancellor and is working with the two local MPs to campaign for the £20 Universal Credit uplift to be made permanent.
- South Western Railway are consulting on reducing rail services which will have an impact locally. The consultation will close on 19 September. For more information visit: <https://www.southwesternrailway.com/plan-my-journey/timetables/timetable-consultation-december-2022>.

#### **1. Adult Social Care Academy Training Offer for Community and Voluntary Sector Partners**

Anita Woods and Joasia Marzec (Professional Development Advisors, Richmond Council) provided an update on the training and development offer available through the Adult Social Care Academy.

- Adult Social Care has produced a framework for safeguarding so that staff can access the relevant safeguarding training depending on their level of responsibilities: [https://www.sabrichmondandwandsworth.org.uk/media/1352/workforce\\_training\\_standards\\_framework.pdf](https://www.sabrichmondandwandsworth.org.uk/media/1352/workforce_training_standards_framework.pdf)
- E-learning is available from the Training and Personal Development online portal with 90 courses on offer to community and voluntary sector organisations. Courses range from safeguarding to specific training on autism and mental health. Visit: <https://www.tpd.org.uk/cpd/portal.asp?sid=> (videos are available explaining how to use the TPD platform). For technical issues please email: [tdservice@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:tdservice@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk)

- Face to face virtual learning is also available for multiagency staff via Teams. Courses include Fire Safety Awareness, Multiagency Hoarding, MARAC Briefings, Suicide First Aid: Lite and Suicide First Aid: Understanding Suicide Intervention.
- [Research in Practice](#) membership is available for Voluntary Sector organisations, one pass per organisation, which offers a wider range of resources (e.g. supporting carers, briefings and practical tools). Contact: [AdultsSocialCareAcademy@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:AdultsSocialCareAcademy@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk)
- Social Care Institute of Excellence also offer a range of free training resources: <https://www.scie.org.uk/care-providers>

*See slides for details.*

## **2. Energy Advice Programme and Big Energy Saving Network**

Simon Lawson (Chief Executive, Citizens Advice Richmond) provided an update on two energy advice programmes running in winter 2021 by [Citizens Advice Richmond](#): Energy Advice Programme (EAP) and Big Energy saving Network (BESN).

- Local residents are expected to be financially hard hit this winter, particularly those on low incomes or who are considered vulnerable. This is the result of the impact of Covid-19, removal of the £20 uplift in Universal Credit and the ending of the £140 energy price cap in October 2021.
- Energy Advice Programme (EAP) provides one to one energy advice support for vulnerable customers and more complex cases over the phone, on video call or in person (at Hampton Hill and Sheen Citizens Advice offices). Client referrals can be made directly via the website: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/richmond/referral-page](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/richmond/referral-page)
- EAP includes support with switching supplier, tariff or payment method, getting financial support, how to be more energy efficient in the home and assistance with complaints against energy companies.
- Big Energy Saving Network (BESN) focuses more on outreach to engage people who might not normally access energy support as well as 'hard to reach' groups. Contact Justin Webb to access support and further information: [Justin.webb@citizensadvice.org.uk](mailto:Justin.webb@citizensadvice.org.uk)
- BESN includes one to one and group support with switching provider, warm home discount, priority services registration and energy efficiency.
- Citizens Advice has an online energy switching tool available to anyone: <https://energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk/>
- Colin Cooper (Habitats & Heritage) – highlighted that Habitats & Heritage are providing support within people's homes to improve their energy efficiency, which complements EAP and BESN. Visit: <https://habitatsandheritage.org.uk/our-work/encouraging-sustainable-behaviour/energy-efficiency/>

*See slides for details.*

## **3. Opening up Voluntary Sector Services: Networking Session**

Kathryn Williamson (Director, Richmond CVS) introduced a networking session for Voluntary Sector organisations to share and discuss their experiences of opening up services. Attendees discussed in

groups their recent experiences of opening up services and the impact on staff, volunteers and service users.

#### Group Feedback Summary:

- Buildings and facilities may no longer be fit for purpose or practical due to Covid-19 e.g. to enable social distancing.
- Staff and volunteers are slowly returning to work, but many still working remotely or in a hybrid form.
- There is a need to recruit, train and retain a new cohort of volunteers as some volunteers have stood down from roles over the last year. Volunteer recruitment strategies need to look at ways to be more flexible and access volunteers with specific skills.
- There are a number of organisations that have had to use some of their reserves over the pandemic which is not sustainable in the long term.
- Some service users are experiencing a loss of confidence with doing day to day activities and accessing services. Voluntary Sector organisations are having difficulties with finding ways to reach people in need of services, who are not previously known.
- There has been an increase in demand and reconfiguring of services to meet that demand, but there is concern that some of the older and more vulnerable residents are missing out as they are unable to access phone or digital services.
- Services which involve home visits are particularly challenging, if the organisations are not social care providers.

#### **4. Introduction to Council Funding**

Ben Smitton (Community Grants Officer, Richmond Council) provided an overview of funding available to the Voluntary Sector.

- [Local Area Fund](#) has renewed funding available of up to £10,000 per ward for not-for-profit groups and individuals to improve local communities within a Council ward. Applicants need to obtain initial Councillor Endorsement before submitting their application (although this does not guarantee funding). It is a rolling programme and applicants can apply at any time. Decisions are expected within 10-weeks subject to all the information being provided to make a decision.
- [Civic Pride Fund](#) provides funding for local initiatives that have a borough-wide focus. Grants are available to constituted groups for up to £5,000 and for individual and non-constituted groups up to £1,000. It is a rolling programme and applicants can apply at any time. Decisions are expected within 8-10-weeks subject to all the information being provided to make a decision.
- [Community Fund](#) supports projects that alleviate the impact of local development with grants being awarded from the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL). Constituted not-for-profit groups can apply (or individuals linked to constituted groups), for grants of a minimum of £5,000. The next round will be announced in autumn / winter 2021.
- [Active Richmond Fund](#) offers grants for projects that enrich the Social Prescribing or Cultural offer, promoting an active lifestyle for borough residents. Applicants can apply for Micro Grants for up to £1,000 (about a 6-week turnaround) or Main Grants for up to £5,000 (about a 10-week turnaround).

- Applicants are advised before applying to contact the relevant Officer to discuss their project, read the criteria in full and seek further support from [Richmond CVS](#) or [Habitats & Heritage](#).
- For further information or to be put in touch with the relevant funding Officer, please contact: Ben Smitton at [ben.smitton@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:ben.smitton@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk) or on 020 8831 6297.

*See slides for details.*

## 5. Prevention of ill health related to Covid-19 in our vulnerable communities

Dr Nike Arowobusoye (Consultant in Public, Richmond Council) provided an update on the Public Health prevention strategy.

- Public Health has developed a 5-point research approach for prevention on Covid-19 related ill health.
- The prevention framework outlines the approaches and mechanisms to achieve and support healthy communities. The aim is to develop ways to see how work is achieved consistently and creates its intended impact.
- The programme aims to be co-produced with the community to develop good data.
- Capacity building is available to the Voluntary Sector through training and funding such as the Active Richmond Fund.
- The five-step Community Action Research approach includes community engagement and insight, capacity building, co-production, communication and celebration.
- So far, Public Health have been carrying out a survey to understand people's lived experiences, including partnering with Multicultural Richmond. Community Health and Wellbeing Champions are being recruited to promote the health and wellbeing of local residents in a meaningful way.
- Public Health work to reduce health inequalities and prevent ill health and would like to involve groups in the Public Health Community Action Model. Colleague leads are Dami Gbadebo and Nidal Al Azawi. Please email [Nike.Arowobusoye@RichmondandWandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:Nike.Arowobusoye@RichmondandWandsworth.gov.uk) for more information.

*See slides for details.*

## 6. Open Forum and Q&A

- **Grimwood Road garden site** – Habitats & Heritage has been awarded funding to help support the revitalisation of a vacant garden site for community use in the heart of Twickenham. The Twickenham Training Centre, also known as the Twining Centre, in Grimwood Road, Twickenham was originally built as a day centre for adults with mental health issues and is Council owned with Achieving for Children (the Council's Children's Services provider) using the site to provide training and conference facilities for schools and other local groups. Habitats & Heritage is looking to support a programme of engagement with local groups and organisations to better understand how the site could be used to benefit the local community. Local groups and residents are encouraged to register their interest in the project by contacting Edward Stannard at Habitats & Heritage: [grimwood@habitatsandheritage.org.uk](mailto:grimwood@habitatsandheritage.org.uk)

- **Habitats & Heritage** will be running engagement events for Richmond Climate Week during COP26. The overall aim of the week is to engage and inform Richmond residents from across the community about climate change, COP26 and how they can make positive changes for the climate. The week will have a combination of digital content, online and in person events (Covid-19 dependent). For more information contact Francesca Batt: [francesca@habitatsandheritage.org.uk](mailto:francesca@habitatsandheritage.org.uk)
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- **Citizens Advice Richmond** encouraged Voluntary Sector organisations to join the campaign to keep the £20 uplift on Universal Credit, through social media and emphasising the preventable impact it will have on local people. (see [Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Open Letter to the PM](#))
- **Richmond CVS** autumn training and events programme is getting underway. The popular introductory trustee training runs on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> September - great for new trustees and those who need a refresh. Also, a couple of places are left for groups that want to recruit trustees at their online event on 14<sup>th</sup> October. More details available on their website: <https://richmondcvs.org.uk/training-and-events/>
- **South Western Railway** are consulting on a proposal which would reduce the frequency of key rail services within Richmond borough. The consultation closes on 19th September 2021. Find out more on the proposal: <https://www.southwesternrailway.com/plan-my-journey/timetables/timetable-consultation-december-2022> and respond by emailing [dec22consultation@swrailway.com](mailto:dec22consultation@swrailway.com)
- **Healthwatch Richmond** have been mandated by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to distribute small grants of about £500 to £1,000 to small charities, organisations and businesses across the borough, for them to run activities or events related to health, Covid-19 and/or the vaccine. They are especially trying to reach communities that are more isolated. More information can be found on this link: <https://www.healthwatchrichmond.co.uk/news/2021-07-12/covid-community-outreach-fund> or contact Chloe Auclair, Outreach and Projects Officer for more information on: [chloe@healthwatchrichmond.co.uk](mailto:chloe@healthwatchrichmond.co.uk)

### Closing Remarks

Cllr Wilson thanked participants for attending and asked attendees to share any feedback or suggestions for future meetings. A special thank you and recognition was given to Simon Lawson for his work at Citizens Advice Richmond, as he is moving on from the organisation at the end of September.