

MSG 2015-18 Outcomes Report

Introduction

Tower Hamlets Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS):

A diverse range of community organisations, voluntary bodies, faith groups and neighbourhood groups make up the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Tower Hamlets.

The Tower Hamlets Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy (2016-18) was key in ensuring the council's relationship with the VCS sector is strengthened and redefined by supporting communities in a more flexible way that is responsive to local needs whilst demonstrating value for money on commissioned services to the sector.

The VCS has made a valuable and distinctive contribution to the lives of local people. It delivers many services that local people highly value. It has empowered people to be active citizens and develop a more sustainable environment. It has also tackled deprivation and helped create a more prosperous community.

Mainstream Grants (MSG)

Programme Context & Rationale:

As the council recognises and values the unique contribution the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) makes in supporting and delivering services that meet the needs of local people.

The Mainstream Grant (MSG) 2015/18 Programme was approved by the Commissioners on 29 July 2015. Voluntary and Community Sector organisations were invited to apply for grants (in one of the 5 Theme strands of the MSG Programme) and deliver core community project services in improving the outcomes of residents and making Tower Hamlets a great Place to live as detailed in the borough's Community Plan.

The MSG programme was initially expected to be delivered from the 1st September 2015 to 31st Aug 2018.

At the 12th September 2017 Grants Determination Sub-Committee, the programme was extended to 31st March 2019. A further extension to the programme, to the 30th September 2019, was agreed by the Grant's Determination Sub-Committee at its meeting on the 6th June 2018.

MSG Funding and Themes:

Total Funding available MSG 2015-18: £3,211,000 pa

In addition to the 5 listed themes below, the MSG programme also had 2 cross-cutting themes: equalities and digital inclusion which were both considered under the eligibility criteria for all grant applications.

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Theme 1 - Children and Young People and Families

Theme Summary:

The primary focus of this theme was delivering projects that improve outcomes of Children, Young People and Families by ensuring;

- Improved levels of participation, educational attainment and progression for children and young people.
- Children and young people are protected from harm and families are supported to provide a safe environment.
- Harmful relationships among peer/gender groups are reduced
- Improved physical (such as reduced levels of obesity) and emotional health and wellbeing in children and young people.
- Reduced levels of substance misuse and sexual abuse, violent crime (including domestic violence) and anti-social behaviour.

MSG funded projects under this theme focused on improving outcomes for children, young people and families with activities including; dance, music, arts, adventure playgrounds, youth clubs, homework clubs, mother tongue classes and family intervention projects.

Outcomes achieved:

- Improved levels of participation, educational attainment and progression for children and young people
- Children and young people are protected from harm and families are supported to provide a safe environment.
- Harmful relationships among peer/gender groups are reduced
- Improved physical (such as reduced levels of obesity) and emotional health and wellbeing in children and young people.
- Reduced levels of substance misuse and sexual abuse, violent crime (including domestic violence) and anti-social behaviour.

Case Study Quotes:

‘Parents have commented that their children can communicate confidently at home with family members. Also they enjoy talking to their family in Chinese and do family activities together’ (Raising Attainment - Chinese Association of Tower Hamlets)

‘I am 11 years old...I used to mix capital letters with lower letters and found spellings very difficult. Using the small library at the centre and the weekly spelling test has been very useful as it has helped improve my spellings’ (Raising Attainment - Black Women’s Health and Family Support)

Theme 1 Children, Young People and Families

Community Languages

£175,746 funding	11 projects	649 children and young people supported
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Culture

£261,814 funding	10 projects	1,748 people supported
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Raising Attainment

£139,893 funding	8 projects	783 young people supported
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Sports

£264,664 funding	7 projects	1,145 people supported
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Vulnerable & Excluded Children and Families

£542,997 funding	6 projects	700 people supported
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Youth

£602,250 funding	17 projects	2,499 young people supported
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Theme 2 – Jobs Skills and Prosperity

Theme Summary:

This theme targets key groups who are furthest from the labour market, including those who are under-represented, marginalised or facing barriers to employment.

The funding is designed to support services that provide specialist support to address specific barriers to employment including relevant Information Advice and Guidance support, accredited and /non-accredited training, volunteering and employment support and referral to other provision where appropriate. Funded projects under this theme worked towards achieving the following outcomes;

- Measurable increase in the numbers of people moved closer to the labour market and prepared for sustained employment
- Reduce the numbers of residents in the borough with no qualifications or training
- Improved integration of pathway to work employment support services
- Reduction in numbers of residents negatively impacted by welfare reforms
- Minimisation of the number of residents facing housing repossessions
- Increase in the numbers of residents supported with addressing problem debts
- Increases in number of residents on low incomes receiving their correct benefit /tax credit entitlement
- Empowering residents and building resilience

Outcomes achieved:

Routeways to Employment:

- All organisations have achieved outcome relating to confidence-building and therefore have reported an increase in confidence in their clients.
- All funded organisations had achieved their outcomes relating to knowledge thus ensuring beneficiaries access accredited and non-accredited training.
- Organisations have all successfully contributed to enhancing the well-being of residents by securing paid employment.

Social Welfare Advice Services:

- Organisations have supported residents to successfully win benefits appeals
- Residents have been supported with benefits issues resulting from welfare reforms
- Support residents with housing related issues

Theme 2 Jobs, Skills & Prosperity

Routeways to Employment

£934,308 funding	9 projects	People supported
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170 residents supported into employment	582 residents engaged in accredited training	285 residents on work or volunteer placements
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1,770 residents receiving ongoing employment support	913 residents engaged in confidence building and basic skills including digital skills	635 residents referred to other organisations
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Social Welfare Advice Services

£2,671,766 funding	11 projects	45,121 clients have been supported with welfare benefits, housing and debt issues.
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£6,229,572 backdated benefits	15,184 successful reconsideration outcomes	1,313 successful appeals outcomes
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£23,317,293 increase in benefits		
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Theme 3 –Prevention, Health and Wellbeing

Theme Summary:

The prevention, health and wellbeing theme is intended to achieve a range of targeted outcomes that improve the health and well-being of Tower Hamlets residents by demonstrating;

- Increased number of vulnerable residents leading healthier lifestyles through improved diets, taking regular exercise and related activities, including lunch club attendees
- Improved emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people and families
- Reduced loneliness and social isolation
- Greater community cohesion
- Increased knowledge about where to go for advice and information
- Improved health and well-being through access to cultural activity that brings people together, allows for self-expression including projects around memory and cross generational activity.

This theme is divided into 3 strands;

Lifelong Learning and Sport; Lunch Clubs; Prevention, Health and Wellbeing. Project activities in this theme all demonstrated outcomes in improving the health and wellbeing for vulnerable adults, older people, BAME women, residents with disabilities, people suffering from mental health issues and carers in Tower Hamlets. There were 33 projects in total funded under this theme.

Outcomes Achieved:

- Project activities directed at vulnerable adults all achieved their 'Healthy Lifestyles' outcome by delivering a range of physical and social exercise sessions. These projects ranged from dance sessions to Luncheon clubs that reduced isolation of vulnerable groups and improved the overall health and well-being.
- Increasing levels of community cohesion was successfully achieved by projects delivering innovative and tailored activities for older people. Activities ranged from Arts & Crafts, Befriending, and delivering intergenerational projects with local schools to encourage greater understanding of each other as a community whilst increasing the levels of community cohesion.
- Reducing health inequalities was successfully achieved by organisations delivering bespoke activities that increased the level of involvement in sport and physical activity of people with Mental Health, residents with disabilities and vulnerable adults.
- Improved understanding of health and well-being was achieved by organisations delivering tailored IAG to beneficiaries around their health

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needs. This involved confidence building, sign posting and facilitating discussions on reducing isolation and making friends.

- Improving the Health and well-being of children and families was successfully achieved. Projects delivered activities that ranged from Family learning ICT sessions, textile and design and ESOL classes.

Case study 1

Mr & Mrs W are a married couple living in the Isle of Dogs. Mr W was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease with he's health deteriorating...Mrs W was finding very challenging caring for her husband. The couple started accessing the luncheon club and found it to be extremely beneficial. Making new friends and developing new friendships has been paramount to both parties as they no longer feel isolated in their own world. Being able to have discussions and conversation with other people in their peer group in a similar situation has mentally helped both Mr and Mrs W. They both expressed their mental health and wellbeing has improved and both look forward to other adventures out and about this summer with their new friends.

Case study 2

Mrs T is a retired single female in her 70s living by herself. "It feels great to give back to the community and my peer group". Along this journey she has made new friends. She meets up with another member of the Chinese Association and goes swimming every week. Other members of staff have helped and showed Mrs T how to use a smart phone which has enabled her to communicate with family members that are abroad. Over all this has naturally improved Mrs T's mental and physical health and wellbeing. She now walks into the Chinese Association with a big smile on her face and informs she looks forward to Saturdays.

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Theme 3 Prevention Health & Wellbeing

Lifelong Learning and Sports

£521,419 funding	9 projects	1,532 people supported
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Lunch Clubs

£575,480 funding	11 projects	11,312 people supported
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Prevention Health & Wellbeing

£977,321 funding	14 projects	3,025 people supported
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Theme 4 Summary – Third Sector Organisational Development

Theme Summary:

The primary focus of this theme is to build the VCS infrastructure by improving sustainability of specialist resources available to the third sector by funding strategic partner projects in achieving;

- Increased levels of external grant funding secured by local VCS organisations
- Increase in the number of organisation able to effectively manage grant funded activities and better demonstrate the impact of their work

One of the projects covers a key “strategic partner” role to the Council and is undertaken by Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Services. The other two consortium projects provide organisational development and capacity building support to local voluntary and community sector organisations, as detailed below.

Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service (THCVS) led on two partnership projects that were concerned with supporting voluntary sector organisations in the borough:

- Support for Council Funded Organisations (Priority 1) project, in partnership with Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets (VCTH)
- Supporting VCS Organisations Based in Tower Hamlets (Priority 2) project, in partnership with VCTH and Tower Hamlets Community Transport.

These projects were focused on developing organisations’ managements and procedural systems and developing the skills of organisations’ staff. Project partners believe that the projects were particularly successful on making progress on the following outcomes for local voluntary sector organisations:

- improved financial management systems
- improved project management processes
- development of organisations’ monitoring and evaluation capabilities
- increased skills and knowledge for organisations’ staff
- networking and peer learning, which is particularly beneficial for smaller scale organisations
- improved policies for organisations
- development of business plans, including ensuring whole organisation ownership of these plans

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- organisations working towards Investors in Volunteers accreditation – progress had been made in this area in the third year of the project, with the expectation that three organisations would secure accreditation post-project lifetime
- organisations identifying external funding sources and making successful applications for funding.

THCVS was the sole delivery organisation for the Strategic Partner Project, which provided and supported representation, networking and partnership among voluntary sector organisations and between the statutory, business and voluntary sectors. The planned outcomes for this project focused on:

- Supporting structures for voluntary sector engagement, consultation and representation
- Promoting the voluntary sector in the borough, including with the statutory sector
- Developing voluntary sector partnerships and networks
- Supporting London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) in the development and delivery of strategy and action plans relating to the voluntary and community sector.

Outcomes achieved:

- THCVS membership increase. When THCVS applied for Main Stream Grant (MSG) for the project in 2015 it had 184 members. At August 2018 membership had risen to 305 organisations, an increase of 66%, although below the project target of 350 at the end of Year 3.
- the introduction of payments by results into LBTH MSG programme
- supporting the development of LBTH Voluntary Sector Strategy
- helping to secure LBTH's extension of its rent reduction policy, including the scope of community use

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Theme 4 Third Sector Organisational Development

£780,000 funding	3 projects	205 people from MSG funded organisations receiving training
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466 people from VCS organisations receiving training	197 strategic and board meetings attended	
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Theme 5 Summary – Community Engagement, Cohesion and Resilience

This theme focused on community engagement, cohesion and resilience.

Projects worked closely with local residents to facilitate the building of a stronger, more cohesive, supportive and stronger community. The theme was made up of 10 projects which concluded at the end of March 2017. A closure report detailing the outcomes of this theme was considered by the Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee at their meeting on the 12th September 2017 – (Appendix 1)