



**LVSC**  
London's Network  
of Networks

# The **Big Squeeze**

## We're (still) in it together

The recession, Londoners and the Voluntary and Community groups who serve them.

Final report July 2009

FUNDED



Our thanks to supporters of The Big Squeeze campaign and  
LVSC's Policy and Research work

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# 1 Introduction and Executive Summary

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**Thank you for your interest in this report, which details the findings of the first phase of LVSC's Big Squeeze campaign.**

We believe London's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) has an enormous role to play in helping Londoners through the recession. This identifies the impacts on Londoners and the groups that serve them, demonstrates the role of the VCS and makes some common sense recommendations about what should happen next.



**The recession is already having severe impacts on London. We think that chief amongst these is that the most marginalised are becoming even more so.** We see this through a well-documented increase in demand for VCS services – initially for advice and volunteer brokerage, but increasingly within wider services around the general relief of poverty. Our case study with the **Universal Beneficent Society** for example demonstrates this changing nature of the services individuals are asking for, and the sharp intensification of that need.

**LVSC fundamentally believes those who are most marginalised are best served by local organisations with a sensitive, informed approach.** That's why one of our case studies **Family Action** – a national organisation of 140 years' experience working in 17 boroughs – work directly with VCS groups to verify the emergency grant applications they receive, speeding up their awards processes for the most vulnerable.

**This report also opens up a fresh debate about the secondary, psychological effects of the recession.** One illustration comes from our case study with **FORWARD** – a pan-London and international African Diaspora organisation concerned with the sexual reproductive rights of African women and girls. Forward's research has highlighted anxieties fuelled by men in their communities being hard-pressed to remain in work and becoming dependent on khat (a chewed stimulant).

**Much of our research also demonstrates the ways in which groups are adapting to the changing economic climate.** LVSC's specialist employment advice service PEACe has seen calls around restructuring and redundancy more than double in the first half of 2009 compared to last year.

**But the recession also brings positive opportunities for London's VCS groups.** We welcome the new focus on volunteer brokerage, although we argue that supporting employability is not the only public good such services bring. The experience of **Greenwich Volunteer Centre** echoes many across London. They

report unprecedented increases in volunteering enquiries, but have encountered difficulties in accessing Government funding.

And echoing many respondents to our survey, we fear the situation is only going to get worse. Following the first wave of the recession the next few years will likely see significant public spending cuts – whichever political party is in power. Already LVSC is receiving double the number of calls from VCS groups looking to cut back on their services through restructure, variation to contracts or redundancy. This means fewer services for the most marginalised Londoners.

A real commitment and drive to work collaboratively with the VCS is therefore essential if we are going to minimise the impacts on Londoners, and come out of the recession collectively stronger.



Peter Lewis, Chief Executive



## 1.1 About the Big Squeeze

The Big Squeeze is both a research project and campaign focusing on the value of the London's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) during the recession. This report is a summary of work undertaken between January and June 2009. It is both a narrative on the VCS experience and an insight into the communities for whom VCS groups are working. We hope this report also acts as a reference document, effective signposting tool and planning aid for all sectors as we move into the next phase of recession.

## 1.2 What the campaign sought to achieve

This report collates the learning and impact from phase 1 of the Big Squeeze campaign. The initial aims of the campaign were:

- To begin to map the impact of the recession on London's communities and the VCS groups that serves them; and
- To raise the profile of the contribution VCS groups make to Londoners during the recession, with funders and public sector partners.

## 1.3 Headline results

Our survey focused on four key questions:

- **Is the recession affecting the communities you work with?**  
95% said yes
- **Has your workload increased due to the recession?**  
71% said yes
- **Are you confident you will be able to meet increases in demand now and in the future?**  
80% said no
- **Is your organisation already taking action to help survive a recession?**  
78% said yes

## 1.4 Methodology

The evidence and analysis used in this report is drawn from the following bases:

- **The Big Squeeze survey:** a (primarily) web-based survey of London VCS groups that ran from January – March (inclusive) 2009. Additional freepost hardcopy questionnaires were distributed at LVSC's office, via every Council for Voluntary Service in London and via all members of the London Regional Change Up Consortium.
- **Commissioned case studies:** LVSC commissioned case studies from six respondents to the Big Squeeze survey, to provide a greater depth of understanding of the issues being faced by groups. The full case studies are available as a single document on the [LVSC website](#).

- **Direct outreach:** LVSC undertook a series of [direct outreach visits](#) to engage key networks, forums and individual groups in the key themes of the research. This provided much anecdotal evidence and enabled us to crosscheck key themes and experiences.
- **Desk-based research:** Undertaken within the LVSC Policy and Networks Team to provide additional local, national and strategic context to the report.

## 1.6 About LVSC

London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC) is the strategic umbrella organisation for the VCS in London. We bring together London VCS organisations to learn and share best practice and to create a co-ordinated voice to influence policy makers and statutory partners. We provide up-to-date support services for VCS groups around their business, policy analysis and influence and training for those working in the sector.

LVSC will celebrate its centenary in 2010 and is currently consulting on a new strategic plan for 2010-15, which seeks to refocus our agenda on poverty, inequality and environmental sustainability. For more information please visit [www.lvsc.org.uk/strategyconsultation](http://www.lvsc.org.uk/strategyconsultation).



## 2 The Big Squeeze research

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### Survey results

#### 2.1 Headline results

The Big Squeeze survey found overwhelmingly that the recession is already affecting London's communities and the VCS groups that work with them. Voluntary activity has increased to meet this demand, but there is fear this cannot be sustained indefinitely. More positively there are many signs London's groups are taking proactive steps to ensure their organisations and their services can survive. The survey reached a wide range of groups operating at different spatial levels in London, representing a good spread of VCS activity in the capital.

#### 2.2 Breakdown of responses

- The Big Squeeze survey received detailed responses from **104** organisations in London. Of these **40% worked 'locally'** (in one borough), **41% regionally** (pan-LDN), **16% sub-regionally** (working in multiple boroughs) and **4% nationally** (but London based).
- The **majority of local responses** came from the boroughs of Islington, Tower Hamlets, Southwark, Hackney and Brent.
- Roughly **70%** of responses came from **groups working at the front line**, with 30% coming from infrastructure or '2<sup>nd</sup> tier' organisations.
- As of June 2009 there had been over **2000 visits** to the Big Squeeze web page and **194 downloads** have been made of the interim report (February 09).

#### 2.3 Who funds these groups?

Respondents were asked to identify their funding partners. Here is what they told us:

- **56%** of all funding identified came from **statutory sources**
- **37%** from **non-statutory sources**

In greater detail:

- **25%** said they received funding from **local authority**
- **19%** from a **London-based trust**
- **18%** from a **national trust**
- **11%** from a **regional statutory partner**
- **11%** from a **national statutory partner**
- **9%** from a **Primary Care Trust (PCT)**
- **4%** from **Private sector sources**

## Case studies

LVSC commissioned six case studies from the Big Squeeze survey, in order to provide greater understanding of the issues groups raised.

### 2.4 The six case studies commissioned were

- **UBS (Universal Beneficent Society)** are a national organisation founded in 1857. They exist to alleviate the problems faced by the most disadvantaged and isolated older people, especially those living alone in inner-city areas. [www.u-b-s.org.uk](http://www.u-b-s.org.uk) / Registered Charity no. 220978.
- **MECMAC** (Middle East Christian Minorities Advisory Centre) has been working for Middle Eastern people since 1991 but went through a merger in 2000. Since 2008 MECMAC has been providing services to all residents of Ealing, including refugees and migrants. They are based in Ealing. [www.mecmac.org.uk](http://www.mecmac.org.uk) / Registered Charity No. 1085788.
- **FORWARD** is a pan-London and international African Diaspora organisation concerned with safeguarding and protecting sexual reproductive rights of African women and girls. They undertake research, lobby statutory partners and governments and provide capacity building support, especially on the issue of Female Genital Mutilation. [www.forwarduk.org.uk](http://www.forwarduk.org.uk) / Registered Charity No. 292403
- **Family Action** is a national charity supporting over 45,000 families every year. Working in 17 London boroughs they provide a unique blend of practical advice, financial help and emotional support to people facing a range of complex challenges. [www.family-action.org.uk](http://www.family-action.org.uk) / Registered charity no. 264713.
- **Ealing Volunteer Centre** recruit volunteers for local organisations. They also assist those organisations to develop volunteering opportunities and provide good practice advice around volunteering. [www.ealingcvs.org.uk/volunteering/index.php](http://www.ealingcvs.org.uk/volunteering/index.php) / Registered charity no. 800684.
- **Wandsworth Voluntary Sector Development Agency (WVSDA)** is the Council for Voluntary Service for the borough of Wandsworth, providing Wandsworth's voluntary and community groups with a voice with public sector service providers. [www.wvsda.org.uk](http://www.wvsda.org.uk) / Registered Charity no. 1078984.



To read the case studies in full click [here](#)



# Case study findings

We asked the six groups to describe the impact of the recession under four key questions:

- [How is the recession affecting the communities you work with?](#)
- [How has your workload increased as a result?](#)
- [How are you planning to meet increases in demand for your services?](#)
- [What other action are you taking to ensure your services survive the recession?](#)

## 2.5 How is the recession affecting the communities you work with?

**UBS** reported a near doubling of enquiries related to their services or volunteering between July and November 2008. Some of those offering to volunteer explained that they had recently have been made redundant.

Referrals from other organisations have also risen, as has the need to undertake benefits reviews with clients. UBS report they have, working through services provided by Age Concern or the Citizens Advice Bureaux, increased the benefits levels of ten clients this year alone.

Elsewhere they identify rising heating costs as emerging issues for their clients, leading not only to fuel poverty but also increased stress. The UBS Beneficiaries caseworker reports increases in requests for support in dealing with creditors for heating related debt and there has been a rise in applications to their emergency grants scheme to pay heating bills.

Food costs have also risen, with many beneficiaries with mobility problems having limited access to supermarkets and, therefore, greater reliance on more expensive local shops.

80% of UBS' beneficiaries have chronic health conditions. Without their support these individuals would become even more excluded and isolated.

### **MECMAC**

Recent reductions in staff (from five to one) have meant drastic cuts to their services, especially outreach, which disproportionately affects the elderly and disabled. Provision of advice by telephone is no longer available, with most calls incurring a 48hour minimum response time; many service users no longer even leave messages. The immigration and asylum advice service has also ceased, with referrals the only option now available for these clients.

However, as MECMAC point out, they are reluctant to signpost to other services, as working with vulnerable clients have not only built confidence

but MECMAC is culturally aware of their needs and in particular speaking their own languages. In 2007/08, MECMAC were able to see approximately 450 clients, not only Middle Eastern Christians, but a large proportion of Kurds, Arabs and others.

### **FORWARD**

FORWARD reports a noticeable increase in asylum seeking cases. Two years ago these accounted for about 20 enquiries per year, predominantly from organisations. Now they are receiving 2-4 calls a week - many from individuals. Staff are indicating that they receive about double the usual number of calls this financial year.

In recent research FORWARD found their female clients were reporting increased need for counselling services. Men within BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) communities were struggling to remain in work, and the women expressed concern for male youths within their communities seeking employment and avoiding dependency on khat. FORWARD also found refugee and immigrant women were increasingly becoming desperate and having adverse effects on many marriages.

FORWARD also revealed warnings from organisations working in related fields that incidences of domestic violence are rising, which suggests the increasing vulnerability of some women. In the context of the recession they highlight increased poverty and stress within the home, particularly during pregnancy, as risk factors.

### **Family Action**

In the first three months of 2009 Family Action saw a 15% leap in applications for financial support compared with the 2008 equivalent period. Family Action also run an educational grants advisory service, which in the same period saw a massive 500% rise in demand from individuals seeking charitable funding to support their education. This has led to the closure of the fund for the first time in 11 years.

Many of the agencies and professionals who support applications to Family Action's services cite two reasons for working with them: firstly because their clients are unable to access support from the Government's Social Fund; and secondly they are unable to access and/or afford the repayments on commercial loans.

### **Wandsworth Voluntary Sector Development Agency**

In serving local VCS groups, WVSDA say even prior to the recession they had witnessed voluntary organisations struggling to obtain or renew grant funding due to the redirecting of funds to the Olympics and other criteria. They claim new central government funding at grassroots level has helped smaller groups, but the one-off payment (up to £5,000) means the impact for many is short-lived.

A review of their database last year showed the number of VCS groups closing in the borough (over multiple years) was 301. WVSDA say they have seen a trend for groups to relocate outside the borough whilst still

delivering local services, with one reason often cited being the lack of affordable premises.

Looking at other services, more people are now citing wanting to learn more skills and gain new experiences in order to gain employment as their primary motivation for volunteering, echoing evidence from many other volunteer bureaux. WVSDA also say prior to the recession individuals remained unemployed for an average of 22 weeks before looking for voluntary work, but this has now fallen to six weeks. The experience and calibre of volunteers however has increased, and these individuals are filling volunteer placements on a regular basis.

### **Ealing Volunteer Centre**

Demand for volunteer brokerage is up by around a third, and the new clients are of very different types – usually highly skilled, recently unemployed former City workers, a group EVC describes as specialist and very insular, requiring a lot of education about how volunteering works. This group is seeking volunteering opportunities locally but currently demand far outstrips supply. Two-thirds of the new clients are women and the diversity of clients more or less reflects Ealing's demographic from the 2001 census.

These new clients are displacing services for 'existing' communities, such as those with learning disabilities, as there is substantial pressure to attend to the needs of the new and more demanding clients with relatively limited, short-term resources. However, so far, staff are meeting these challenges.

## **2.6 How has your workload increased as a result?**

[↑ Case study home](#)

**UBS** report increased demands on staff time, including the provision of emotional support by phone. Prior to the recession UBS surveyed their clients to assess their needs and found the majority wanted support with shopping and other day-to-day support, to improve quality of life. Since the recession this has changed to include:

- Grants for basic appliances clients cannot afford to replace
- Support around social isolation, such as volunteer visitors, befrienders or pen pals
- Donations of warm knitted items and other clothing
- Direct support through an NHS or hospitalisation experience

### **MECMAC**

In addition to the reductions in services described above, there has been a reported increase in the number of people seeking welfare benefits advice and resettlement in the UK due to the recession, and also an increase in numbers of people asking for family mediation support. From the beginning of the year, the Director has started to respond to emails at night and from home in order to keep up with demand.

## **FORWARD**

FORWARD has had to take on case work in relation to asylum and often requires research into country cases as well as child protection related matters which many social services are unable to take on due to the limitation of the laws on FGM. Additionally FORWARD staff capacity is stretched and has had to use in-house staff for an end of project evaluation, taking valuable staff time that would otherwise have been outsourced. This stretches their capacity to deliver services.

In other areas, one of their funders recently lost a large chunk of its core funding, leading to a cancellation of the funding to FORWARD for its community outreach programme.

## **Family Action**

Family Action reports that on three occasions this year they have recruited temporary staff, to provide the support required to keep the service afloat.

## **Wandsworth VSDA**

For volunteer brokerage, demand for services due to recession-related unemployment showed a jump from 384 in 2008 (January to March) to 1022 in 2009, a rise of more than 160%. The number of organisations seeking support for developing their own volunteer programmes has also gone up. WVSDA also report however that some organisations are actively decreasing their numbers of volunteers, volunteer training and expenses to make budgetary cuts.

## **Ealing Volunteer Centre**

EVC report an increased workload all round, leading to greater need for co-ordination internally and more ill health among staff. The 'huge emotional and different support needs' of new clients compared to existing ones mean they expect to be placed with an organisation straight away. This has meant staff working harder to raise awareness in volunteer involving organisations about the benefits of taking on highly skilled volunteers.

They are also meeting increases in demand by training new volunteers to become advisors in the centre and to provide support to other recently unemployed clients.

## **2.7 How are you planning to meet increases in demands for your services?**

[↑Case study home](#)

## **UBS**

UBS report a reduction in their asset values of 40% as a result of the recession. In response they have revised the lifetime nature of their regular allowance service as it could not be sustained. They are replacing the service with a more comprehensive one-off financial grants programme. They have also taken on an extra member of staff to support the Beneficiaries caseworker.

## **MECMAC**

The Director wishes to recruit volunteers but admits he has few resources available to train them.

## **FORWARD**

FORWARD report they recently had one funding application refused, in part justified by quoting 2008 central government guidance around cohesion and the funding of 'single' groups. LVSC and many specialist organisations campaigned strongly against this guidance in 2008. [You can read more about that campaign here.](#)

Elsewhere FORWARD are now charging for specialist advice given to law firms regarding Female Genital Mutilation. They are also searching for ways in which to boost fundraising for unrestricted purposes and depending on more and more volunteers to fill gaps.

## **Family Action**

Family Action have recently gone into partnership with Save the Children and British Gas to launch the Families in Crisis campaign. Family Action will administer the scheme (worth £125,000) that will provide small grants to fund a range of basic essentials to families affected by the recession.

## **Wandsworth VSDA**

WVSDA are concentrating on changing their work priorities to support the new needs of groups in the borough. They have taken on administration of the modernisation fund for central London, which provides bursaries for expert help in areas such as HR, finance and business planning. They have also surveyed their membership in conjunction with LVSC, and created a website of downloadable resources on topics linked to the impact of the recession impact on the sector.

## **Ealing Volunteer Centre**

EVC are doing more to demonstrate the added value of volunteering – such as its use as a bridge into employment. They are also looking into increasing some service charges and generally thinking more strategically about their resources. Finally, they are gearing up to compete against national organisations they fear may threaten to bid for providing brokerage services at a lower cost.

## **2.8 What other action are you taking to ensure your services survive the recession?**

[↑Case study home](#)

## **UBS**

They are testing new working partnerships with other charities and exploring other methods of collaborative working with appropriate organisations, to increase the support they can provide. Internally they are revising their service delivery patterns by sharing and supporting volunteers across departments.

## **MECMAC**

MECMAC sought support from the Evelyn Oldfield Unit (EOU) who advised taking on a specialist fundraiser. This person is in post now and working to identify other funding options. They are also looking to build up a consortium with EOU's support and have taken fundraising advice from LVSC. The Director has reduced his salary by nearly 40%.

## **FORWARD**

FORWARD are considering moving premises and renting out some of their office space to recoup some overhead costs, but this is not without upfront costs. The move may free up additional office space for more volunteers. The Board of Trustees remain very committed and offer much expertise and support on a daily basis to paid staff. Moving towards a social enterprise will enable FORWARD to sustain the training and outreach programmes. Additional focus is also now being placed on translating research into policy and lobbying tools and building stronger relationships with funders, a strategy they hope will bring longer term rewards.

## **Family Action**

The joint venture Families in Crisis partnership have a target to assist around 900 families with grants during 2009/10. In order to meet this they have imposed an awards ceiling of £150 per applicant.

Elsewhere they are working to ensure their services are more responsive to issues families encounter as a result of the recession. They are working to create greater synergy between their grants and frontline services – for example by using their universally accessible children's and family centres to improve awareness and take up of tax credits and Family Action grants. This work will be underpinned by the development of an income maximisation strategy, the central aim of which is to increase the incomes of the families that their services support.

## **Wandsworth VSDA**

The Volunteer centre has increased the number of open sessions and will be introducing outreach sessions around the borough. There has also been the recruitment of additional volunteers by the Volunteer Centre to assist with this work. WVSDA are imposing strict financial controls and using reserves to fund staff employment where funding for essential services has ceased.

## **Ealing Volunteer Centre**

As part of Ealing CVS, EVC are confident they can survive the recession as they have a strong track record of exceeding their Local Area Agreement targets, can clearly demonstrate added value and meet increasing demand. They have achieved three quality marks – Investing in Volunteers, the Green Mark and Investors in People standard.



# 3 Policy and Strategic context

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## Regional context

### 3.1 London's Voluntary and Community Sector

London has an estimated 60,000 Voluntary and Community organisations, of which 26,634 registered as charities (Source: Guidestar) and approximately 5,000 that might be defined as social enterprises. Estimates suggest London's VCS employs around 250,000 people – some 6-7% of London's working population.

VCS groups exist to directly address community needs, so based on population figures it is safe to assume London has greater number of groups serving Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and Lesbian, Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities than other regions. There will also be a wider diversity of religious or belief-based organisations. These parts of the sector are often very small with low capacity. Many such groups responded to the Big Squeeze research, which [can be read here](#).

The NCVO Almanac shows the headquarters of national and international charities are disproportionately located in London and South East, although only 4% of the Big Squeeze survey responses came from such charities.

### 3.2 Child poverty

Rates of child poverty also stand out when looking at the London region. The [End Child Poverty London](#) project report that 4 in 10 of London's children (some 650,000) live in poverty. This is the highest level of child poverty in England's nine regions.

These statistics, when combined with [London's employment rates](#) suggest there are greater demands on VCS services than in other regions, which will be put under even greater strain during the recession. Further information can be found in a dedicated joint [LVSC/End Child Poverty London policy briefing](#).

### 3.3 The London region

At the beginning of the recession [London had the lowest employment rate](#) of all the regions, but predictions suggested the capital would suffer the biggest job losses due to its higher concentration of financial services than other regions. [London's unemployment has risen](#) since the recession began but [GLA Economics predicts it will fall](#) over the next three years.

With an extremely diverse mix of Voluntary and Community Groups and unique statutory structures, the London region often feels different to others. However LVSC's sister organisation in the South East region,

[RAISE](#), echoes many of the findings of the Big Squeeze survey in its own research, in which its members reported a 10% increase in demand for services between January and April 2009.

### 3.4 Mayoral activity

#### **London's Economic Recovery Action Plan (ERAP)**

In December 2008 the Mayor of London published his [Economic Recovery Action Plan](#), setting out a £3bn package of measures to help London through the economic downturn. The Plan contained the following statement:

*"in such times the public sector needs to reaffirm its support to the Voluntary and Community Sector which helps to provide vital local services".*

(Source: ERAP, 2008, Action 40, p33)

The Plan contained particular commitments to support advice services and develop more volunteering opportunities. It was updated in April 09 with a promise to provide advice seminars and workshops for VCS organisations, to help them to adapt to and overcome the current economic climate. LVSC has been [tracking progress in implementing the plan](#).

The London Development Agency also announced that its £23.4m support package of services to help small and medium enterprises through the recession would also be open to London's VCS organisations.

#### **London Skills and Employment Board**

The LSEB was set up by the Mayor to improve adult skills and employment in the capital. Currently one of its 22 members holds a place from the VCS. In July 2008 the LSEB published ['London's Future'](#), its skills and employment strategy for 2008-13, which aimed to provide better targeting and integration of London's skills and employment services. The Strategy was implemented by a joint Delivery Group composed of the London Development Agency, London Job Centre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council (London Region).

### 3.5 London Funders

[London Funders](#) is the membership organisation of funders - including public sector funders, independent foundations and Lottery distributors - that support London's Voluntary and Community Sector.

On 11th February 2009 they ran a conference in partnership with LVSC, the London Regional ChangeUp Consortium, The Young Foundation and social investment bank CCLA entitled ['The recession: We're all in it Together'](#). Keynote speakers included the Rt Hon. Kevin Brennan MP, then Minister for the Third Sector.



The role of London Funders in supporting London's most vulnerable communities will be crucial over the next few years, as demand for public services (especially at local levels) continues to rise whilst public sector spending is widely expected to fall.

## Local context

### 3.6 London's local Voluntary and Community Sector

40% of Big Squeeze survey responses came from 'local' VCS groups – i.e. those based and operating in one borough. It is at this level where the most vulnerable Londoners access their most vital services - and also where the pace of change in relationships with statutory partners is most great.

Our survey also found that 25% of all respondents said their Local Authority was one of their key funding partners. [Increasing demand for public services](#) on local authorities suggests, when combined with widely anticipated cuts in public spending, that local VCS groups will see threats of their key sources of funding before other parts of the sector in London. Within this context the impacts of the recession on the health of the VCS will be even harder experienced in London's boroughs.

***"We receive no funding from the Local Authority yet we are expected to work with them. The Council keep asking what WE are doing to help the community in the recession!"***

(Source: LVSC Big Squeeze survey 2009)

### 3.7 Local partnership working

In April 2008 Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) gained increased autonomy to shape local services and partnership work under the new system of Local Area Agreements (LAAs).

Balanced against this autonomy were new requirements upon Local Authorities, who lead LSPs, to take on board the new [Duty to Involve](#) (introduced in April 2009), to report against a series of national indicators requiring engagement with the VCS under the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and in taking forward a variety of community empowerment initiatives instigated by the department for Communities and Local Government (CLG).

Within this climate there is tremendous potential for constructive partnership work between the VCS and statutory partners, and given the advent of the recession - if the worst impacts on communities are to be mitigated - this potential is now also a very real need. However the local arena is most often the one where sensitivities in the relationship between groups and local statutory partners are most amplified. For VCS groups,

especially infrastructure groups, fulfilling a 'critical friend' role can be particularly difficult.

### 3.8 Local VCS Infrastructure

All London boroughs have a level of VCS infrastructure – organisations that work at the 'second tier' – supporting front line VCS groups in a number of ways. These groups are referred to as Local Infrastructure Organisations (LIOs), most commonly expressed as Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS). Roughly 30% of those who responded to the Big Squeeze survey can be counted as infrastructure groups, but not all of those are working at local level.

### 3.9 New economic duty on local authorities

The new [Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill](#) (currently awaiting the final stages of debate in the House of Commons) contains measures to introduce a new duty on all local authorities to assess the economic conditions of their area. If passed in its present form it is intended that this new duty will allow local authorities and their partners, working through the LSP, to better research and target investment in economic development. Such investment will obviously be affected by the economic downturn and its consequences.

## National context

Central government support the VCS during the recession has taken several forms:

### 3.10 Third Sector Action Plan

Following a [Third Sector Recession Summit](#) in November 2008, the Government published its third sector action plan, 'Real Help for Communities: Volunteers, Charities and Social Enterprises' in February 2009. (Read this [here](#).) This resulted in additional funding for the VCS in the form of:

- **A £16.5 million Modernisation Fund** to help VCS organisations to collaborate or merge. This is being delivered through [Capacitybuilders](#);
- **A £15.5 million Targeted Support Fund** to help small and medium organisations in the 50 areas most affected by the recession. In London this is restricted to [Greenwich](#) and [Barking and Dagenham](#). However some VCS groups in these boroughs have been unable to apply because the eligibility criteria sets a bar for organisational turnover at £250,000 p.a.; and
- **A £10million volunteer brokerage scheme** to provide 40,000 people, who had been claiming Job Seekers Allowance for more than

six months, to find work-focused volunteer placements, to be administered by [BTCV](#). In London some Volunteer Centres have questioned why they have not been involved in this process, given many already have successful working referral relationships with Job Centre Plus that they fear may be usurped by the new scheme, or lead to duplication of effort.

### 3.11 Additional Government spending

The Budget of April 09 also contained an additional £20m (subsequently reduced to £16.7million) **Hardship Fund** for VCS organisations delivering services to people affected by the recession.

Likewise the new [Future Jobs Fund](#) aims to support local authorities, VCS organisations and others in partnership to provide 100,000 new jobs for 18-24 year olds who have been claiming Job Seekers Allowance for more than one year.

Finally the then Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (now the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills) also extended its small business support package to VCS organisations.

A second third sector recession summit was held in June 2009 where VCS leaders signed up to '[Support in Uncertain Times – Principles for Managing in the Recession](#)', which advocated greater collaboration between VCS organisations.

### 3.12 Setting government support in context

There has therefore been additional government finance and related support for the VCS since the recession began. However this remains significantly less than the emergency funding pumped into the banking system.

In many ways support for the VCS mirrors the approach taken in the financial markets – quick moves to prop up urgent economic considerations. This can be seen through volunteering support targeted at areas of highest unemployment rather than demand, and advice services overwhelmed with demand for support around debt and related financial issues.

The Big Squeeze research argues that a more comprehensive and long-term approach to supporting Londoners through voluntary and community action is needed. Addressing immediate economic concerns is a start, but does little to support the longer-term psychological and social costs London's VCS groups will undoubtedly have to absorb in the coming years.

[Urban Forum](#) is currently campaigning for further reform of the nationalised banks to establish a new banking system with a social purpose (see also [Bank Secrets](#)). They want to use the banking crisis as an incentive to

reduce financial exclusion of the poorest households and support social and community enterprise.

## Overarching context

### 3.13 Grant funding and commissioning

VCS groups were already approaching these issues with expectations of less core funding, less grant funding, an increase in commissioning approaches, less flexibility and increased pressures from tendering processes which encourage economies of scale. VCS groups often bring unique skills, knowledge and expertise of issues faced by communities on the ground and the true impact of public services on residents. They can be a vital source of knowledge to inform commissioning discussions and borough-wide strategies. Such work should be resourced wherever possible.

Procurement systems should seek not to eliminate VCS groups purely on the ground of lowest unit cost, by including considerations of social impacts in the tender criteria. Given sufficient flexibility specialist or niche service providers can often achieve greater proportional impact than larger, more remote contractors who are primarily driven to make a profit. They also help keep public funds within a local area or a particular disadvantaged community in the form of employment and investment.

### 3.14 CSR and private donations

Generally there is little evidence within the findings of the Big Squeeze research to suggest London's VCS is suffering from a fall in corporate donations or private sector support delivered through corporate and social responsibility schemes. Overall much of the national narrative around the impact of the recession on the charity sector – such as a fall in levels of corporate and social responsibility (CSR), reductions in investment bases or cut-backs in direct fundraising operations seem to have little resonance with the London regional picture.

That said, one of London's largest trust funders the Jack Petchey Foundation has stopped all new applications due to losses in investments. Likewise one of the Big Squeeze case studies (UBS) reported a reduction in asset values of 40%. See their case study [on our website](#) for more detail.



# 4 Impact on the VCS

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In this section we summarise the key themes affecting different areas of the VCS in London. Greater understanding of such areas, where the early impacts of the recession are most identifiable, will be crucial to the effective planning of VCS services as we move into a period of funding cuts, characterised by some as the 'public sector recession'.

## 4.1 The advice sector

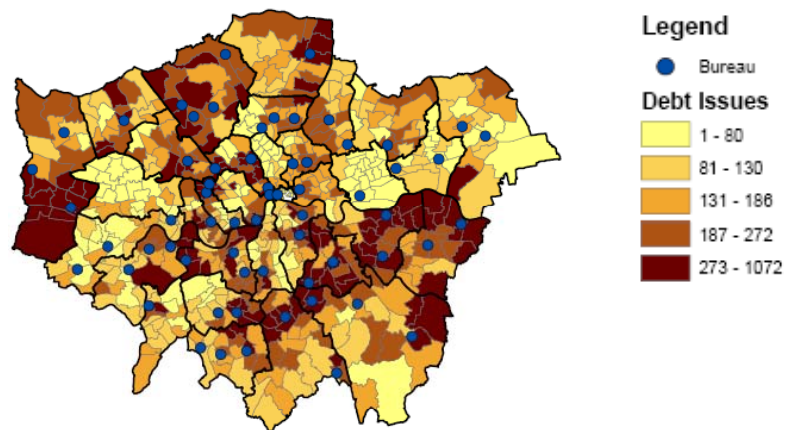
Not just in London, but nationally, the advice sector has experienced the most urgent and acute demands on its services since the recession began.

Across England and Wales The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) say that daily enquiries relating to redundancy more than doubled, from under 200 in April 2008 to 425 in the November. Daily enquiries to bureaux from people looking for guidance on Job Seekers Alliance increased by 66% in the same period, and over the financial year 07-08 the number of enquiries from people seeking advice on applying for jobs rose by 76%.

Local Authorities also recognise this increase demand. Across England [80% reported a rise in demand](#) for debt and welfare advice services.

### Debt Issues in London by ward 2008/09

Source: CAB



In London these trends are echoed by LVSC's PEACe helpline (the Personnel, Employment Advice and Conciliation Service providing expert advice and guidance on HR and employment law issues to London's VCS employers) – where calls around redundancy and restructure more than doubled during April-June 09, compared with the same period in 2008. 13% of total calls in the 2009 period were also concerned with variation of contract - organisations looking to reduce or change terms and conditions of employment. This aspect also did not feature in the enquiries received last year.

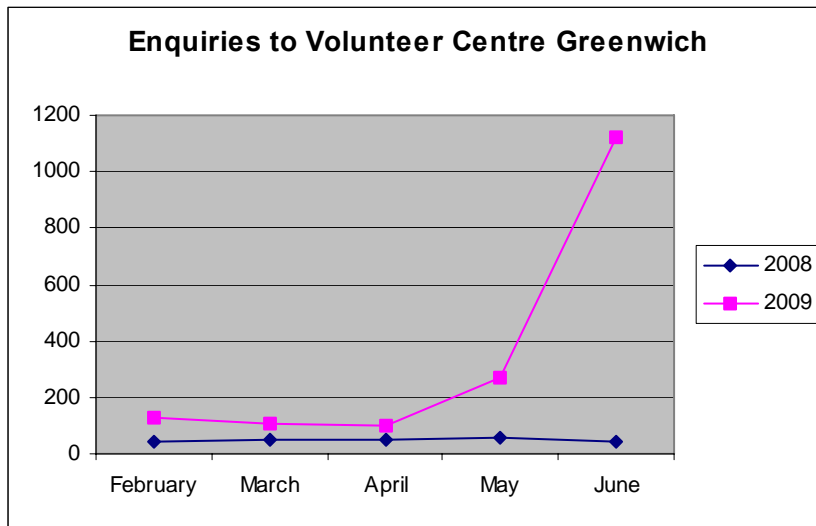
***“People are being made redundant and proper processes are not being used”***

(Source: Big Squeeze Survey 2009)

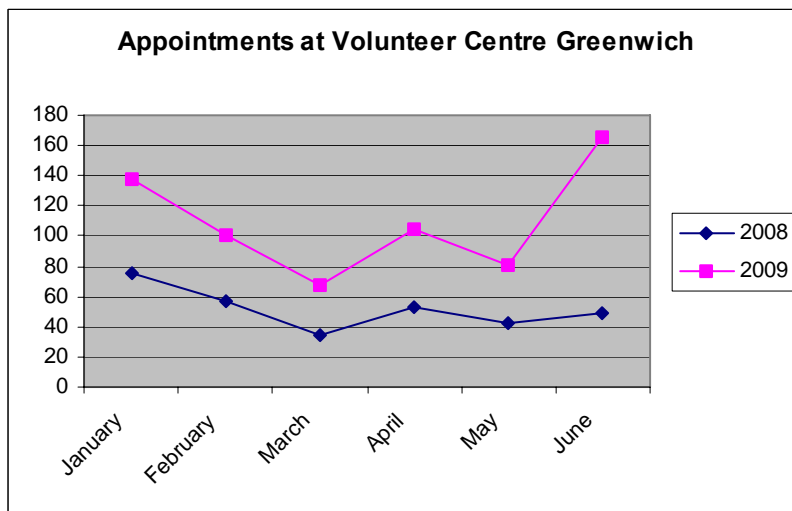
For further information on advice services in London contact the [London Advice Services Alliance](#).

## 4.2 Volunteering

Like advice, demand for volunteering opportunities has also risen dramatically, as highlighted here by figures supplied by Greenwich Volunteer Centre comparing demand in 2008 with 2009:



The bureau is also working hard to meet this new demand, as expressed by a similar increase in appointments:



Such trends are echoed throughout the Big Squeeze responses. In Bromley volunteering enquiries doubled in the first two weeks of 2009 compared to the previous year. Another local volunteering organisation reports that more and more people within the community are now out of work; and that "since Christmas (2008) their *phones have not stopped ringing*".

[Government funding](#) has been made available to meet this demand, however several Big Squeeze respondents reported problems with such funds. These included:

- An eligibility focus for Capacitybuilders funding focusing on unemployment rates rather than demand for volunteering. In the West London sub-region no boroughs have been able to access this funding;
- The limited nature of the [Targeted Support Fund](#), which is only available in two London boroughs and has a relatively low turnover ceiling, preventing groups of a certain size applying;
- A lack of funding devoted to managing volunteering opportunities related to the Olympics;
- A delay in allocation of the [Working Neighbourhood Fund](#) in their Borough.

However the pressures on volunteering are not all financial. Some Big Squeeze respondents reported reductions in Employer Supported Volunteering, as employees decide to cancel taking part in team challenges in order to 'look busy at their desks'.

A one off seminar run by LVSC and the [Charity Trustee Network](#) in March 2009 also highlighted the vital if often less-recognised role of Trustees as volunteers. Many of those who took part revealed they acted as trustees of several organisations, indicating a lack of supply in this area.

For further information our [case study report](#) features related insight from Ealing Volunteer Centre and Wandsworth Voluntary Sector Development Agency. [London Councils](#) have also recently highlighted the importance of volunteering. Additional enquiries can be directed to the regional infrastructure body [Greater London Volunteering](#).

### 4.3 Generic infrastructure services

London's borough-based Local Infrastructure Organisations (LIOs) – more commonly known as Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS). Many of these groups have taken a strong local leadership role in tackling the impacts of the recession upon their members and local communities, much of which has been financed through the [Capacitybuilders resilience grant](#).

Such groups often face unique challenges, fulfilling vital local co-ordination, information and capacity-building roles as discussed in part in [section 3.7](#). In the recession pressures on such groups is likely to intensify as local groups require greater support, advice and advocacy.

LVSC worked to support such activity in Tower Hamlets, Lambeth, Barnet, Brent and Bexley. For more information see [Appendix 2](#).

A list of London's Councils for Voluntary Service [can be found here](#).

London's CVS also arrange themselves by sub-region, details of which can be found here:

- [North London CVS Partnership](#)
- [Central London CVS Network](#)
- [East London VCS Network](#)
- [West London Network](#)
- [South London CVS Partnership](#)

#### 4.4 Psychological impact

Londoners are *“less motivated because they don't think they will get jobs anyway.”*

(Source: Big Squeeze Survey 2009)

There is much within the Big Squeeze responses to indicate increased levels of stress, depression and anxiety related to the recession. The UBS case study confirmed these symptoms amongst their clients, predominantly older people in poverty with chronic health conditions.

FORWARD also told us about their female clients experiencing secondary anxiety from men in their communities struggling to remain in work. External research undertaken by MIND also shows the recession is having an adverse affect on men's health. They report forty percent (40%) of their two thousand respondents expressed worry and feeling low - especially with regards to jobs, security and money<sup>1</sup>.

While several studies<sup>2</sup> have shown there is no real link between increased GDP, consumer/owner prestige and wellbeing (indeed, our psychological state has remained stable as a nation since the Industrial Revolution began (but Oliver James provides evidence that the UK population is unhappier now than in 1950s), the impact of perceived inequality and economic impotence does have a psychological effect.

A [number of studies in the UK](#) and elsewhere have identified a connection between unemployment and depression or physical illnesses. [Being in debt can negatively affect a person's mental health](#), while living with a mental health problem increases the likelihood of falling into debt.

The recession thus threatens to compound material with psychological distress, especially in the lives of those Londoners already vulnerable before it began. A recent Royal College of Nursing report entitled '[The recession](#)

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<sup>1</sup> MIND: "Men: Mental health – Get it off your Chest", May 2009 – 2000 respondents.  
<http://www.mind.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/08EB77BB-3A58-4AA1-ACAB-B378B6E34815/7663/Mw09reportsummE.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> The Green New Deal <http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/uploads/2ajogu45c1id4w55tofmppy5520072008172656.pdf> p.33



[and mental health services](#)' (Haddad, June 2009) raises alarm bells for the VCS, noting: *"anxiety about job insecurity increases levels of depression"*.

Such fears find resonance in other responses to the Big Squeeze, such as that of the front-line organisation Anchor House, who report 'reduced' rather than simply low pay amongst its service users and go so far as to call this phenomenon – where wages fall below the minimum legal level, and insecure trial periods are extended at the workplace 'exploitation'.

Although the Big Squeeze research cannot conclusively demonstrate a correlative link between increased job insecurity, decreasing wages, and employees' rights, and Londoners' likelihood to turn to the VCS for advice (and arguably, solace), such increases in demand for our services cannot go unrecognised.

As we learn more about the psychological impacts on London's communities, we can be sure such impact will be felt within the services offered by Voluntary and Community groups. All sectors should therefore be mindful of the knock-on psychological effects on social exclusion and community cohesion.

#### 4.5 Opportunities for the VCS

Finally we should not fail to recognise the opportunities brought on by the challenges of the recession. A number of Big Squeeze respondents rooted firmly in the natural environment highlighted the positive side of increased demand for their services:

- **Ramblers' Greater London Forum** found that more people are joining their free organised walks. They are increasing the awareness of Londoners that walking is a worthwhile, cheap and healthy activity for them to take up in time of recession.
- **Spitalfields City Farm** says people with less disposable income for treats mean more people using their farm, which is free to the general public. The Farm is also selling more vegetables to the community - demand has increased by 25%.
- The **London Community Recycling Network** surveyed their members in February 09 and found increases in referrals from Local Authorities, the need for volunteers, recycling rates and calls for advice on saving energy.



# 5 Recommendations

[↑Contents](#)

As immediate responses to the recession subside this report presents an opportunity to consider the future needs of Londoners as served by the capital's Voluntary and Community Sector. Funding for such work is under pressure at all levels, and any comparison between statutory support for the financial markets and our most marginalised communities clearly indicates the direction of travel for public spending priorities.

## 5.1 For Voluntary and Community Sector groups

To begin planning strategically now (if not already doing so) for the impact of the recession on your organisation, and the communities for whom you exist. This can be achieved through:

- Initiating or maintaining **monitoring processes** to measure changes in demand for your services, changes in your beneficiaries or the outcomes you're seeking;
- **Talk to your funders** at an early stage if you're experiencing such changes, or if your agreed funding outcomes are no longer appropriate to need. Examples might include quota systems which restrict ability to meet new or increasing demand;
- **Work with infrastructure organisations**, through networks and umbrella groups to ensure the needs of your communities are properly reflected in policy and strategic planning at local, regional and national levels.

## 5.2 For statutory bodies and other funders of VCS activity

To work through [London Funders](#) to co-ordinate activity and build on the findings of the [We're All in it Together conference](#) (February 2009). Key actions should include:

- A recognised need amongst funders for **effective collaboration** as the mixed economy of funding available to VCS groups falls;
- A **reaffirmation of funders' commitment to working with the VCS** for the benefit of Londoners, along the lines expressed by the Mayor of London within his Economic recovery Action Plan (ERAP). Regional statutory groups and statutory-led partnerships should show leadership in this area.
- For all funders to work together **to develop and maintain an agreed evidence base and mechanisms for forecasting**, so that the recession's impact on London's communities can be effectively tackled;
- For all funders to recognise of the **potential of the recession to compound many of the issues VCS groups were already facing** prior to the downturn – including the challenge of public service delivery, moves to commissioning-based systems, demonstrating the economic value of social activity and the (often unfunded) costs of engaging with the statutory sector.

### 5.3 For LVSC

Over the summer and early autumn of 2009 LVSC will consult with partners on the most appropriate next phase of the Big Squeeze campaign. We also undertake to repeat the survey over the equivalent period in 2010 to provide comparable year on year data.

To register for updates or to engage in the next phases of this work please contact [policy@lvsc.org.uk](mailto:policy@lvsc.org.uk).



# Appendix 1 [↑Contents](#)

## Comments from survey respondents



Many of those who responded work with the most vulnerable and marginalised in London. Here, in their own words, they describe their current situations.

### A1.1 Advice services

**London Advice Services Alliance (LASA)**, as a second tier support agency for the independent advice sector, has noticed a huge impact on front line advice providers. Citizens Advice reports that enquiries relating to redundancy have increased by 125% since April 2008. Enquiries from people seeking benefits advice have increased by 66%. LASA has been working very hard on getting the Government to recognise the value and benefit of advice by lobbying and campaigning for more money to be put into the sector. This has had some success with an extra £15 million promised for face-to-face and telephone advice in the Pre Budget Report. LASA says there will be even greater demand for advice services especially around debt, employment, housing and benefits. There is also the impact of the Government's Welfare Reform in October 2008 to consider. Department for Work & Pensions research anticipates that there will be an extra 26,000 appeals in the first year of the introduction of Employment Support Allowance.

**Newham Voluntary Sector Consortium** has seen an increase in the number of people seeking advice services at a time when the Council has reduced funding for advice provision by around £175,000. They have also seen greater uptake of lunch clubs and community activities and a 50% increase in the number of phone calls from groups wanting support and information.

**Cambridge House** has noticed an increased demand for employment advice where people are being made redundant without proper processes being used. They are looking at cost savings and restructuring to reduce core costs.

**Havering Citizens Advice Bureau** says more clients are being seen - and their problems are more complex. Not only is there an increase in debt, welfare benefits and employment queries but also in housing and relationship problems, many of which are as a direct result of the debt or employment issues resulting from the recession.

**Chinese Community Centre** has received more enquiries issues relating to debt and welfare benefits but due to lack of funding, is unable to recruit more staff to meet this demand. They say they have no choice but to cut staffing. All existing staff have had to take on more duties without any increase in pay.

## A1.2 Carers

**Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association** says older people are becoming more worried about the future of council-run day centres and Meals on Wheels as well as increases in heating bills. They are putting together a new funding and services strategy and looking at the possibility of negotiations with their local council to deal with the funding shortfall they expect to experience.

**Harrow Carers** report that carers are finding it more difficult to keep their jobs and to afford the essentials they need on the benefits they receive. They say there has been probably around 10-15% increase in people contacting them to ask for advice and emotional support, both about the general depression that a downturn causes and practical difficulties with finances, banks etc. They feel that pressure on Local Authority and PCT budgets due to economic pressures means that they are clawing back money from the VCS.

## A1.3 Children, young people and their families

**London Play** feel that as the cost of living rises and more people find themselves out of work, there will be less money available in families for children's entertainment, holidays etc. Therefore access to free play opportunities and spaces in the capital is becoming more important than ever. It is harder to raise funds, and existing funding does not keep up with rising costs. London Play are continuing to look for possible savings and may have make redundancies. They are putting more resources into fundraising but this impacts on some of the services we are meant to deliver.

**Home-Start UK** says their schemes are not confident that they will be able to meet increases in demand, there is already a shortage of staff to balance the families on their books not to mention the squeeze from new referrals. Existing coordinators' time is being pressed to the limit.

**Barnardo's** will be closing down the CANDL Project on Tuesday, 27 January and retaining one worker with a brief to continue building relationships and developing networks, but also to run parenting programmes and raise funding to do so! From a team of five, CANDL has become one.

**Islington Childcare Trust** reports that women losing their jobs or having working hours reduced are struggling to pay for childcare. If they give up their childcare place, they cannot seek alternative employment. If hours are reduced, there will be an impact on community nurseries, requiring them to reduce staffing. So a vicious circle has been created. The Trust will be losing its small business support manager at the end of March due to reduced LDA funding, putting pressure on other staff. The Child Poverty issue is growing and the Trust is doing a lot of hand-holding for families through the minefield of benefits and debt advice. The Trust's workload has increased by around 30%. At the same time, the commissioning

process has forced them to compete with bigger national charities, that may appear more efficient in tender documents because of economies of scale. The staff have agreed to a wage freeze this year will also have to reduce training for workless women who will be losing benefit due to changes in the system from November 2008.

**The Minster Centre - Families Without Fear Project** works with families where there is a history of domestic violence and abuse and says that this recession is causing increased stress and pressure on clients and staff. The Centre's main concern is about running out of money and having to close down its fantastic programmes once again at the end of this financial year, as it does every year, due to lack of sustainable funding. The Centre has hired a fundraising consultant to maximise chances of keeping the service open.

**Young People's Project** is concerned about limited job opportunities, the lack of professionals in place as wider cutbacks take effect - eg low number of Health visitors - and local authority budgets. They say that locally some organisations are working better in consortiums.

**Teviot Action Group** report that the cessation of funding from one trust from April 2009 will result in a loss of one third of their total income. The Group has no paid fundraiser and is finding it difficult to win funding bids. They will not be able to pay staff and out of school activities will have to close, badly affecting parents in further education and working parents on low wages. The Group has contacted other organisations to see if they can help but they are having the same problems.

#### **A1.4 Disabled people's services**

**Disability Coalition - Tower Hamlets** report higher unemployment in the Borough and believe there is less chance of money and practical support from City firms and Canary Wharf.

#### **A1.5 Employment and worklessness**

**KMEBP** works with young people, especially those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET. KMEBP expects demand for its services to increase and are concerned that they will not be able to achieve enough funding to keep up with demand.

#### **A1.6 Older people's services**

**Manor Gardens Welfare Trust** (AKA Manor Gardens Centre) says that more people (especially older people and people with disabilities) drop into the Centre for support, often related to complications with benefits, health access or poor housing. They estimate that the increase of ad hoc drop-in is around 50%. Existing staff are overwhelmed and there is a danger of

increasing deficits as funding authorities do not always approve full cost recovery. There is a real concern that qualities of services might suffer.

**Age Concern Barking & Dagenham** says that many older people are unable to afford to participate in events, day trips and holidays, whilst others are struggling with energy bills. Although funding has been stopped for essential services, more and more people are contacting them for information and advice. Trustees and volunteers are being asked to take on more of the work that was being done by paid staff. They are concerned that will be cuts in funding for all voluntary sector organisations and that funding bodies will see a decrease in funding from their investments. Their own investments have taken a serious blow over the last year. They will be making some redundancies and closing centres that have a funding deficit. They are no longer able to offer a final salary pension scheme to new employees.

**The Access Organisation** reports that clients - older and disabled people - are looking for more free services. There is "tremendous" demand and a waiting list for the community UK Online centre, which offers free internet and email training. They would like to offer an outreach service and are looking for extra funding/volunteers to do so.

### **A1.7 Refugee, asylum and migrant communities**

**Naz Project London** works with many low income and asylum/refugee communities, as well as many in the service industries. Finances are already tight and rising unemployment is beginning to have an impact. They are prioritising core services in case they have to cut back.

**SERLS Friendship** say that the recession is affecting the communities they work with (Russian speaking) and they are experiencing increased workload.

**The Ukrainian Migrants Network** reports that the current recession is causing funding and resources difficulties for the provision of advice, guidance and information services. More and more members of Ukrainian migrants' communities feel as they have nowhere to turn for advice and support.

### **A1.8 VCS backroom and support Services**

**Fossbox** says that resourcing IT is becoming extremely difficult and groups are having particular difficulties in finding the money for adequate IT maintenance and support.

**St Katherine's and Shadwell Trust** say that although they receive no funding from their local authority they are expected to work with them and have had repeated enquiries from the council about what they are doing to help the community in the recession.

**The Cranfield Trust** is a free management consultancy supporting other voluntary organisations - 43% of their 200 client organisations a year are London-based and they are seeing client charities facing increasing demand for services but great financial uncertainty. For many smaller organisations the position is fragile - they have very low reserve levels to support them over a difficult period. The Trust is also seeing a much greater number of professional people coming forward as volunteers. Three times as many people joined as volunteers in Jan/Feb 09 as in Jan/Feb 08. The Trust is managing costs tightly, reducing staff hours where possible and asking major donors to make donations early to help cashflow; a major budget review and financial scenario planning have been carried out.

## **A1.9 Women's services**

**An organisation that works with women in prison** says the recession hasn't affected their client group but has affected their funders. They are on the verge of folding as they cannot bring in enough money to sustain services. They are currently investigating a merger.

**Woman's Trust** says demand for counselling services is up by 42% and there has been a 23% increase in demand for our combined counselling, support groups and advocacy services. We are finding it difficult to secure funding - many more applications have been unsuccessful so we have not been able to increase our capacity to meet this increase in demand.



## Appendix 2 [↑Contents](#)

### Summary of LVSC outreach activity

#### Outreach and partnership work delivered through Big Squeeze

In the first six months of the 2009 the Big Squeeze has provided a platform for enabling London's VCS to address issues surrounding the recession. LVSC thanks all organisations for the opportunity to work in partnership, and much of what they said has informed this report.

Date	Event	LVSC Role	Further information
11.02.09	'We're in it together' –	Organising partner	A pen-London, multi-sector conference led by London Funders in partnership with LVSC and The Young Foundation. <a href="#">Click here for conference report</a>
25.02.09	VSF Annual Conference	Organiser	Recurring themes included widespread anger over the differences in levels of financial support made available to the financial markets and the VCS. <a href="#">Click here for conference report</a>
25.03.09	The Big Squeeze in Tower Hamlets	Organising Partner	Led by Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets in partnership with LVSC and Toynbee Hall. City Bridge Trust, St Katherine's and Shadwell Trust also contributed. <a href="#">Click here for conference report</a>
31.03.09	Meeting of the Westminster Women's Forum	Contributor	LVSC presented on Big Squeeze and contributed to the Forum's recession debate.
31.03.09	Bexley Voluntary Service Council	Contributor	LVSC presented on the purpose and findings of the Big Squeeze campaign (to date) and discussed the role of the sector at this time. <a href="http://www.bvsc.co.uk">www.bvsc.co.uk</a>
20.04.09	Lambeth Voluntary Action Council	Contributor	LVSC presented on the purpose and findings of the Big Squeeze report to date.
21.04.09	Barnet Council for Voluntary Service	Contributor	LVSC presented on the purpose and findings of the Big Squeeze report to date.
28.04.09	Charity Trustee Network	Organising partner	CTN, LVSC and the social investment bank CCLA ran a working lunch looking at the role of trustees in a recession.
15.05.09	London Older People's Strategy Group	Contributor	Presented on Big Squeeze
15.07.09	Brent Council Recession event	Contributor	Presented on Big Squeeze

## Appendix 3 [↑Contents](#)

### Summary of key recession activity by other VCS groups in London

Date	Event	Further information
10.02.09	<b>Community Action Southwark</b> <i>economic summit for VCS</i>	<a href="http://www.casouthwark.org.uk">www.casouthwark.org.uk</a>
11.02.09	<b>London Funders</b> <i>We're all in it together</i>	<a href="#">link</a> to the report
22.06.09	<b>Debt Summit</b>	Led by Toynbee Hall and partners. The debt crisis report, 'Up To Our Neck in It' is available <a href="#">here</a>
July 09	<b>IARS</b>	<p><a href="#">Independent Academic Research Studies</a> (IARS) have carried out research on the impact of the recession on the youth-led sector. The report addresses the issues affecting small youth-led organisations that are often invisible to funders and infrastructure organisations in the third sector; the key findings included an increase in funding cuts, more diverse range of volunteers and the need for a youth-led policy forum to support the youth-led sector. According to IARS research, the youth-led sector is yet to be put on the policy map and this has an impact on the development and provision of specialist infrastructure support and grant giving.</p> <p>The report highlights that as a result of the recession more support is needed to the youth-led sector as it may become harder to engage with young people as deprivation, disengagement and unemployment rise.</p>
30.06.09	<b>MiNet (Minority Network, hosted by ROTA)</b>	<p><a href="#">ROTA (Race on the Agenda)</a> The Economic Downturn and the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Third Sector – <a href="#">read here</a></p>
-	<b>Wandsworth VSDA</b>	<p><a href="http://www.wvsda.org.uk">www.wvsda.org.uk</a> <a href="http://recessiontools.wordpress.com">http://recessiontools.wordpress.com</a></p>
-	<b>Capacitybuilders</b> resilience grant	<a href="#">London resilience grant activity</a>

## Appendix 4 [↑Contents](#)

### Signposting to national research and resources

Organisation / Source	Description / links
<b>LVSC</b>	<p>A third sector economic downturn research mapping has recently been conducted. The report comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The most recent research carried out about the impact of the recession on the third sector, including feedback from meetings and events</li><li>• The impact on local authority leaders</li><li>• A range of guides, resources and support to enable the sector to cope with the economic downturn.</li></ul> <p>Here is the <a href="#">full report</a> (under Research Areas for 2009)</p>
<b>Homeless Link</b>	<p>Report on survey of their membership – 'The impact of the credit crunch' – <a href="#">here</a></p>
<b>LSC, LDA and Jobcentre Plus</b>	<p>Their <a href="#">joint action plan</a></p>
<b>Local Government Association</b>	<p>Council Leader survey on impact of economic downturn on local authorities – <a href="#">Full Report</a></p>
<b>Princes Trust and Cass Business School</b>	<p>Research report 'Deprived Youth hit hardest' <a href="#">here</a></p>
<b>CharityFinance</b>	<p>'Government make Business support available to VCS' (article <a href="#">here</a>)</p>

# Appendix 5

## Acknowledgements

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### Contributors

Sincere thanks to all the London VCS groups who responded to the Big Squeeze survey and the subsequent case studies commissioned to support the survey findings. Many other organisations also engaged in the project in other ways - through workshops, conferences or informal feedback – all of which contributed to this report.

Governance of The Big Squeeze project was provided by the Steering Group. Members included:

- London Advice Services Alliance
- Greater London Volunteering
- London Youth
- Race on the Agenda
- Social Enterprise London
- Women's Resource Centre
- London Community Recycling Network
- Barnardo's London
- East London CVS Network
- South London CVS Partnership
- Central London CVS Network
- Age Concern London
- Toynbee Hall

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### LVSC

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## Partners in The Big Squeeze

