



**CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS FROM EALING
COUNCIL AND NHS EALING INTEGRATED CARE
PARTNERSHIP FOR THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDING IN
THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR (VCS)
FUNDING PROGRAMME 2023-2027**

June 2022

Summary

Ealing Council and Ealing Borough Based Partnership (EBBP)¹ funds voluntary and community organisations to provide support to some of Ealing's most vulnerable residents through the [2019-23 VCS funding programme](#). Support for voluntary and community sector groups remains a core priority for the council going forward and, in partnership with the NHS, the council will continue to invest over £2.2m million per annum through this programme.

The 2019-23 VCS grants programme has been extended to 30 September 2023 to allow time for consultation on the 2023-27 programme and the application process. The 2023-27 programme will then be in place from 1 October 2023. In order to best meet the needs of residents, we are now consulting on the next grant programme. The consultation covers proposed new funding streams and priorities for Ealing Council and EBBP for the 2023-27 programme and seeks views on these to inform future plans.

This document sets out priorities and proposals for funding a range of services and activities which are currently supported via the 2019-23 VCS grants programme. The consultation is aimed at all voluntary and community organisations that provide services in London Borough of Ealing whether they are currently grant funded or not. We would also welcome the views of other public or private sector partners who work with the voluntary and community sector in the borough and individuals who make use of the services provided by the voluntary and community sector.

We are seeking your views on the proposals set out in section 4 of this document. You may also want to feedback on the overall direction of travel or on specific streams. The key consultation questions are:

- a) Are these the right funding streams?
- b) Are these the right priorities within each funding stream?
- c) Any there any funding streams/priorities missing?
- d) Is the balance of funding right?

We are also asking for views on the impact of the proposals on people with protected equality characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Information you provide will be used to support the development of our analysis of the likely impact of the proposals and the steps that might be taken to address any negative impacts. This information will be included in the final Equality Analysis Assessments which will form part of the report to Cabinet expected in November 2022.

You can respond to this consultation in several ways:

- By completing our [online survey](#)
- By email to vcsfunding@ealing.gov.uk
- By attending the [consultation workshop](#) on Tuesday 19th July 2022. Further details of this are available separately on the [website](#).
- By participating in a workshop specific to infrastructure support. Further details will be available in due course on the [website](#).

The closing date for all consultation responses is **5.00pm on Monday 26 September 2022**. Following the close of the consultation the responses will be reviewed and used to inform the criteria for each priority area that will form the individual grants for organisations to apply for. These are expected to be presented to the council's Cabinet and the EBBP Board in November 2022.

¹ The Ealing Borough Based Partnership is a partnership of the health and care system across Ealing, as part of the North West London (NWL) Integrated Care System.

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1. Introduction

Ealing Council and Ealing Borough Based Partnership (EBBP) are committed to working with the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to secure improvements in the well-being of the people of Ealing. The current VCS grants programme will end on 30 September 2023 following a six-month extension and this document sets out the proposals for the funding of services for 2023-27, for the purposes of consultation with the sector and the wider community.

These proposals relate to council and EBBP budgets for funding VCS services to support the council's priorities and those of the EBBP. This consultation document sets out the overall context and budget for the proposals, the proposed funding streams and priorities. It also highlights the main changes from the 2019-23 funding arrangements.

While the document shows the overall level of funding potentially available, the consultation will focus on how best to use that available budget.

Attached to the document are three appendices:

1. The proposed timetable for the funding process
2. Summary of the funding streams showing proposed budget allocations
3. Draft Equality Analysis Assessments for each of the funding streams

The timetable for consultation on the proposals contained within this document is as follows:

4 July 2022	Consultation launched on Ealing Council website
19 July 2022	Consultation event with representatives from NHS, Ealing Council and VCS networks and organisations
August/September	Consultation workshops around infrastructure support
26 September 2022	Closing date for receipt of consultation responses
9 November 2022	The Council's Cabinet determines funding priorities, funding streams and budgets for the period 1/10/2023 – 30/09/2027 following consideration of the consultation responses and the equality analysis assessments
November 2022	EBBP confirms agreement with the proposals.
Mid-January 2023	Launch of the application process

A more detailed timetable is set out in Appendix 1.

2. Value of the voluntary and community sector

2.1 Importance of the VCS

The voluntary sector is a vital element of both community character and service provision in Ealing. The council and EBBP

- value the substantive contribution the sector makes to the quality of life and well-being of residents in the borough and we want to help build the sector's capacity and resilience.
- want to support a vibrant and sustainable VCS that provides responsive services to our growing population and which reflects the wide range of cultural and community needs and interests within the borough.

- recognise that including voluntary sector activities alongside public and private sector provision can make for a larger, more diverse and more competitive supply base for public services.
- understand that, in some areas, the VCS has a particularly good understanding of users' needs and/or a distinctive delivery capability.

This consultation is being launched against a backdrop of significant societal change. The Coronavirus pandemic particularly has highlighted the importance of VCS in Ealing as during the pandemic the sector successfully served the boroughs most vulnerable and socially excluded residents. This included implementing new initiatives such as the Emergency Food Hub and collaborating with mutual aid groups and faith groups. The sector has also shown real innovation and flexibility in responding to challenges such as working remotely during the lockdown.

Because of the value that the voluntary sector brings, the council and EBBP are committed to continuing to work with the sector to shape public services, deliver them and to provide support to individuals in need. The commitment that there will be no reduction to the overall budget for the 2023-27 programme further reflects the value put on support from the voluntary sector.

2.2 Challenges for the VCS

It is recognised that the VCS has faced major challenges over recent years. Residents are currently faced with the greatest cost of living crisis for a generation, and we wish to ensure that the VCS grants programme can help residents navigate and access the support they need.

National evidence shows that there have been:

- Significant reductions in funding to the VCS both from local & central government
- Increased demands on both local government and the VCS, in particular as a result of the impacts of welfare reform and demographic growth within vulnerable communities
- Relative shifts in demand from public services onto the VCS and local communities.

It is however possibly the challenges as result of Covid and the need to recover from the pandemic which have been felt most strongly by the sector in recent years. According to Charity Commission (CC) research, the COVID-19 pandemic had a number of negative impacts on the charity sector with the effects likely to continue for some time.

- **Financial challenges** - According to CC research, 60% of charities lost income during the pandemic. 62% of charities expect some threat to their financial viability in the next year. However, only 1% views the threat as critical to the survival of their organisation. An NCVO study found that 46% of charities used cash reserves to deal with the pandemic. 44% of charities said they had enough cash reserves to last six months. 9% said they did not have sufficient cash reserves.
- **Increasing demand** - After the pandemic, charities experienced overwhelming demand for their services, and many expect this to continue as society and the economy recover. During COVID-19, more people turned to charities for support, and they still rely on them as they navigate their way back to normality.
- **Volunteer retention** - During the initial outbreak of the pandemic, people supported their community members wherever they could. It will be difficult for the sector to maintain volunteer numbers as the country returns to normality as thousands of people who had signed up to become volunteers go back to their normal work lives.
- **Digital technology** - NCVO COVID-19 Voluntary Sector Impact Barometer reports that 81% of charity organisations have changed their use of digital technology due to

the pandemic. As a result, the need for digital skills among charity staff has increased.

- **Equality diversity, and inclusion** - The NCVO research also found that most organisations have drawn up plans to address equality, diversity, and inclusion issues in the workplace. However, implementation of changes has in some circumstances been delayed due to the pandemic and a lack of resources. Some of the main obstacles to becoming more inclusive are limited financial resources, limited staffing capacity, a lack of human resources skills, knowledge, and capacity, and a lack of equality, diversity, and inclusion knowledge or skills.

Some of these challenges were also highlighted in the Build Back Better research conducted in 2020 by the Young Ealing Foundation and Ealing Community Network

Alongside these challenges, there have also been new opportunities for the VCS such as digitalisation to improve service delivery and engagement; and various alternative forms of investment in the sector such as crowdfunding, community shares and social investment.

The statutory sector and the VCS share many of these challenges and opportunities, so it is important that we continue to work in partnership to improve the lives of our residents.

2.3 The VCS in Ealing

Data from Ealing & Hounslow Community & Voluntary Service (EHCVS) indicates that there are currently over 800 voluntary sector organisations in Ealing with figures from the Charity Commission highlighting that there are in excess of 600 organisations registered as charities who operate in the borough. In addition, there are a large number of Ealing based organisations registered as Community Interest Companies (CIC) or Community Interest Organisations (CIO).

The results of the EHCVS Ealing State of the Sector Survey in 2021 show that the areas across which the groups work are varied. Whilst some are focused on specific wards or localities, 84% of respondents reported that their services benefit the whole borough. The range of activities provided also varies greatly with the five most common areas of work amongst respondents being:

- Health and wellbeing (60%)
- Mental health (56%)
- Promoting and supporting community cohesion (44%)
- Promoting Volunteering and community development (44%)
- Leisure, including sports and recreation (44%)

These are largely the priority areas that the 20323-27 VCS funding programme.

2.4 Investment in the VCS

This consultation deals exclusively with the 2023-27 funding programme. It should be noted, however, that the investment in the voluntary sector through the council's VCS funding programmes is only a small part of the overall investment by the council in voluntary and community sector/not-for-profit organisations.

- a. From 2019-23 the value of the **annual grants programme** was over £2.24m. This was made up of almost £1.6m from the council and £0.669m from the EBBP (formerly the CCG).
- b. There are a significant number of **council contracts with not-for-profit organisations** to deliver services for residents and local communities in the borough, particularly in

health, social care and housing. In the last financial year (1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021) the council invested almost £36.1m in the third sector. The 2020.21 total includes:

- £7.307m for 'micro' organisations i.e. those with less than 10 employees and a turnover of under £2m
 - £2.611m for 'small' organisations i.e. those with less than 50 employees and a turnover of under £10m
 - £18.667m for 'medium' organisations i.e. those with less than 250 employees and a turnover of under £50m
- c. The council further supports the VCS through **rate relief**. The amounts awarded in 2021/22 were £10.470m for registered charities (of which £10.2984m was the 80% mandatory rate relief and £0.173m was the discretionary top-up to 100%). £0.019 was awarded as discretionary relief to non-profit making organisations.
- d. The council owns a number of buildings in the borough which are utilised by the voluntary sector to deliver services, sometimes on a subsidised basis. The overall current **subsidy** amount is around £0.35m p.a.
- e. Investment of £1,132,995 from the council has led to the successful delivery of 305 completed **ward forum** projects since 2018, with a further 27 on track to complete by summer 2022.
- f. Since 2018, 23 projects worth £440,820 have been supported with £138,429 of council **Transform Your Space** funding to enable delivery of projects proposed by the community for the community, helping build trust with the council, as well as increase community resilience and community cohesion.
- g. Recognizing the pressure on the sector as a result of the recent Covid pandemic, the council has also directed **ad hoc external funding** to the sector through (much of which has come from central government), for example, the Covid emergency grants, the Public Health community health champions, household support grant funding etc.
- h. In 2021/22 the council contributed £0.254m to the **London Boroughs Grants Scheme**. This scheme provided grants to support voluntary and community organisations in London to deliver projects with a focus on combatting homelessness and tackling sexual and domestic violence. Together with contributions from the other London boroughs these grants totalled in excess of £6m for the two priorities. Although these grants are not specifically for Ealing, data from London Councils show that borough residents do directly benefit from this funding.
- i. In 2021/22 **West London NHS** contributed £0.35m towards the council's small grants scheme and have given over £0.25m in 2022/23 for mental health grants.
- j. We also recognise that the VCS itself plays an important role in **attracting funding into the borough**. For example, in 2021 over £1.77m was secured through the National Lottery Community Fund for projects in Ealing.

3. Context to these proposals

The current four year VCS grants programme was agreed by [Cabinet](#) in June 2018 and will end on 30 September 2023 following a 6-month extension approved by [Cabinet](#) in June 2022. At this point all current funding arrangements as set out in the existing grant agreements will cease and so organisations currently in receipt of grant funding ending on 30 September 2023 should put in place plans to take account of this.

These proposals set out how the council and EBBP intend to commission a range of services and activities (similar to those currently being delivered through the existing grants programme) from 2022/23 to 2026/27 (subject to annual budget approval). These proposals do not cover services currently commissioned outside of the 2019-23 grants programme.

3.1 Principles

The following principles underpin the 2023-27 funding programme.

A 4 year funding round: The council and EBBP are committed to a 4 year funding round for 2023-27 to provide security for funded organisations; however annual allocations will be subject to confirmation via the annual budget process for both the council and EBBP. The 2023-27 programme will run from 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2027.

A co-ordinated funding process involving all council departments and EBBP: A co-ordinated process enables us to consider needs across service areas and consider aligning resources around a need or cohort in line with council and EBBP priorities.

Funding allocations which take into account the budget available: Although it is not proposed to reduce the budget for the 2023-27 funding programme, it is likely that allocations across the various funding streams will change in response to the current levels of demand and the outcome of the consultation.

What we want to fund: Funding will be aligned to the agreed council priorities and outcomes. Council and EBBP strategies are the basis for decisions by departments about specific priorities for funding.

How we will commission services: All funding in the 2023-27 VCS funding programme will be via grants, unlike in the 2019-23 programme where there were a number of contracts.

3.2 Future support for the VCS

The council and EBBP are committed to supporting the voluntary and community sector and will focus on:

- Targeting support at those most in need to reduce inequality
- Helping people to help themselves and each other
- Helping people to take advantage of the opportunities in their neighbourhood
- Empowering people to take action to improve their communities
- Making the best use of the assets of our residents and communities

To support the VCS, we will also:

- Leverage the additional social value that council suppliers can provide following the adoption of a new [Social Value Policy](#).
- Help the local VCS attract investment and become financially sustainable

We will work with other funders and commissioners that support the VCS and communities in Ealing to develop a more coordinated approach to social investment locally, notably to:

- Reduce the risk of funding being duplicated across public services, if not other investors
- Influence the investment to be targeted at council outcomes and priority groups as set out in [Brighter Futures](#), and the [Better Lives Programme](#)
- Attract and invest in infrastructure that can support communities and VCS

organisations to take advantage of the opportunities including digital solutions and alternative forms of investment

- Reduce reliance by the VCS on grant funding and instead support them to explore alternative and more sustainable forms of investment and have exit plans in place for when their current funding ends

3.3 Council priorities and the NW London Integrated Care System

The funding priorities for 2023 onwards will be based on the council and NW London Integrated Care System priorities to improve the lives and opportunities for Ealing residents making the best use of resources as demand on services grows.

Ealing Council is refreshing its Council Plan 2022-26 with a focus on three cross cutting objectives: tackling inequality, addressing the climate crisis and supporting good jobs and growth. These objectives and the 9 priorities in the plan provide a strategic context for our plans and service delivery with partners. The priorities for the council are:

1. Tackling inequality
2. Climate action
3. Healthy Lives
4. A Fairer Start
5. Decent living incomes
6. Inclusive economy
7. Genuinely affordable homes
8. Good growth
9. Thriving Communities

More information about these priorities will be found in the new 4-year [Council Plan](#) which will be published in July following Council approval.

The NWL Integrated Care System priorities are focused around 2 statutory components:

1. Integrated Care Board
Responsible for allocating the NHS budget and commission services and produces five-year system plan for health services.
2. Integrated Care Partnership
Planning to meet wider health, public health and social care needs; develops and leads integrated care strategy but does not commission services

However, the system is made up of a number of partner organisations who operate as part of the Partnership of the integrated care system, which includes Place-based partnerships.

Over the coming months the Integrated Care System will be developing its 5-year strategy with all partners.

3.4 Budget

It is proposed that the overall grants budget for the funding programme for 2023 onwards will be £2,241m per year (subject to annual approval), the same as it is for the 2019-23 funding programme.

Both the council and EBBP are subject to an annual budgetary process and neither organisation has confirmed levels of central government funding for the four-year period to which the consultation relates. The council has a forecast budget gap of £71m over the next three years and the commitment to a multi-year settlement that is protected in cash terms is a significant commitment. While recognising the benefits of long-term funding commitments

to the VCS, both organisations need to be able to adjust their future commitment if priorities and the financial position change.

All funding agreements will provide for monitoring of performance and any reduction or withdrawal of funding during the agreement period will be subject to the three-month notice period as set out in the grant agreement. Continuation of funding will be dependent on the delivery of agreed outcomes.

In developing the proposals officers have taken into account the public sector equality duty. The funding programme is designed to provide more financial resources to the higher priority areas based on an assessment of need which in turn will mean fewer financial resources being proposed for those areas deemed to be a lesser priority.

4. Funding proposals for 2023/24 – 2026/27

4.1 Proposed funding streams

The overarching priorities set out in section 3 above cut across all council departments. Individual funding streams have been identified which will apply to all ages and all communities. Each funding stream is detailed below and includes the

- context relating to the proposals;
- proposed overall annual budget for the stream;
- proposed funding priorities;
- main changes from 2019/23 funding arrangements.

The main funding streams will focus on the following 7 areas:

	Funding Stream	Potential budget allocation
A	Improving community connections	£0.420m
B	Information and advice	£0.547m
C	Mental health	£0.385m
D	Short breaks/respite care for adults and children	£0.405m
E	Domestic violence	£0.258m
F	Infrastructure support	£0.146m
G	Small grants	£0.08m
	Total	£2.241m

It should be noted that the individual priorities set out within each of the funding streams do not specifically relate to the individual grants that will be awarded. Detailed criteria for each separate grant will be developed following analysis of the response to the consultation. These will be highlighted in a report to Cabinet in November 2022.

A. Improving community connections

Context

Ealing's Council Plan focuses on thriving cohesive communities where people have a strong sense of local connection and involvement in their local area and a strong focus on early help and a preventative approach.

People of all ages can be socially isolated. We saw this starkly during the Covid-19 lockdowns and now, as we see the impacts this has had on communities and individuals. Social isolation broadly refers to the absence of contact with people. A lack or loss of meaningful social relationships can result in social or emotional loneliness for the individual. The effect of loneliness and isolation can be as harmful to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day and is more damaging than obesity.

Some groups are at a higher risk such as older people who are more likely to suffer from social isolation because of loss of friends and family, loss of mobility, deterioration in physical health or loss of income. Carers, refugees, people with mental health problems and those with disabilities, long-term conditions or sensory impairments are also at risk. Being socially isolated and or lonely can affect both physical and mental health as well as life expectancy.

Some impacts of social isolation and loneliness include:

- More frequent use of public services due to lack of support networks such as more likely to visit a GP, visit A&E, have an emergency admission, more likely to enter residential care.
- Increased likelihood of developing certain health conditions such as depression, dementia, be physical inactive which may result in developing diabetes, suffering a stroke or developing coronary heart disease.

In Ealing half of the over 65s live alone and over 60% of adult social care users want more social contact. For families and young people, social isolation and deprivation can be a vicious cycle preventing families from getting out of their disadvantaged position, having long term effects on child development, education, employment, health, emotional and psychological development and growth. Vulnerable groups such as care leavers and young carers are at particular risk in this category.

The Care Act 2014 places a general duty on councils to take action on loneliness and isolation to meet the prevention duties, and to meet care and support needs identified during assessments.

National and local health, social care and public health priorities place an emphasis on preventative and early intervention work to improve the wellbeing of the whole population. There are many places such as libraries, schools, community centres, sports centres, places of worship or pubs in localities which could provide opportunities for people to get together and develop connections and we want to see groups linking up with these organisations for this purpose.

There is increased use of social prescribing as a means of enabling GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services. Social prescribing aims to address people's needs in a holistic way and support people to take greater control of their own health. Evidence indicates that it can lead to improvements in quality of life and mental and general wellbeing and reduce levels of depression and anxiety.

Budget

The proposed budget for community connections is £0.420m per year for 4 years (2023/24 to 2026/27) subject to annual approval.

Proposed funding priorities

We want to fund a wide range of community projects to provide solutions and opportunities for people that tackle social isolation.

People who have lived experience of using services should be central to those services being developed, run, monitored, and reviewed. When resources are limited it is especially important to make sure that what is provided is what is wanted and needed and is responsive to those concerned. As well as unique insights into how to improve services, people with lived experience can also tell us what works best and what is most important.

The aim overall is 'coproduction', with people working alongside each other to create the best possible services. Involvement in training staff, gathering views and opinions about proposed changes, and monitoring and reviewing services are all important. When people are involved their confidence and skills are developed, they have better access to and engagement with services, and their own health and wellbeing can often be improved.

This funding stream will focus on the following outcomes:

- Promoting social inclusion, encourage independence and develop personal resilience taking a preventative approach focussed on those most at risk of isolation
- Build positive relations between different groups and communities that will support high levels of community cohesion in Ealing.

Main changes from 2019/23 funding arrangements

The consultation is seeking views from the sector about the focus for the community connections grants and the method of delivery. Any changes to the 2019-23 programme will be identified as a result of the consultation feedback.

B. Information and Advice

Context

This funding stream will provide specialist, generalist and children's specific information and advice.

The [Care Act](#) acknowledges that information and advice is fundamental to enabling people, to take control of, and make well-informed choices about, their care and support and how they fund it. It helps to promote people's wellbeing by increasing their ability to exercise choice and control and is vital in preventing or delaying people's need for care and support.

Under the Children & Families Act 2014, local authorities are required to provide information advice and support to families of children with special educational needs and disabilities. Parents and carers of children with SEN, disabilities or complex health needs require specialist additional support within the community that provides advice and guidance practically and emotionally to help come to terms with and deal with the many challenges that they face.

Accessible information, advice, signposting and customer representation service is vital, as it empowers people to take control of their personal situation, can lead to reduced anxiety and improved health and wellbeing; and ultimately results in less intervention and less unnecessary referrals to statutory services.

Note: Advocacy is contracted separately outside of this programme. Customer representation is a less formal support service, however is just as vital for people who find it difficult to understand or use information given; and need support communicating their views and needs; as well as help to liaise with formal services to access the best support.

Budget

The proposed budget for the provision of information and advice services is £0.547m per year for 4 years (2023/24 to 2026/27) subject to annual approval.

Proposed funding priorities

For **adults**, the priority is information, advice, signposting and customer representation to support people to keep independent, safe and well.

There is a Care Act requirement to meet the information, advice and customer representation needs of the following groups:-

- people with sensory impairments, such as visual impairment, deafblind and hearing impaired
- people who do not have English as a first language
- people who are socially isolated
- people whose disabilities limit their physical mobility
- people with learning disabilities
- people with mental health problems

The services will provide information and advice on adult social care and health provision, housing issues, welfare benefits, money management, debt, counselling, consumer protection, education, employment, family and domestic issues, immigration, carers' services and benefits, accessing independent financial advice, including supporting people with the completion of appropriate forms for other national and local services. There will be a focus on addressing digital inclusion to enable people to get the full benefit of the services available.

For children, the priority is targeted information and support services for **families of children with disabilities and complex health needs**. The service will target all families of children with disabilities providing proactive and preventative services such as brief information on welfare benefits and housing, focusing on sign posting to other services. The services will also provide information and support to parents regarding their child's diagnosis and disability via the development of peer and self-advocacy groups and training sessions.

It is proposed that funding for specialist information and advice for children will continue as a grant. The service will be required to work in partnership with the wider generalist information and advice services provided by the council.

Main changes from 2019/23 funding arrangements

There are no changes proposed for this funding stream.

C. Mental Health

Context

Funding for this stream will support people with common mental health needs and those with serious and long-term mental health needs in their recovery, and promote mental wellbeing for all.

[Ealing's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) for adult was launched in 2017 to 2022. A new one for 2023-2027 is being developed alongside people from statutory mental health services, voluntary and community sector organisations and people with lived experience of mental health needs. The existing strategy aims to achieve five outcomes, which reflects the North West London Sustainability and Transformation Plan, the West London Mental Health Transformation Plan as well as the Council's Better Lives Programme, with its emphasis on

people connecting with each other within their communities, building resilience and promoting wellbeing.

COVID-19 has had a direct as well as indirect impact on the mental health and wellbeing of residents in Ealing, including increased depression, stress and anxiety. Social Isolation, economic uncertainty and disruptions to routine and social networks have triggered substance misuse, domestic violence and the increased risk of suicide. Challenges were exacerbated in those with the least resources and those more vulnerable to inequalities, including children and young people, older adults, those from BAME groups, those of low income, other socially excluded groups and people with Learning Disabilities and existing Mental Health disorders.

An integrated impact assessment was undertaken across Ealing and resources were mapped to understand existing support available, with gaps and areas of need identified to ensure accessible and equitable resources were available for all, and a COVID-19 MH Action plan was subsequently developed which focused on key themes:

- 1) Promoting Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing:** This seeks to improve the understanding of looking after mental health and wellbeing, improving information of and uptake of services and improving communication and engagement strategies.
- 2) Better outcomes and support for people with common mental health needs:** This seeks to support accessibility of skills and employment for people with Mental Health needs, including provision of advice and guidance to employers on mental health support for employees.
- 3) Working Better Together:** The aim is to work with volunteers and community champions to provide social supporting, social prescribing, linking with NWL CCG social prescribing services, signposting and promoting volunteering and employment opportunities.
- 4) Reaching all our communities:** Ensuring health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities is a key priority, focusing on tackling stigma and discrimination, building trust and coproducing solutions with BAME groups. This priority area also focuses on developing local digital offers for young people and non-NHS frontline workers, ensuring access to face to face support and mental health services for those who may not be able to access online.

Some impacts of the increased effect on Mental Health include:

- More frequent use of public services such as more likely to visit a GP or A&E with Mental Health emergencies, have an emergency admission, more likely to enter residential care.
- Community support needs to be embedded to decrease relapse risk and risk of readmission
- Increased likelihood of developing health conditions such as depression, dementia, diabetes, or stroke.
- Increase in suicide attempts and subsequent impact on physical health

Budget

The proposed budget for the provision of mental health services is £0.385m per year for 4 years (2019/20 to 2022/23) subject to annual approval.

Proposed funding priorities

The contribution of the voluntary and community sector is an integral part of delivering the above objectives and improving mental health and wellbeing in Ealing. Our priority will be for the voluntary sector to continue to work with the council and the NHS to deliver Ealing's strategic priorities through grant funded services to

- upgrade prevention and wellbeing for the whole population, building on people's resilience and community resources
- reach all our communities and improve equality and access to services
- improve outcomes and support for people with common mental health needs
- deliver a model of care for people with serious and long-term mental health needs and reduce waiting times
- provide support to neurodiverse residents
- work better together

This will be delivered through funding for services such as talking therapies, community support, autism etc.

Main changes from 2019/23 funding arrangements

- Funding will be used to ensure co-design informs service delivery to meet the diverse needs of the community.
- There will be a focus on grass work organisations, embedded within communities to ease access and equality in services and reduce the risk of readmission.
- All funding for mental health which are part of the 2023-27 programme will be via grants as opposed to a mix of grants and contracts as in the 2019-23 programme.

D. Short Breaks/Respite Care for adults and children

Context

From a **childrens'** perspective, short breaks provide families with an essential respite for both vulnerable children and their families and provide young people with individual support and enrichment activities.

Short breaks provide structured safe activities for children and young people within the community, providing the opportunity for children and young people to have fun, learn, develop and gain independence and confidence.

Providing meaningful short breaks allows families a regular break from their caring roles, preventing a family from going into crisis and the council having to intervene further to provide more intensive and costly forms of support including overnight short breaks, children entering the care of the local authority or being placed in residential special schools.

The provision of these services supports the council's priorities for Tackling Inequalities and providing the Best Start in Life for vulnerable children and young people.

Whilst the Council has a statutory responsibility to provide a range of short breaks, the demand for services has grown year-on-year. This is further exacerbated by limited provision within the borough.

Adults' services are seeking proposals for innovative approaches to delivering respite and short breaks services for carers of adults with a range of health and social care needs including dementia, mental health issues, learning disability, physical disability, long-term health condition etc.

Carers and the person they care for over the age of 18 will be provided with a range of options including home, community, centre-based and other settings. Carers and the person they care for to be supported to use community facilities, establish social networks, meet people and make friends.

We want to develop a varied respite and carers breaks offer that is available to all unpaid Adult Carers. The design of the service should be informed by carers to meet both their emotional and practical needs.

A varied range of respite care with flexibility to meet different needs including emergency respite will require a flexible and responsive range of high-quality respite care offers.

Budget

The proposed budget for Respite/ Short Break services for both adults and children from 2023 is £0.405m per year for 4 years (2023/24 to 2026/27) subject to annual approval.

Proposed funding priorities

For **children's services** provision moving forward will be focused on:

- reducing the current waiting list (approximately 100 young people on the waiting list at the time of writing)
- Increasing capacity – provision additional services during holidays and at weekends
- Increasing the diversity of provision – age-appropriate provision with more opportunities to access activities within the community
- Embedding Co-design in the development of services
- Implementing robust performance monitoring to drive up the quality of provision e.g. regular review, attendance, activity planning

Young people benefit from:

- Developing and pursuing new and existing interests and hobbies
- Making and sustaining a range of positive relationships outside of their families
- Taking part in a range of fun and interesting activities and life experiences
- Learning new skills that can contribute to help them prepare for adulthood

Parents and other members of the family benefit from:

- Being able to have break from their caring role(s)
- Having the opportunity to catch up with 'everyday activities' (sleep, employment, education)
- Have time to attend to their own physical and psychological wellbeing
- Spend time with other children in the family
- Maintain and develop social networks

The council is also looking to develop a range of **respite services for adults** that support prevention of placement breakdown and in-patient admission. This could be support provided in the customers/carers home, in the community, at a centre or other setting. The council want to look at a range of options and encourage innovation.

The service will provide both planned and emergency respite for unpaid carers of adults. This could include provision of regulated personal care. Both the planned and emergency respite provision is focused on helping individuals remain at home, sustain caring relationships and prevent crises developing. The service will be available 365 days per year.

Main changes from 2019/23 funding arrangements

For children's services

- The desire is to increase the range of short break providers. At present grant funding has been commissioned to two providers (short breaks and young carer provision respectively). The short breaks provider currently operates a waiting list.
- Funding will be utilised to provide a range of placements across all age groups and provide additional support to a smaller but more complex cohort who may need specialised support.
- Intelligence from an ongoing service review of Short Breaks provision (Feb 2022-Dec 2022) will help to further inform priorities.
- Funding will be used to ensure co-design informs service delivery to meet the diverse needs of the community.

In the previous round grant funding was provided to a consortium of organisations to deliver a short breaks service for **Adult Carers**. The council is seeking alternative innovative proposals to deliver a respite and short breaks service that meets the needs of carers and the person they care for.

E. Domestic violence services

The provision of domestic abuse services is one of the priorities within the [Safer Ealing Partnership Strategy](#) specifically relating to tackling vulnerability and building confidence and resilience. It will also be one of the strands outlined within the developing Safer Ealing Partnership's Violence against Women & Girl's Strategy, due to be published this year.

The provision of these services for residents of Ealing supports:

- the Future Ealing objectives in relation to supporting those who are vulnerable and reducing crime.
- the Tackling Inequalities objective in relation to supporting those who are vulnerable and reducing crime.
- The Healthy Lives objective: providing the best start in life.

Budget

The proposed budget for domestic violence services from 2023 is £0.258m per year for 4 years (2023/24 to 2026/27) subject to annual approval.

Proposed funding priorities

The Council want to ensure victims of domestic violence have access to a service that safeguards the safety of the victim and their children and empowers them to begin the process of re-building their lives to become independent and resume control of their lives.

The funding provided for domestic abuse services will continue to ensure access to

- A general domestic abuse service for men and women offering support, safety planning for victims and their families for a period of twelve weeks.
- A specialist domestic abuse service for the BME community offering support, safety planning for victims and their families for a twelve-week period recognising that in some cases a longer period may be required for complex issues which specifically affect BME communities.
- A domestic violence therapeutic service for children and young (CYP) who have been affected or are affected by domestic abuse. The main objective of the service will be to

help improve situations where the wellbeing and/or development of the child/young person is being adversely affected.

Main changes from 2019/23 funding arrangements

There are no proposed changes to this funding stream.

F. Infrastructure support

Context

In addition to these priorities, the council wishes to provide funding to support all voluntary sector organisations to be sustainable in order to make the best use of the VCS' strengths outlined in Section 2.1 and meet the challenges and opportunities it faces in Section 2.2. We will do this through providing funding to support the infrastructure of the VCS in Ealing.

In order to best meet the needs of the borough, we would like to hear ideas on how to focus on supporting voluntary and community groups in developing stronger organisational infrastructure, better coordination with their partners and in effective fundraising, rather than trying to directly fund everything that is needed in the borough.

Budget

The proposed budget for the provision of infrastructure support to the VCS is £0.146m per year for 4 years (2023/24 to 2026/27) subject to annual approval.

Proposed funding priorities

The proposal is for VCS infrastructure support funding to focus on the following priority areas:

- a) Improving the capabilities of VCS organisations through capacity building, training, funding advice and having a voice for the sector.
- b) Supporting organisations & communities to better enable social action and volunteering
- c) Enabling the VCS to have a common voice to democratically represent the sector.

We know that having a strong, sustainable voluntary and community sector will play a key contribution in achieving the council's priorities and improving the wellbeing of our communities so this funding stream will include

- Providing funding advice, with associated capacity building and development support to local VCS groups
- Supporting communities and VCS organisations to take advantage of digital opportunities to help residents take action and meet their own needs
- Developing the capabilities of the VCS to become more financially sustainable and work with other local organisations to attract investment into our local communities
- Providing safeguarding information, advice and training to the voluntary sector
- Working to increase the number, diversity and impact of volunteering & social impact across the borough
- Helping to improve the ability of local organisations to access and make the best use of volunteering to improve their impact
- Improving collaboration between organisations to develop a culture of giving across the borough

The proposal is to deliver these priorities through grants with the focus being on organisations which are able to provide specialist expertise in specific areas.

Main changes from 2019/23 funding arrangements

The core activities remain the same as in 2019-23 programme with a similar budget allocation. It is however proposed to review the delivery of infrastructure support as part of the consultation to determine the most efficient and effective way of funding this area. Research indicates that having a grant for the voice of the sector separate to the capacity building grant is not the model that other local authorities have adopted as it can lead to confusion in the sector and a degree of duplication. We will therefore be inviting feedback from the sector on its needs and whether there is value in retaining our current arrangements or whether alternative arrangements could better meet the needs of the sector.

The 2019-23 capacity building grant included a detailed requirement for safeguarding support to voluntary, community and independent groups who work with and support children and their families aged 0 to 18, supporting the provision of safe services and safe employment practices, by providing advice, information and guidance. Although safeguarding support will be included in the criteria for the new capacity building and group development grant for the 2023-27 programme, it is proposed to review this requirement as some of the activities are already provided as part of the council's statutory function.

G. Small grants fund

Context

Many smaller organisations are rooted in their local areas which brings with it a detailed knowledge and understanding of those neighbourhoods' strengths and needs. They can play a role in building social networks and in creating positive relationships between people. They can help to build local social capital and develop links within and between communities. Importantly smaller community organisations are considered to be uniquely placed to engage directly with those that the statutory sector perceives as hardest to reach.

However, over 150 different funding opportunities available to organisations in the borough have been identified which means that there should be less of a need to rely on council funding for these local projects.

Budget

One overall fund of up to £0.080m could be made available each year from 2023/24 to 2026/27 subject to annual budget approval with organisations being able to apply for grants of up to a maximum of £5,000.

Proposed funding priorities

A small grants programme would fund projects which will benefit the local community, examples of which might include projects such as older people's coffee mornings, arts and cultural events and activities, intergenerational projects, health and self-care support groups, peer support groups, exercise and healthy walks, horticultural/environmental projects or initiatives to tackle digital exclusion etc. The key is that the projects should be local, led by local people/ organisations, meeting the needs of local people to improve lives, health and wellbeing in their neighbourhoods.

The focus for small grants would need to reflect the council's priorities – creating good jobs, tackling the climate crisis and fighting inequality.

Small grants would only provide a **contribution** to the cost of new activities, projects and services planned by the organisations and it would be expected that the organisations applying would do additional fund-raising to support their activities.

Main changes from 2019/23 funding arrangements

There are currently no proposed changes however, as part of the consultation process, views will be sought on the value of the small grants programme in light of the other local funding opportunities available to the sector and whether an alternative funding model would be beneficial, for example a neighbourhood model, match funding, year round funding etc.

In addition to the funding streams A - G above, it is proposed that a small budget is retained to enable the council, in partnership with the sector, to commission specific consultation and research projects in response to emerging issues which may arise during the funding period. Examples of these over the past four years would have included the impact of Brexit, the cost-of-living crisis, the Covid pandemic etc.

5. Impact and equality implications

The proposed changes will have an impact on people with protected equality characteristics who currently use the services and support delivered by the voluntary and community sector. Draft equality assessments for each funding stream which focus on the impact of the proposals on service users are attached as Appendix 3.

The changes will also have an impact on some VCS organisations. Grant funding for organisations that are currently delivering services and activities as part of the 2019-23 programme ends on 30 September 2023 and organisations in receipt of this funding will need to plan ahead for this.

6. Next Steps

Following the close of the consultation, the council and EBBP will be developing guidance for the application/bid processes. This will be available in the New Year but the key principles for will be as follows:

- Consortia bids will be accepted provided they include a signed Statement of Intent from all the partners of the consortium. A signed Memorandum of Understanding will be required by any successful consortium prior to final agreement of the grant award.
- A service development plan will be required for all applications.
- Applications will be considered by a panel of three officers consisting of two from the relevant department and one Officer from another department to ensure external validation and robustness of the decision-making, including an EBBP representative as appropriate.
- Supporting information submitted such as accounts and policies will be reviewed as appropriate by the council's legal and finance departments.
- The final decision for grant awards will be made by the Executive Directors and the Director of Strategy & Engagement.
- All applicants will be informed of the decisions by June 2023, thereby giving at least 3 months' notice of the start of the new awards.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Timetable for funding Voluntary Sector Services

Date	Activity
4 July 2022	Consultation launched
26 September 2022	Closing date for receipt of consultation responses allowing at least 12 weeks for responses
October 2022	Departments draft specifications/criteria taking into account consultation responses
9 November 2022	Report to Cabinet for decision including consideration of consultation responses and final EAA's; grant priorities, criteria and grant budget levels, application process and delegation of decisions on grant awards to appropriate Executive Directors
December 2022	Possible call-in to Overview and Scrutiny Committee
18 January 2023	Possible date to take report back to Cabinet following call-in if necessary
23 January 2023	Earliest date to launch the application process
1 April 2023	Start of 6-month extension of existing grants/contracts
17 April 2023	Closing date for receipt of applications – allowing at least 12 weeks for applications to be submitted
May 2023	Officers assess applications and make recommendations for awards
June 2023	Executive Director decision on awards
By 1 July 2023	Decisions announced to applicants following possible call-in of decisions
30 September 2023	2019-23 funding ends for all existing grants/contracts
1 October 2023	New grants start 01/10/23 – having given three months' notice

Appendix 2 - Summary of funding streams

	Funding Stream	Proposed spend per year 2023-27
A	Improving community connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family and individual support and befriending Group based activities 	£0.420m
B	Information and advice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialist and general service Families of children with disabilities services 	£0.547m
C	Mental health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talking therapies Community Support Support for autism 	£0.385m
D	Short Breaks/Respite Care for adults and children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respite for carers of adults Short breaks for children and young people Young Carers 	£0.405m
E	Domestic Violence services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generalist and specialist BME services Children and families' therapeutic support 	£0.258m
F	Infrastructure support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer support Capacity building and development Voice of the sector Budget for commissioning research 	£0.146m
G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small grants fund 	£0.08m

Note: the areas highlighted under each funding stream do not necessarily indicate the individual grants that will be available. This will not be determined until the response to the consultation has been analysed.

Draft Equalities Analysis Assessment for consultation

Appendix 3 - Draft EAAs

Overall funding programme for the years 2023/24 to 2026/27

- A. Improving community connections
- B. Information and advice
- C. Mental health
- D. Short Breaks/Respite Care for adults and children
- E. Domestic violence services
- F. Infrastructure support
- G. Small grants fund

Note: The draft EAAs are available to download as separate documents

Summary of equality impacts of the proposals on the protected characteristics:

	Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Race	Religion and Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy and Maternity	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Carers	Health
Overall funding programme	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	0	+/-	0	0	0	+/-	+/-
Improving community connections	+	+	0/+	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	+
Information and advice	+/-	+/-	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	+
Mental health support	+	+	0/+	+	+	+/-	+	0	0	+	+
Short Breaks/Respite Care for adults and children	+/-	+/-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+
Domestic violence services	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	+
Infrastructure support	0/-	0/-	0	0/-	0/-	0/-	0/-	0	0	0	0
Small grants	+	+	0	+	0	+	+	0	0	+	+

+ = Positive
0 = Neutral
- = Negative