



## **Voluntary Sector Funding in Westminster – New Arrangements Announced**

Westminster City Council and NHS Westminster, in partnership with representatives from the voluntary and community sector, carried out a voluntary sector funding review last year. This review looked at what funding processes should be put in place to fund the voluntary and community sector in 2011-12 and beyond, recognising the challenging economic environment we now face. I am pleased to now announce the results of this review, with full details enclosed.

In these challenging times I am particularly pleased that we can make **£100,000** available during 2011-12 for small grants up to the value of £5,000 for voluntary and community sector organisations to undertake local activities.

The council will also work in partnership with the Capital Community Foundation to attract business donations to the Westminster Fund. This will enable grants and other funding to be made available to local groups.

The council will no longer administer the Annual Revenue Grants round. Instead, a number of the services that were funded through this grant will be commissioned through a procurement process to ensure that our resources are targeted effectively and give greater certainty to providers. Decisions concerning the future commissioning intentions of most services will be made shortly once budgets for 2011-12 are finalised. Those organisations currently funded through the Annual Revenue Grants round and other organisations who want to find out more can contact Kathy Morris on 020 7641 3114 or [kmorris3@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:kmorris3@westminster.gov.uk).

I am also pleased to announce that the council will continue to invest in voluntary and community sector support services. **£200,000** has been allocated for this purpose. Voluntary and community sector organisations who want advice about other funding opportunities can contact Voluntary Action Westminster (VAW). More information can be found at [www.vawcvs.org](http://www.vawcvs.org) or phone 020 7723 1216.

**Councillor Steve Summers**  
**Cabinet Member for Community Services**



## Voluntary Sector Review Outcomes

Set out below are the outcomes of the Voluntary Sector Review in Westminster. These decisions have been taken in partnership with representatives from the voluntary sector in Westminster.

### 1. Shared principles to govern funding processes

<b><i>Openness and clarity</i></b>	Make sure everyone knows what money is available, the criteria and how to apply.
<b><i>Proportionality</i></b>	Keep the process for getting money as simple as possible, particularly for small grants.
<b><i>Timeliness</i></b>	Have reasonable timeframes so that people know what has to be done by when, and ensure they have the time to do it.
<b><i>Need to know</i></b>	Make sure the application process only asks for essential information and policies.
<b><i>Equality and inclusion</i></b>	Make support available to small and single-focus organisations to ensure that they are not disadvantaged because of their size or scope when applying for funding.
<b><i>Sustainability</i></b>	Recognise the need for the voluntary and community sector to have stability.
<b><i>Collaboration</i></b>	Involve the voluntary and community sector in all elements of the commissioning process: needs assessment; service development; procurement; monitoring and evaluation.
<b><i>Accountability</i></b>	Put a robust monitoring system in place to ensure public money is used well to meet local needs.

### 2. Funding Process

The Council and NHS Westminster will implement consultation option 2, comprising:

- a) a small grants fund
- b) the development of a mechanism for dispersing medium-sized grants when they are available (approx. £5,000-£50,000); and
- c) commissioning through contracting of most services.

#### a) Small Grants

£100,000 will be made available during 2011-12 for small grants up to the value of up to £5,000. These grants will be available to all voluntary and community sector organisations to undertake local activities and may be available for up to three years. VAW will administer the grants on behalf of the council.

#### b) Medium-sized grants mechanism

During 2011 the council will establish a mechanism to be used whenever larger grants are available (approx £5,000 to £50,000). This will provide consistency and make it easier for groups to find out what funding is available.



We will also work in partnership with the Capital Community Foundation to attract business donations to the Westminster Fund. The Westminster Fund is an endowment fund and when the fund reaches a sustainable size, the interest will be available in the form of grants and other funding for local activities.

### **c) Commissioning through contracting of most services**

In light of the current difficult economic circumstances, and the shift to the greater commissioning of services in both the council and NHS Westminster, the council will no longer administer the Annual Revenue Grants round. Instead, a number of the services that were funded through this grant round will be commissioned through a competitive procurement process. This will help to ensure that the limited resources available are targeted effectively and will also give greater certainty to providers. Decisions concerning the future commissioning intentions of most services will be made shortly once budgets for 2011-12 are finalised.

Organisations currently funded through the Annual Revenue Grants round and other organisations who want to find out more about what contract opportunities will be available as a result of this change can contact Kathy Morris on 020 7641 3114 or [kmorris3@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:kmorris3@westminster.gov.uk). All organisations that currently receive a grant will also receive a letter from the relevant commissioners outlining in further detail what these decisions will mean for them.

All organisations interested in contract opportunities should register on CompeteFor, the supplier database that the council uses ([www.competefor.com](http://www.competefor.com)) to announce such opportunities. Organisations registered on CompeteFor will be notified of those contract opportunities available in the council, and many other public and private sector organisations.

### **3. Support Services**

The council will continue to invest in voluntary and community sector support services. During 2011 the council will tender for a VCS & Big Society Support Service provider to commence in April 2012. It is also our aspiration that this service will be commissioned jointly with other boroughs. The service is likely to encompass some of the services that are currently provided by Voluntary Action Westminster and Volunteer Centre Westminster. In 2011-12 we will continue to fund both of these organisations to ensure there is no gap in service provision.

Further updates about voluntary sector funding in Westminster will be available on the council's website: [www.westminster.gov.uk/voluntaryreview](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/voluntaryreview)