

LVSC

Voluntary and  
community action  
for London

  
**The Big Squeeze**

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## The Big Squeeze 2010

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

Second phase

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# Foreword

Sadly, much of the anecdotal evidence we picked up from our first Big Squeeze survey last year has now turned into hard data – empirical evidence shows people are experiencing more mental health problems; more people are unemployed, with young people, disabled people and Black and Minority Ethnic communities (BAME) affected worst of all<sup>1</sup>; more people than can be catered for are still seeking advice from our services. The most marginalised are becoming more marginalised.

At the same time this 2nd year of the Big Squeeze emphasises how focussed, resilient and flexible we are as a sector. Almost all the organisations we heard from have adapted their services to meet the changing needs of the Londoners they support in the short term – whether or not they have had funding to support those changes. This is unsustainable in the longer term.

But perhaps the biggest challenges lie ahead as all this is in the face of public spending cuts that are likely to bite very hard in the forthcoming years. And this report shows that whether or not the economy is now out of recession, the lagging effect of the recession is impacting harder and harder on the communities we serve.

Yet we are not asking for a huge bailout in order to help those people. All we are asking is that when the cuts are made, as they will be, thought is given to those people who are already the poorest and most deprived in London. It is the budgets, which support these people that should be protected, irrespective as to whether they are health, education or economic development budgets.

We also ask for dialogue. As can be seen from the evidence in this report, the sector often comes up with innovative solutions to what seem like intractable problems. We ask our partners to come to us with the problems they are facing, and to work through those problems with us. Together we can make far better decisions and deliver far better services to the Londoners whom most need our help at this time.



Peter Lewis, Chief Executive

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<sup>1</sup>GLA Economics, for the London Skills and Employment Board (2009) The London Story Update 2009. Available from: <http://www.london.gov.uk/lseb/docs/thelondonstoryupdate2009.pdf>

# Chapter 1

## Executive Summary

### The key findings and recommendations of the 2nd year of the Big Squeeze are:

#### 1. Recession and spending cuts

##### **a) Findings**

- Even though the recession is formally “over”, it is continuing to have a lagging negative impact on the lives of Londoners.
- To safeguard the needs of the Londoners they serve, organisations are placing a greater reliance on part-time staff, volunteers and trustees to deliver services.
- Workloads have increased and are anticipated to continue to increase next year whilst extensive public sector cuts are predicted, with cuts of between 10–30% widely anticipated.
- The trend to commissioning larger contracts is compounding the effects of the recession and spending cuts on Londoners. This is making it more difficult for small organisations to find funding.
- There is evidence that some trust funding has already fallen as a result of the stock market crash and groups predict that their own levels of funding from trusts will continue to fall.
- There may be more competition for trust funding as public sector funds are reduced.

##### **b) Recommendations**

###### *Funders should:*

- look at the findings and recommendations in this report and analyse the impacts, if any, on the services they provide and/or commission;
- work to ensure that in their respective areas of responsibility the combination of the recession and any proposed public spending cuts do not have a disproportionate effect on those already most marginalised, especially equality groups. Services for the most marginalised Londoners should be protected from spending cuts;

- work to ensure that their funding models do not preclude them from commissioning small and specialist service providers who may be best placed to deliver the best outcomes for Londoners.

- enter into dialogue with the sector before making any necessary cuts in order to make the most of the funding available.

###### *VCS organisations should:*

- talk to funders at the earliest possible time in relation to changes in demand for their services;
- prioritise planning as early as possible to meet increased demands or manage with fewer resources;
- maintain a sharp focus on the organisation’s mission and the Londoners they are there to serve.

#### 2. Action taken to minimise the impact of the recession

##### **a) Findings**

- The VCS has been shown to be very resilient. 93% of organisations told us that they have taken action in order to continue to provide services to meet the needs of the Londoners they serve. This is up 15% from last year.
- Many organisations are exploring innovative approaches to combat the worst effects of the recession and spending cuts.
- “Quick” solutions developed by the VCS to meet the increasing or changing needs of Londoners may only be feasible for short periods of time before a strategic review of resources is needed.

##### **b) Recommendations**

###### *Funders should:*

- understand that even though positive and innovative approaches may be taken to safeguard services to Londoners in the short term, these may not be sustainable in the longer term;

- support VCS organisations as they move into new and different models of service delivery;
- seek not to disproportionately reduce funding for preventative services in favour of those dealing with ‘fire fighting’ issues, as it is often preventative services that make the long-term savings;
- be sufficiently flexible to adjust to the changing circumstances as the impacts of the recession continue to emerge.

*VCS organisations should:*

- explore whether new organisational approaches are needed to best serve their communities.

### 3. Unemployment, debt and advice

#### **a) Findings**

- There has been a significant increase in demand for some advice services including those helping with debt management, Job Seekers Allowance, housing repossession, unemployment and welfare benefits.
- The recession has compounded inequalities for deaf and disabled people as they are finding it harder and harder to find work.
- The employment rate for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Londoners as compared to all Londoners has got worse.
- Young people are being particularly hard hit by unemployment, especially young black men.

#### **b) Recommendations**

*Funders should:*

- look at standardising their monitoring of the advice sector and capacity build the sector to enable it to monitor its services and the demand for its services effectively;
- use this evidence and work collaboratively to develop a strategy for funding of debt advice in London over the next 2 years;
- lobby government to continue investment in the Financial Inclusion Fund for debt advice;

- work with partners such as Job Centre Plus, local government, NHS and others to develop debt diagnostic and signposting capabilities amongst their staff, maximising the potential for user-led self-help;
- recognise that funding high quality advice at the earliest possible stage is cost effective in the long term;
- bring together a range of partners to discuss the advice sector in London through London Funders;

*In particular:*

- the London Skills and Employment Board (LSEB) should continue to monitor employment rates of different groups;
  - the LSEB should ask its delivery partners to ensure that specific action is being taken to address the poor and worsening employment rates specifically of deaf, disabled and BAME Londoners;
  - the LSEB should assure itself that the projected budgets of the London Development Agency, Job Centre Plus and Skills Funding Agency are sufficient to meet the current and predicted levels of unemployment in the capital.
- VCS organisations should:*
- ensure they are gathering evidence about changes in demands, collecting case studies and sharing this evidence and experience;
  - look for ways to innovate and target resources, especially around signposting, self-help and telephone services;
  - ensure their services continue to target those most in need;
  - make the most of opportunities to make their voices and experiences heard through their respective networks, for example through the LVSC Employment and Skills Network, the Crisis WILLOW project, the London Debt Forum or the London Debt Strategy Group.

#### 4. Mental Health and well-being

##### **a) Findings**

- Unemployment is leading to increased levels of stress and depression.
- People with mental health problems are finding the stress of the current employment situation making them less able to sustain employment.
- There are more enquiries to VCS organisations relating to mental health issues and family tensions, including domestic violence.
- There are increased levels of stress among VCS staff having to deal with job insecurity and redundancies.

##### **b) Recommendations**

###### *Funders should:*

- the Mayor, working with partners, should use his Health Inequalities Strategy to support measures to reduce the impact of the recession and public spending cuts;
- the Mayor, the London Health Commission and its members should work together to minimise the impact of the recession on health inequality in London, with a specific focus on mental health.

###### *VCS organisations should:*

- work to establish a VCS health policy network that could help inform debate in relation to the health and well-being impact of the recession and spending cuts on Londoners;
- put in place support mechanisms for members of staff, trustees and volunteers in order to minimise the impact of increasing workloads and job insecurity;
- seek early advice from specialist services, such as PEACe<sup>2</sup>, in relation to complex matters such as redundancy or Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employees (TUPE).

#### 5. Volunteering

##### **a) Findings**

- There are increasing numbers of highly qualified volunteers, who are bringing benefits to the organisations they support.
- More unemployed people are looking at volunteering as a route into training opportunities and employment, rather than “civic engagement”.
- There is a lack of resources to support increasing numbers of volunteers.
- There are increasing numbers of “new” and more educated volunteers with diverse support needs. This has reduced capacity to support more vulnerable long-term volunteers.

##### **b) Recommendations**

###### *Funders should:*

- Recognise that volunteering projects need adequate resources in order for volunteers to be trained, supported and managed effectively.

###### *VCS organisations should:*

- think about whether they could improve their services to Londoners through the effective use of volunteers;
- ensure they have adequate resources in place to manage and train volunteers.

<sup>2</sup>LVSC's Personal Employment Advice and Conciliation Service (PEACe) provides expert law and human resources support and advice to voluntary sector employers, development workers and advisors in London. For more information see: <http://www.lvsc.org.uk/Templates/information.asp?NodeID=90165&i1PNID=90016>

# Chapter 2

## Introduction

### 2.1 The wider context

Following the credit crunch, the UK began to see a period of economic contraction from August 2007 and officially entered recession in July 2008. As a result, UK productivity (as measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP)) was 5.6% lower at the end of June 2009 than a year previously. This in turn has led to a decline in jobs in London and as a result the employment rate has gone down. The employment rate in London in the quarter to July 2009 was 68.5%, 3.1% lower than in December 2008. Correspondingly unemployment has risen. The ILO (International Labour Organisation definition) unemployment rate for London has risen to 9.2% for the quarter to July 2009 whilst Jobseeker's Allowance claimant count data for London has shown a net increase of 93,000 claimants (72%) between May 2008 and August 2009. The credit crunch has also seen loans become scarcer and more expensive, and income from savings decline.<sup>3</sup>

Recent research carried out by the Institute of Public Policy Research found that London has the second highest rate of youth unemployment (27%) compared to the rest of the UK.<sup>4</sup>

National and local budgets have been fixed under the current Labour government until March 2011 under the current Comprehensive Spending Review. However, spending cuts have already begun in some areas, as debt has increased and tax revenues have dropped and the size of the public sector debt continues to increase. Currently the public sector spends between £11 billion and 12 billion on the third sector each year.<sup>5</sup>

### 2.2 About the Big Squeeze

LVSC produced its first report "The Big Squeeze – We're in it Together" in February 2008. LVSC and its partners collected evidence and perspectives from across London's voluntary and community sector (VCS) to inform the debate on the role of our diverse sector in helping Londoners through the recession.<sup>6</sup> A full report was published in July 2009.

### Key findings of our 2009 survey

Our survey in 2009 found overwhelmingly that the recession was affecting Londoners and the VCS groups that work with them. Voluntary activity had increased to meet this demand, but there were concerns that this could not be sustained indefinitely. The survey found that 78% of respondents were

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<sup>3</sup>London Skills & Employment Board (2009) The London Story 2009 update Available from: <http://www.london.gov.uk/lseb/docs/thelondonstoryupdate2009.pdf> (23rd April 2010)

<sup>4</sup>IPPR (January 2010) Study On The Recession And Employment Affecting Young Black Men. Available from: <http://www.ippr.org.uk/pressreleases/?id=3846> (23rd April 2010)

<sup>5</sup>Papasolomontas, A. & Hand, K., Charity Finance Directors Group (2009) Public Funding cuts in the third sector: scale and implications. Available from: [http://www.cfdg.org.uk/docs/publications/sharedoc/public\\_funding\\_cuts\\_to\\_the\\_third\\_sector\\_0910CHSH0002.pdf](http://www.cfdg.org.uk/docs/publications/sharedoc/public_funding_cuts_to_the_third_sector_0910CHSH0002.pdf) (26th April 2010)

taking proactive steps to survive the recession. The survey also found that the advice sector had experienced the most urgent and acute demands on its service since the beginning of the recession. Volunteering opportunities rose dramatically. The survey also showed greater levels of stress, anxiety and mental health issues relating to increasing levels of poverty and unemployment.

This document provides both a narrative on the VCS experience and an insight into the communities for whom VCS groups are working for the following year 2010. 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 financial year when public sector cuts are generally anticipated.

Despite a shorter survey period (one month, down from two and a half months during the last survey) a wealth of qualitative and quantitative evidence has been gathered from sixty organisations.

Since the publication of our last report many of its predictions, including those relating to psychological effects and other social impacts, have been borne out.

This year we revisit the original survey themes, but we have also mapped how widely anticipated reductions in public expenditure may affect Londoners.

### **2.3 What the campaign sought to achieve**

This report collates the learning and impact from phase two of the Big Squeeze campaign. The aims of this campaign were to:

- map the impact of the recession on London's communities and the VCS groups that serve them;
- highlight the contribution VCS groups have made to improve Londoners' well-being during the recession, through their own work and that with funders and public sector partners; and
- develop a number of recommendations.

LVSC and its partners will continue to use this information to inform the debate on the impact of the recession, the likely impact of future spending cuts, and raise the profile of VCS work with government and other funders in the region, including London Councils, the Mayor, the Government Office and London Funders.

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<sup>6</sup>LVSC's partners were: Greater London Volunteering, Toynbee Hall, ROTA, London Youth, LASA, Age Concern London, Central London CVS Network, East London CVS Network, South London CVS Partnership and London Community Recycling Network (LCRN)



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## **2.4 Methodology**

The evidence and analysis used in this report was gathered using the following methods:

The Big Squeeze survey: a (primarily) web-based survey of London VCS groups that ran throughout February 2010. The survey was circulated through LVSC, Third Sector Alliance, Voluntary Sector Forum, STAN, CASCADE, and Children and Young People VCS networks and members. It was also posted on the Campaigning Central Website and there were a number of LVSC policy twitter feeds promoting the survey. It was also publicised through London Councils, London Funders and London Development Agency websites. Six respondents wished to remain anonymous. Throughout the report they have been referred to as “another respondent” or “another organisation”.

Desk-based research: additional local, regional and national strategic context from other research relating to the recession has been included.<sup>7</sup>

London’s Councils for Voluntary Services: mapping of funding levels from Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) annual reports (2006-2009) obtained through the Charity Commission’s website.

## **2.5 About LVSC**

London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC) is the lead strategic 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.

We recently consulted on our strategic objectives and agreed:

- to be a central resource for knowledge and policy for London’s VCS;

- to act as a collaborative leader for London’s VCS; and

- to enable the VSC to best deliver for Londoners.

Poverty, equality, health and climate change are the cross-cutting themes throughout all of our work and this report specifically addresses the issues in London around the first three, with implications for the last.

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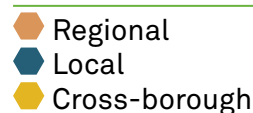
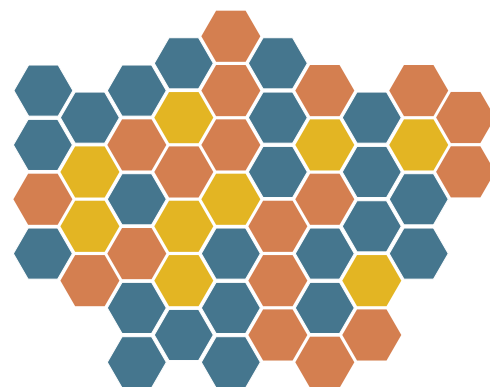
<sup>7</sup>A full report summarising our desk research relating to the recession will become available on the LVSC website.

# Chapter 3

## The Big Squeeze Analysis

### 3.1 Breakdown of responses

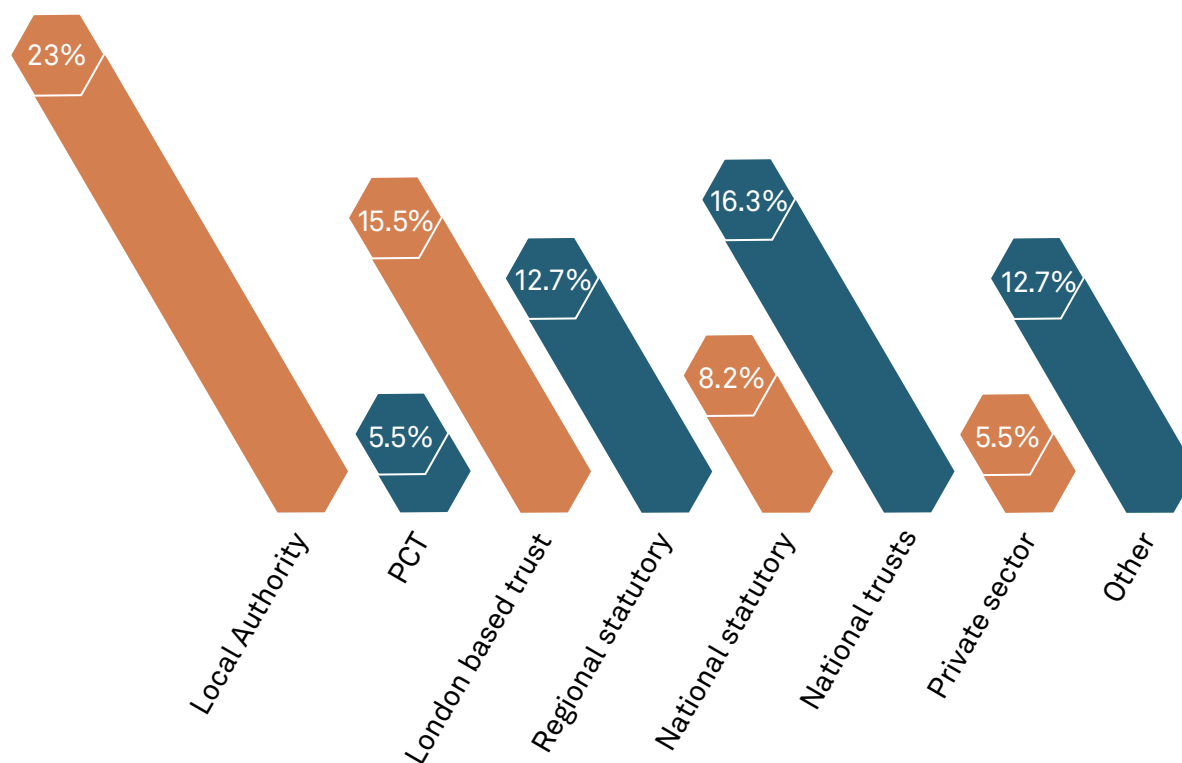
The Big Squeeze survey received detailed responses from sixty organisations in London. As in 2009, this survey drew responses from a diverse mix of groups working locally, sub-regionally and regionally. Of all respondents 46% worked at local level, 18% cross-borough and 36% regionally. Approximately 57% of responses came from frontline organisations; 15% from infrastructure or second tier organisations and 28% a combination of frontline and second tier.



### 3.2 Who funds the survey respondents?

Survey respondents were asked to identify their funding partners. Local authorities were the biggest overall contributors to the income of Big Squeeze respondents. Local authority (LA) funding accounted for a 23% share of all income streams. 70% of all respondents said they get some funding from an LA source. 85% of respondents receive some funding from public sector funds (LA, Primary Care Trust, national or regional statutory body).

### Funding partners breakdown



### 3.3 Headline results

The Big Squeeze campaign and survey confirms that the recession has had a considerable impact on our respondents and the organisations and communities they support.

	2010 response	2009 response
Is the recession affecting the communities you work with?	Yes 97%	Yes 95%
Has your workload increased as a direct result of the recession?	Yes 68%	Yes 71%
Are you confident that you will be able to meet any increases in demand for your services now and in the future?	No 75%	No 80%
Is your organisation already taking action to help you and your services survive a recession?	Yes 93%	Yes 78%
Compared to 2009–10, what do you expect to happen to your funding from the public sector in 2010–11?	53% expect a decrease	Not asked
Compared to 2009–10, what do you expect to happen to your funding from trust funders in 2010–11?	38% expect a decrease	Not asked

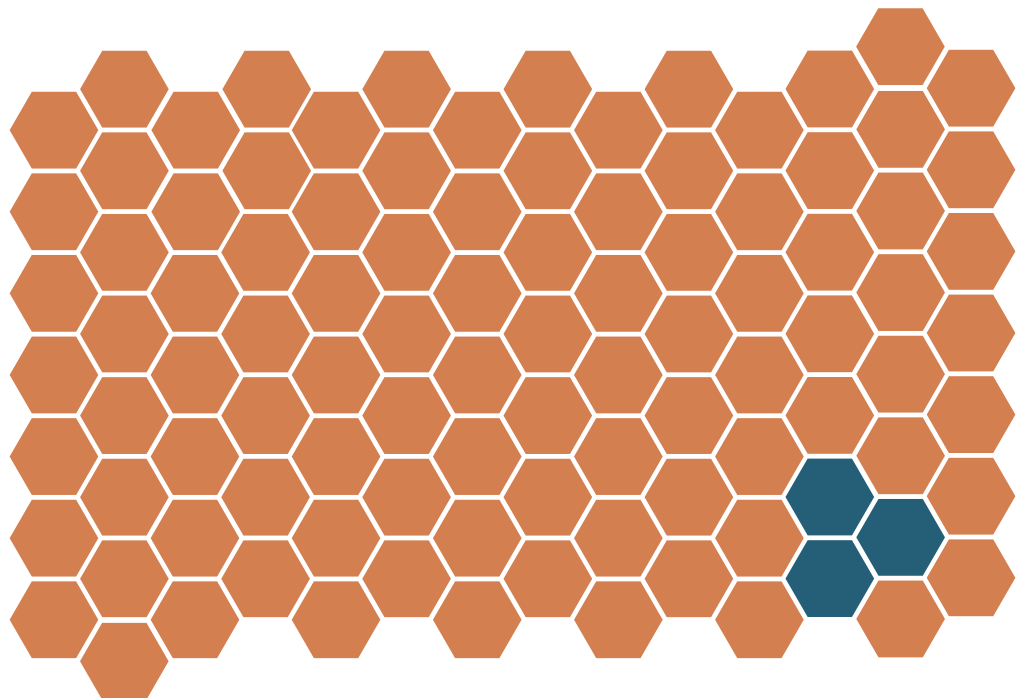
In terms of the impact of the recession on communities, this survey shows a 2% increase compared to the survey six months ago. This is despite the UK officially coming out of the recession. During this period, there has been a substantial increase in the number of organisations taking action to survive the recession compared with our previous survey.<sup>8</sup> This may be because more organisations are aware that urgent action is needed to deal with impending spending cuts.

<sup>8</sup>Baker Tilly, (December 2009). *Managing Charity Finances through Uncertain Times*. The survey received 175 responses from charity leaders. The report found many organisations are taking action to minimise the impact of the recession. For example, 61% are looking for new sources of finance and nearly 33% have or will increase their spending or fundraising. Report available: <http://www.bakertilly.co.uk/publications/Managing-charity-finances-through-uncertain-times.aspx> (23rd April 2010)

**3.4 A summary of the impact of the recession on survey respondents**

## Is the recession affecting the communities you work with?

Negative impacts for the communities they work with are stated as including increasing unemployment (in particular among young people, young black people, some minority ethnic communities and deaf and disabled people), poverty, homelessness, family breakdown and mental health problems. Due to increased levels of poverty more families are said to be becoming reliant on free community facilities e.g. play opportunities for children. The rise in unemployment has also led to an increase in fathers taking caring responsibilities for their young children. Low-income families are becoming even poorer.



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97% of our respondents said the recession was having an impact on the communities they work with.

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● Yes  
● No

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## Has your workload increased as a direct result of the recession?

68% of our respondents said that their workload has increased as a result of the recession. Organisations reported an increased workload of up to 50% due to enquiries relating to worklessness, debt and volunteering. Others reported having to deal with more enquiries relating to mental health issues and family tensions. Similar statements were made in response to our survey last year, which subsequent evidence has confirmed. Other respondents said that they anticipate workload increasing in the next year when public sector cuts are more widely anticipated.



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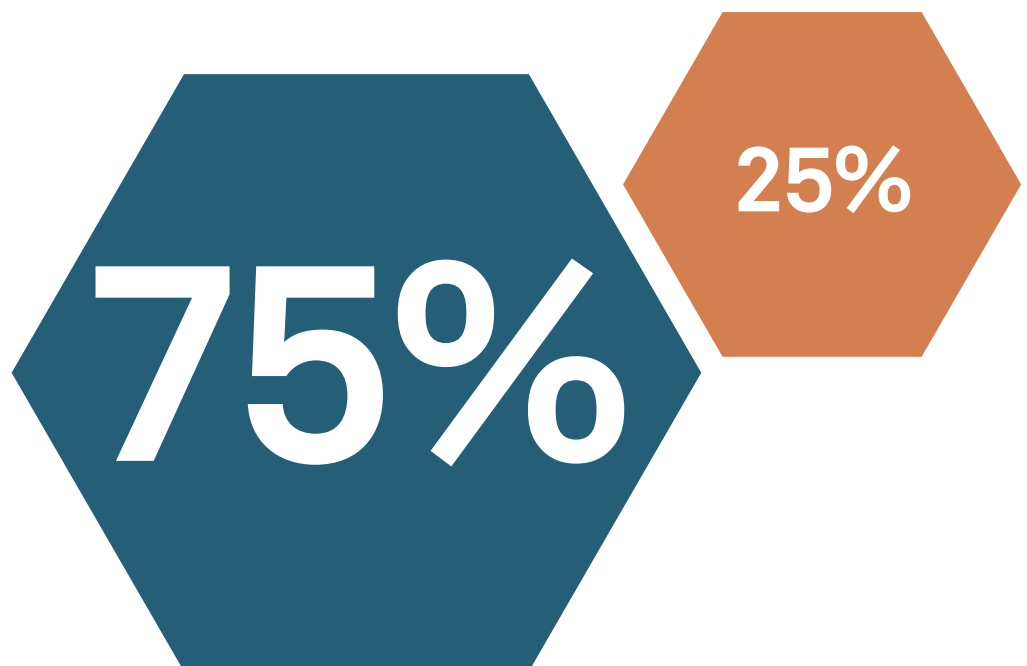
68% of our respondents said that their workload has increased as a result of the recession.

Yes  
No

## Are you confident that you will be able to meet any increases in demand for your services now and in the future? If not, what are your main concerns?

75% of our respondents said that they are not confident that they will be able to meet increases in demand for services. They report that the massive pressures affecting them and lack of capacity are the biggest barriers in meeting demands. Some organisations say that limited physical space compounds the problem. However other respondents are concerned that meeting increased demand will present more challenges once public sector cuts begin to take effect and existing funding streams run out after March 2011.

Respondents reported that pressure on staff and resources may reduce their ability to meet increased demands on their services. As there have been growing numbers of requests for volunteering opportunities, concerns have been expressed that there may be insufficient resources to support and place volunteers. However, increased access to skilled volunteers means that some organisations are able to focus more time on meeting other demands on their services.



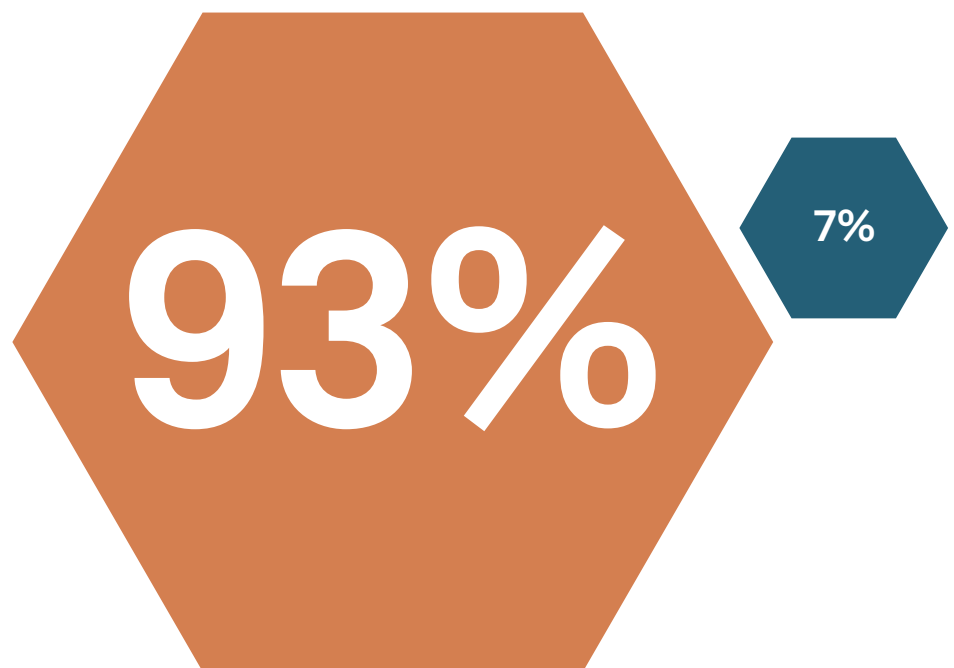
75% of our respondents said that they are not confident that they will be able to meet increases in demand for services.

- Yes
- No

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## Is your organisation already taking action to help you and your services survive a recession?

93% of respondents told us that they are now taking action to survive the recession, which is up 15% from our previous survey. It is also very encouraging that many respondents are exploring innovative approaches to combat the worst effects of the recession, such as generating their own income and using more volunteers. However, a number of organisations told us that these initiatives are not sustainable and could lead to fewer services and reduced quality in the long-term.



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93% of respondents told us that they are now taking action to survive the recession.

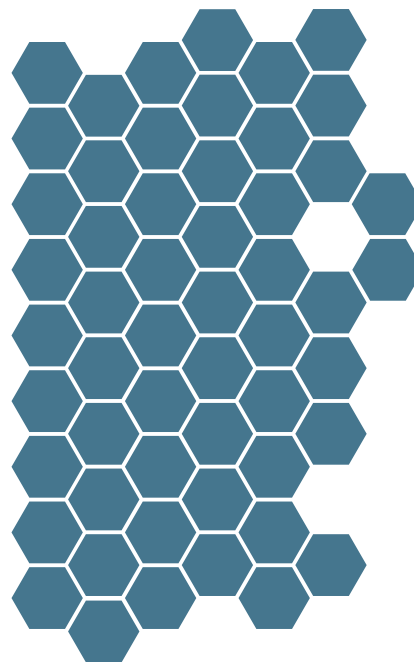
Yes  
No

## Compared to 2009–10, what do you expect to happen to your funding from the public sector in 2010–11?

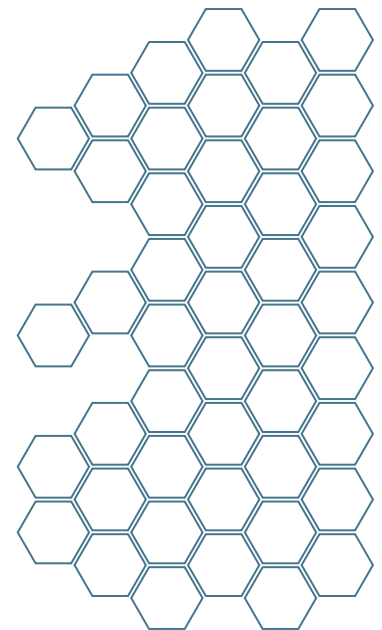
The majority of Big Squeeze respondents (54%) are anticipating a drop in public sector funding in 2010–11. Amongst these several of the capital's Councils for Voluntary Service are expecting cuts in their own LA grants of between 10% and 50% for the coming year.

Most respondents reported on the current funding situation as well as voicing their concerns about public sector cuts next year. About 12% of respondents said that they have already cut back staff, fear that further reductions in income will lead to staff loss, reliance on part time staff, volunteers, or having to close down.

Others are still unclear, as some LAs had not finalised their budgets at the time when respondents were completing this survey. Other respondents tell us that they or the organisations they support find the current funding environment very challenging due to the shift from grants to commissioning. Although this trend preceded the recession, it may well be compounding its effects.



Population expecting a decrease



Population expecting an increase/no change

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54% of respondents are anticipating a drop in public sector funding in 2010–11.

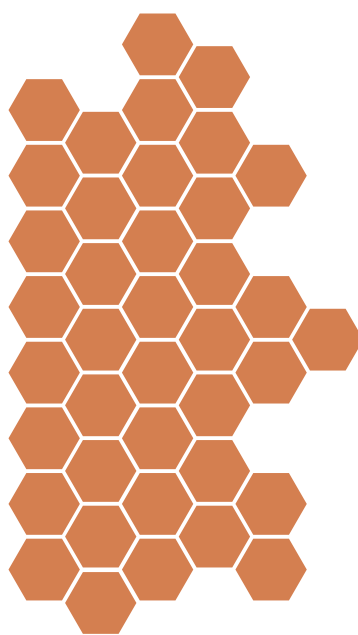
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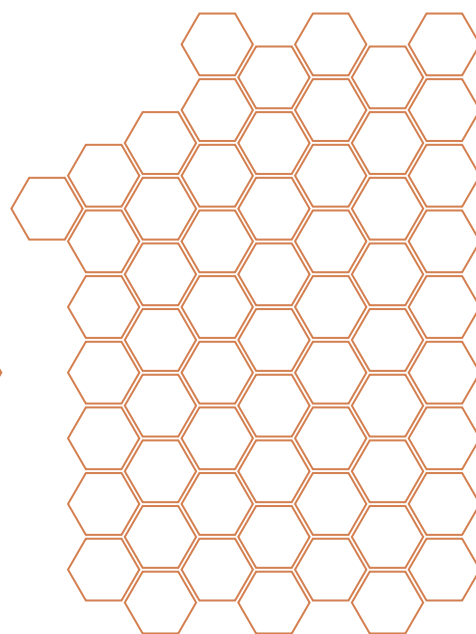
## Compared to 2009–10, what do you expect to happen to your funding from trust funders in 2010–11?

A significant proportion (39%) of respondents expect their funding from trust sources to decrease in 2010–11. After LAs, London-based and national trust funders were cited as the most common funder amongst respondents (16% for each).

Many respondents anticipate a drop in trust funding due to a fall in share prices. Others suspect that competition for trust funding will become stronger as there is less public money available. However, some organisations expect their funding applications to trusts to be successful.



Population expecting a decrease



Population expecting an increase/no change

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39% of respondents expect their funding from Trust sources to decrease in 2010–11.

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# Chapter 4

## The key themes

This chapter provides an in-depth picture of the impact of the recession on VCS organisations, staff, volunteers and the communities they support. Last year's report drew particular focus on advice and volunteering as key-sub sectors affected by the recession. This chapter is a follow up to that work and aims to present current "state of play" analysis. It draws on intelligence and research from our survey. It also provides a VCS picture of volunteering and advice, though the eyes of our respondents.

Other key themes that emerged from the current survey include the psychological impact of the recession on communities and on VCS staff and trustees dealing with potential additional workloads and redundancies. Greater understanding of these areas will be crucial to the effective planning of VCS services during a period of potential extensive public sector cuts. It may also inform policy makers, funders and commissioners when drawing up reviews and commissioning strategies.

### 4.1 Advice, unemployment and debt Increase and change in demand

#### **Key findings**

- Some unemployed people are seeking to change their careers to the VCS.
- There is an increased demand for advice on: debt management, Job Seekers Allowance, housing repossession, unemployment, welfare benefits and CV writing.
- More people are losing their own homes.
- More people are concerned about their own immigration status.
- There are compounded inequalities for disabled people as they are finding it harder to find work. They are also experiencing further marginalisation as they are driven further into debt and poverty due to increased fuel prices and not receiving the correct benefits.
- Young people are being particularly hard hit by unemployment, especially young black men and some Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities.
- Young disabled people have been disproportionately hit due to discrimination and lack of jobs.
- The lower incomes of service users and carers mean they are less able to take part in community activities.

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### A summary of key issues and changes in demand

A report by **Capitalise London's Debt Advice Partnership** identifies the changes in the demands on debt advice services in the last three years in the context of the recession.<sup>9</sup>

- Citizens Advice Bureaux reported that enquiries to its advice services have increased by 35% since April 2008.
- 16% increase in people with **more debt issues** since 2006 and an overwhelming 320% increase in “the average level of priority debts, increasing the complexity and urgency of the cases that debt advisers are dealing with”.<sup>10</sup>
- Average **level of debt of service users has increased** by 16% since January 2007 (to £18,131) even though average annual household income has remained stable at £10,000.
- There are **more debt advice clients who are still employed** (full or part-time) and **seeking debt advice**. They have experienced a 33% increase in debt levels since 2006 (from £14,000 to £19,000).
- Debt advice agencies are seeing more people in work and who own homes, but demand for advice has gone down among the “traditional” low-income clients and these client groups may become excluded from receiving these services.
- “Inner London has clients on lower incomes with a greater risk of financial exclusion, while people in **Outer London have considerably higher levels of debt**”.

### What our respondents said

**Community Links** has noticed increased debt, unemployment and housing repossession. Demands for its debt advice and employment services have doubled and tripled, respectively, in the last year. **Islington Law Centre** has seen demand grow in the local community as people find it harder to manage their debts; people are at risk of redundancy, or have lost their job; more people are claiming benefits, sometimes for the first time, or are moving in and out of part-time/temporary work and benefits; more people are at risk of losing their home, or have become homeless; more people are concerned about their immigration status. **RedR** says that there has been a lot of interest from people wanting to change careers

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<sup>9</sup>Capitalise London's Debt Advice Partnership (June 2009) Up To Your Neck In It: The Debt Crisis in London and the Impact of London's Free Face-to-face Debt Advice Services. The report uses data from about 20,000 people who have accessed free face-to-face debt advice in London. Additional information is used from Citizens Advice Bureaux debt advice services and the Legal Services Commission. Available from: <http://www.capitalise.org.uk/page.asp?section=000100010006> (23rd April 2009)

<sup>10</sup>The report describes “priority debts” as the “most urgent debt problems, including rent arrears, mortgage arrears and council tax arrears”. “Priority debts are an indication of the seriousness of the situation with the most serious impact on people's lives”

and get into the aid sector. This may suggest an increase in people wanting to become aid workers – perhaps as a result of redundancy.

**Stonewall Housing** has had twice as many calls about debt in the first six months of 2009/2010 compared to the same period last year. The number of people calling to say their accommodation is now not affordable has gone up by 360% and the number calling to say their accommodation is insecure by 207%.

Among London's diverse ethnic communities, **Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre** is dealing with increases in demand for welfare advice. Calls for advice on benefit claims have increased by 27%; requests for counselling therapies and mental health support by 33%; requests for volunteering by 11%; advice for homelessness issues by 3%; advice for debt issues by 7%; and need for community support by 22%. The **African Refugee Community Health and Research Organisation** has had a 12% increase in enquiries with many more about debt management, bills etc. The **Centre for Armenian Information & Advice** testifies to increased poverty, unemployment and debt among its clients. Caseloads have gone up by 20% with more assistance required on issues such as direct financial support, grants for education and help with job searches such as CV writing.

**Educating for Equality** has seen a 50% increase in requests for support and advice from disabled people. Some of this relates to decreases in benefits and independent living support. Problems due to budget cuts are impacting on services and care for disabled people. **Disability Network Hounslow** says that as a result of the recession it is even harder for its clients to find work and that through problems such as not getting the correct benefits and increases in fuel prices they are being further marginalised and forced into debt and poverty. **Inclusion London** is aware that the recession is particularly hitting younger people and disabled younger people. They are likely to be facing the double effects of discrimination and lack of jobs. The organisation said that cuts in university places and competition for those remaining places are likely to particularly hit disabled people due to the combination of barriers and discrimination. The **Royal Association for Deaf People** has seen an increase in the numbers of clients who have financial problems, including debt and unemployment with which come other difficulties with issues such as housing and relationships. It claims that in general deaf people are four times more likely to be unemployed than people who are not deaf. Of those who are in full time work, 33% are in low paid, low-skilled jobs and will feel the effects

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of recession disproportionately.<sup>11</sup> Deaf people are particularly vulnerable to being made redundant without their employer following proper procedures and there is anecdotal evidence that this is happening.

**Enfield MENCAP** says that parent carers are less able to make minor contributions to the cost of activities like entrance fees or equipment hire. Where parent carers are required to make up the difference between actual cost and means-funded support their ability to do this has been adversely affected. **Contact a Family** is focusing more on financial issues, debt management and income maximisation for the groups it supports. Reference is also made to acknowledged additional costs involved in caring for a disabled child.

Other respondents including **Kingston CAB** and **LASA** report increased demand for advice services, including housing, unemployment and welfare benefits.

## Case study

**Toynbee Hall**<sup>12</sup> reports an increase in demand for debt advice services of 22%. Waiting times for an appointment are up from two to four weeks with some organisations having to temporarily close their waiting lists. However there has been a significantly higher increase in the numbers of people unemployed and claiming Job Seekers Allowance. **There is a worry that these more vulnerable people may be losing out to a new type of client group who are more able to access their services.** Members of this group are often employed homeowners, who are sometimes not in difficulty, but enquiring for future reference.

Toynbee Hall has established the London Debt Strategy Group in partnership with the Greater London Authority and Mayor's Office with four main aims to:

- ensure debt advice provision meets current demand during the economic recession;
- ensure medium and long term sustainable funding is secured for face-to-face debt advice services in London;
- identify solutions to empower clients who may be being affected by the recession to manage their finances effectively and to prevent future debt problems;

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<sup>11</sup>[www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) (23rd March 2010) Disability Policy (Economic Downturn). Motion made and question proposed. Available from: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100323/halltext/100323h0001.htm> (23rd April 2009)

<sup>12</sup><http://www.toynbeehall.org.uk/>

- improve policy and practice of credit providers.<sup>13</sup>

No financial support has been offered to meet these aims. **In fact, from April 2011, 56 debt advisers in London will be at risk of losing their job which could mean 10,000 clients per year won't get the help they need.** Furthermore these advisers were brought in to meet demand *before* not during the recession. **Cuts are also expected to funding for services for older people, women in prostitution and victims of illegal money lending.**

#### The wider picture

As mentioned in the introduction to this report, recent research carried out by the Institute of Public Policy Research found that London has the second highest rate of youth unemployment (27%) compared to the rest of the UK. Moreover, the study reports big increases among young black people. 48% of black people aged 16–24 are currently out of work, whilst the unemployment rate among white young people is 20%. The rate amongst some other minority ethnic communities has also risen.<sup>14</sup> Recent research by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and the Government Equalities Office corroborates these findings.<sup>15</sup>

### 4.2 Health, social and psychological impact

#### **Key findings**

- Unemployment is leading to stress and mental ill health and vice versa. Those with mental health problems are finding the stress of the current employment market makes them less able to sustain employment.
- People with poor health and caring responsibilities are disproportionately affected by unemployment as support services are being reduced.
- Increased numbers of more “affluent”, recently unemployed people are becoming depressed. They often lack coping strategies and are not aware of support services available to them.

<sup>13</sup>Available from: <http://www.capitalise.org.uk/page.asp?section=0001000100030008> (23rd April 2009)

<sup>14</sup>IPPR (January 2010) Study On The Recession And Employment Affecting Young Black Men. Available from: <http://www.ippr.org.uk/pressreleases/?id=3846> (23rd April 2010)

<sup>15</sup>Equalities & Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and Government Equalities Office (GEO) (December 2009)

Monitoring Update on the Impact of the recession on various demographic groups. Available from: [http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/research/impact\\_of\\_the\\_recession.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/research/impact_of_the_recession.pdf) (23rd April 2010)

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- Deaf people are finding it even more difficult to gain employment due to a “triple whammy” of the recession, communication barriers and cuts to advocacy and interpretation services.
  - There are reports of increased levels of domestic violence and homophobic or trans-phobic harassment.
  - There are also reports of increased levels of stress among VCS staff having to deal with job insecurity and increased workloads.

#### What some of our respondents said

**Brent Mind Contact Service** says that people are losing their jobs due to stress and mental ill health. They are finding the ESA (Employment and Support Allowance) process very hard to deal with. Other people with mental health problems are saying that they are being pressed to look for jobs to qualify for Job Seekers Allowance, but there are no jobs to go for. The **Volunteer Centre Kensington & Chelsea** reports increasing unemployment has brought in new clients and resulted in increased difficulty for those already unemployed to find work. Those already struggling because of low incomes, illness or caring responsibilities are disproportionately affected.

**Mind your Head** says that work opportunities for refugees and illegal immigrants are almost impossible to access due to language barriers and drug/alcohol misuse.<sup>16</sup> A large percentage of the community it deals with is either uneducated or illiterate. Redundancy and significant drops in income are affecting individuals from both affluent and working classes, resulting in unhealthy coping strategies. **Another organisation** told us that there are fewer jobs and that many young people have been laid off. Many of them do not want to claim benefits as they are too proud so are living in great poverty. This is leading to depression and mental health problems.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>There are well-established links between low incomes and stressful “events” (such as job loss or housing issues and aspects such as drug and alcohol abuse (especially among men). See: Audit Commission (August 2009) When it comes to the crunch: How councils are responding to the recession. Available from: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nationalstudies/localgov/Pages/whenitcomestothecrunch12aug2009.aspx> (23rd April 2010)

<sup>17</sup>The disproportionately high rates of unemployment amongst young people were discussed in the previous section.

## Case study

### Domestic violence and the recession

#### **The Minster Centre - Families Without Fear Project**<sup>18</sup>

provides services in Brent, Harrow, Westminster and Ealing. The Project has seen a rise in serious family tensions and an increase in the amount of domestic violence (DV) and DV murder rates being reported in the community.

**In 2009 the service saw a 42% increase in referrals on the previous year, a 33% increase in perpetrators contacting them and a 61% increase in survivors.** Even though there is no conclusive evidence that this increase is attributable to the recession, Metropolitan Police Crime figures show substantial increases in domestic violence for a number of boroughs as shown below. As the Centre's referral rate has nearly doubled in the past 18 months the service is at capacity and has no resources to meet any more demand at all. **It believes that it is dangerous to create a waiting list for its services to help DV perpetrators change their behaviour and is very concerned about the safety of survivors and their families who are in this situation.**

**Stonewall Housing**<sup>19</sup> reports that the **number of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people approaching it with domestic violence issues has increased dramatically to one in three of all callers.** The number of people experiencing homophobic or trans-phobic harassment, currently also represents one in three of all callers.

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<sup>18</sup><http://www.minstercentre.org.uk/>

<sup>19</sup><http://www.stonewallhousing.org/home.html>



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## The wider picture

### Domestic violence (DV)

Even though crime figures from the Metropolitan Police record an overall reduction in DV in London in the last year, eight boroughs show a substantial increase in reported cases.<sup>20</sup> These include three outer London boroughs. Havering has seen a staggering increase of 28.3% in the last year, Bexley 19.5% and Harrow 16.7%.<sup>21</sup> The Audit Commission's research last year claimed a relationship between long-term dependency on welfare and domestic violence.<sup>22</sup> According to the Mayor of London's Office there were 53,069 domestic violence crimes reported in London during the twelve months from March 2008 to March 2009 – a 4.4% increase compared to the previous year.<sup>23</sup>

### Other health impacts

There are well-established links between low incomes and stressful “events” such as job loss, housing issues and drugs and alcohol abuse – especially among men.<sup>24</sup> NATCen's research for the Cabinet Office also shows clear links between job loss and greater risk of depression. This research also established a connection between being female and having bad, or very bad, general health and short and longer-term depression.<sup>25</sup>

A recent survey by the Prince's Trust shows that young people feel less loved and more likely to feel ashamed when unemployed.<sup>26</sup> This may lead to permanent psychological scars if current trends follow those of recessions in the past.<sup>27, 28</sup>

Lastly, Youth Access' research on youth advice and counselling services shows increasing demands for housing, debt and benefits advice from young people. The study also demonstrates that more young people are asking for counselling and other “health interventions”.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>According to the Metropolitan Police (MET) reported cases of domestic crime have fallen 2% in the last year. The MET defines domestic crimes as: “any classified notifiable offence of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or who have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender”. Available from: <http://www.met.police.uk/crimefigures/> (23rd April 2010)

<sup>21</sup>According to MET figures other London boroughs that have seen substantial increases in Domestic crime are Hillingdon: 8.4%, Enfield 6.1%, Brent: 10.1%, Westminster: 7.9% and Kingston upon Thames: 8.1%

<sup>22</sup>Audit Commission (August 2009), When it comes to the crunch: How Councils Are Responding To The Recession. Available from: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nationalstudies/localgov/Pages/whenitcomestothechunch12aug2009.aspx> (23rd April 2010)

<sup>23</sup>Mayor of London, Greater London Authority (April 2009) The Way Forward – A call for action to end violence against women. Available from: <http://www.london.gov.uk/archive/mayor/crime/vaw/docs/the-way-forward.pdf> (23rd April 2010)

### 4.3 Volunteering

#### Key findings

##### Opportunities

- There are increasing numbers of highly qualified volunteers, who are bringing benefits to the organisations they support.
- More unemployed people are looking into training opportunities.
- There is increasing awareness of the importance of enabling disabled people and people with mental health issues to be supported into volunteering.
- Increasing numbers of volunteers are being trained to support VCS service delivery.

##### Challenges

- There is a lack of resources to enable adequate support for increasing numbers of volunteers.
- It can often be difficult to match skills with volunteer placements.
- Organisations need support to think about volunteering in different ways, so that they can make effective use of the increasing numbers.
- Trustees are taking on more operational roles due to lack of funding and paid staff, which can undermine their roles in leading their organisations.
- Increasing numbers of “new” volunteers give up their time as a way to improve their employment and training opportunities only, rather than to improve their community as well.

<sup>24</sup>Audit Commission (August 2009). When it comes to the Crunch: How councils are responding to the recession. Available from: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nationalstudies/localgov/Pages/whenitcomestothecrunch12aug2009.aspx> (23rd April 2010)

<sup>25</sup>NATCen for the Cabinet Office (December 2009) Social Impacts of the Recession: The Impact of Job Loss and Job Insecurity on Social Disadvantage. Available from: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/319351/natcen-social-impacts.pdf> (23rd April 2010)

<sup>26</sup>The Prince's Trust (January 2010) YouGov Youth Index 2010. Based on interviews with 2,088 people aged between 16 and 25 years old. Available from: [http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/news/100104\\_youth\\_index\\_2010.aspx](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/news/100104_youth_index_2010.aspx) (25th April 2010)

<sup>27</sup>Cabinet Office (2009) Social Exclusion & the Economic Downturn: Learning Lessons from the Past: Tackling Worklessness & the Social Impacts of the Recession: Evidence Pack. Available from: [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social\\_exclusion\\_task\\_force/short\\_studies/downturn.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/short_studies/downturn.aspx) (25th April 2010)

<sup>28</sup>Mark Tausig and Rudy Fenwick (1999). Recession and Well being, Journal of Health and Social Behaviour, volume 40 March, pp 1-16. Available from: <http://www3.uakron.edu/sociology/tausig.pdf> (25th April 2010)

<sup>29</sup>Youth Access (April 2010) Under Strain. Available from: <http://www.youthaccess.org.uk/news/Grave-threat-to-vital-services-for-young-people.cfm> (26th April 2010)

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### Summary of volunteering in London

In 2007–8 72% of Londoners volunteered and 46% of these did so regularly.<sup>30</sup>

In London, there are more than 150 organisations providing some kind of volunteering infrastructure support role including brokerage, developing volunteering opportunities and volunteering policy and campaigning work. The biggest demands at local levels were reported to be around “brokerage, capacity building and providing supported volunteering programmes”.<sup>31</sup>

### Feedback from our respondents

Respondents say that volunteer enquiries have increased from between 10% – 100%. One organisation reported a massive 444% increase from 2008 to 2009. However, **African Refugee Community Health and Research Organisation** has seen a drop in the number of volunteers.

**Disability Action Waltham Forest** reports that they cannot take more volunteers as they only have a very small office space. **Islington Law Centre** is also hampered from using volunteers more creatively by a lack of space. **South Bank Group Ramblers** says that the flow of volunteers can never be guaranteed.

### What some of the other respondents said:

#### Opportunities

**One respondent** says that their new volunteers are often highly qualified with strong backgrounds in business and marketing. The **African Refugee Community Health and Research Organisation** says that it is trying to see whether it can develop work-based training for their volunteers while **Ealing CVS** is developing new opportunities for volunteers in its projects. **One respondent** has developed several supported volunteering roles for disabled people and people with mental health issues. **Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre** has increased the number of volunteers it recruits and they have been trained to provide support services for their community.

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<sup>30</sup>Institute for Volunteering Research and Greater London Volunteering for the London Development Agency (2008) London Volunteering Health Check: All fit for 2012? Available from: [http://www.ivr.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/EC3C6F0B-7AB6-4344-94B0-58606D192BC6/0/LDA\\_FINAL\\_Report\\_executive\\_summary.pdf](http://www.ivr.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/EC3C6F0B-7AB6-4344-94B0-58606D192BC6/0/LDA_FINAL_Report_executive_summary.pdf) (25th April 2010)

<sup>31</sup>As above.

### Challenges

**Ealing CVS** says that volunteer advisers need more time to support the massive increase in their volunteering enquiries. **Another respondent** reports on the difficulty in matching skills with placements and supporting organisations to think about their volunteering needs in a different way.

**Disability Action Waltham Forest** says a management committee member feels obliged to give more of his own free time to try and help his organisation manage the changes. The **Centre for Armenian Information & Advice** states that managing increasing numbers of volunteers is a problem, as it has no dedicated support. Neither is it able to provide professional services relying solely on volunteers. **Islington Law Centre** says if the centre loses staff, it would lose capacity to supervise its excellent volunteers, many of whom are law students.

**Volunteer Centre Greenwich** says that more local people have become unemployed and are looking for voluntary work. It does not have the staffing capacity to manage the demand on the centre. **Volunteer Centre Kensington & Chelsea** states that infrastructure organisations are no longer able to support and recruit volunteers because of the increased demand for their services.

### Change in type of volunteers/volunteer contributions

**Universal Beneficent Society** says that the “type” of volunteer offering their time to it has changed. It has had more highly educated volunteers joining it. It has also seen an increase in claims for expenses from volunteers, suggesting they are finding it financially difficult. Historically, most of its volunteers have not claimed reimbursement. **Wandsworth Voluntary Sector Development Agency** sees a continued high demand for volunteering with an emphasis on “volunteering for CV purposes” as opposed to “charity” or “civic engagement”. **One respondent** said that its volunteers would not be ready to work without investment in their support.

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### Increased use of volunteers to maintain services

**Enfield MENCAP** is looking for an increase in the numbers of volunteers to help maintain adequate service provision as levels of staff have been reduced. The **Centre for Armenian Information & Advice** is relying more on volunteers including work placements to deliver services and **London Community Resource Network** is using interns and volunteers for more mundane aspects of project delivery, leaving staff to concentrate on the strategic aspects of the work. **Disability Network Hounslow** engages more with volunteers to assist with the delivery of services.

### The wider picture

Volunteering England's research last year showed that volunteer centres reported an approximate 30% year on year increase in enquiries and placements (in 2008–09 compared to 2007–08).<sup>32</sup> However, there has only been a slight increase in income between March 2009 and August 2009. Volunteering England's research supports our findings as it claims that increased demand is putting a major strain on volunteering centres, compounded by no increases, or reductions, in funding. The concern that volunteer centres may not cope if the impact of the recession deepens was reiterated at NAVCA and the Guardian's roundtable event earlier this year.<sup>33</sup>

Capacitybuilders' research and NAVCA's summit findings confirm that frontline organisations need more support regarding volunteering.<sup>34, 35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Volunteering England and Institute of Volunteering Research (2009). The Benefits of Volunteering for Employment. Available from: <http://www.ivr.org.uk/researchbulletins/The+benefits+of+volunteering+for+employability+%E2%80%93+key+findings+from+recent+research+by+The+Institute> (25th April 2010)

<sup>33</sup>NAVCA (February 2010) Can the third sector do more with less? A summary of the Guardian Roundtable event report with NAVCA. Available from: <http://www.guardianpublic.co.uk/third-sector-roundtable> (25th April 2010)

<sup>34</sup>Capacitybuilders (November 2009). Second Survey of Local Third Sector Support Providers: The Impact of the Economic Downturn. Available from: [http://www.capacitybuilders.org.uk/files/capacitybuilders/Capacitybuilders%27\\_recession\\_survey\\_report\\_\\_November\\_2009.pdf](http://www.capacitybuilders.org.uk/files/capacitybuilders/Capacitybuilders%27_recession_survey_report__November_2009.pdf) (25th April 2010)

<sup>35</sup>NAVCA (January 2010) Recession Summit: NAVCA Members' Response to the Recession.

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# Chapter 5

## Londoners and VCS organisations who serve them

### 5.1 The Respondents' views and the wider picture

#### Is the recession affecting the communities you work with?

London Youth reports that youth clubs are feeling a downturn in donations. Disability Action Waltham Forest says that increased pressure on staff has led to them not being able to spend enough quality time with the clients who use their services. HAVCO has seen a 20% increase in demand for funding advice. Cranfield Trust sees many of their voluntary sector client groups asking for management support in areas related to the recession, including managing cash flow, reviewing human resources policies, preparing for redundancies and seeking advice on mergers and collaborations. Hillingdon Association for Voluntary Services says groups are accessing information and HR advice on redundancy more frequently.

#### The wider picture

A recent Guardian roundtable event found that more organisations are asking for practical support on fundraising, collaborations and partnerships.<sup>36</sup> NCVO's latest charity leaders' poll also supports these findings.<sup>37</sup>

#### Has your workload increased as a direct result of the recession?

70% percent of respondents reported that their workload (or the workload of their members) has increased as a direct result of the downturn. For example, the **Women's Resource Centre** reports that demand for its members' services has increased, particularly for those that are working on issues of poverty and violence against women. **Hillingdon Association of Voluntary Services** says that its HR service has seen a 50% increase in workload mainly from groups requesting advice on redundancy. **Spitalfields City Farm** has had to make some redundancies, which has led to a 25% increase in workload for remaining staff. **The Prince's Trust** has seen a huge increase in workload as enquiries about its programmes from disadvantaged young people have risen since the recession – in some cases by as much as 50%.

**Brent Mind Contact Service** reports that its service users are being pressed to look for jobs to qualify for Job Seekers Allowance, but there are no jobs. This is one possible contributing factor to a 50% increase in its workload.

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<sup>36</sup>NAVCA ( February 2010) Can the third sector do more with less? A Summary of the Guardian Roundtable Event Report with NAVCA. Available from: <http://www.guardianpublic.co.uk/third-sector-funding-cuts-roundtable-navca> (25th April 2010)

<sup>37</sup>NCVO (December 2009) Charity Forecast Survey. Available from: <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/documents/press-releases/charities-lag-recession-recovery-full-impact-cuts-yet-hit> (25th April 2009)

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### The wider picture

What our respondents are telling us is supported by other recent research and recession related events. For example, Capacitybuilders' survey on the impact of the economic downturn on infrastructure organisations showed an increased demand for services from frontline organisations (79% of 389 respondents).<sup>38</sup> The Guardian Roundtable event with NAVCA found that the VCS continues to experience an increased demand on services and less income.<sup>39</sup>

### Are you confident that you will be able to meet any increases in demand for your services now and in the future?

**Kingston CAB** has limited resources and is finding it hard to meet the demand for its services. **Partnership for Young London** states that although the need for its support provision remains, it is not regarded as an essential service. **London Play** says that member organisations need and expect more support but it does not have sufficient resources to meet increased demand. **Another respondent** said that it has to squeeze all its projects, just at a time when people it is working with are less well off. It cannot spend as much on refreshments for youth activities at a time when young people have often not eaten all day. **London Community Resource Network**, while confident it can meet the challenges it faces, states that it needs to ensure programme management is functioning at peak efficiency.

Other respondents report on the lack of adequate funding in the future to be able to meet increases in demand for services.

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<sup>38</sup>Capacitybuilders (November 2009) Second Survey of Local Third Sector Support providers: The Impact of the Economic Downturn. Available from: [http://www.improvingsupport.org.uk/resources\\_by\\_topic/building\\_resilience.aspx](http://www.improvingsupport.org.uk/resources_by_topic/building_resilience.aspx) (25th April 2010)

<sup>39</sup>As above.

<sup>40</sup>Volunteering England and Institute of Volunteering Research (2009). The Benefits of Volunteering for Employment. Available from: <http://www.ivr.org.uk/researchbulletins/The+benefits+of+volunteering+for+employability+%E2%80%93+key+findings+from+recent+research+by+The+Institute> (25th April 2010)

### The wider picture

Volunteer centres are finding it particularly hard to manage, as they also have to cope with new needs and changes in demands for their services.<sup>40</sup>

### Is your organisation already taking action to help you and your services survive a recession?

**Hillingdon Association of Voluntary Services** said that in order to guard against a reduction in funding it is looking at more social enterprise initiatives. The **Women's Resource Centre (WRC)** has developed a "recession" strategy to try and minimise harm from inevitable public sector cuts. On a positive note it has been forced to be more daring and to take (calculated) risks. **RedR** is reviewing all services and its organisational structure. It is looking at maximising demand for introductory courses and workshops. **Ealing CVS** has taken on interns through the Future Jobs Fund and is focusing its work on reviewing its business plan to meet local and national priorities. **Wandsworth Voluntary Sector Development Agency** is in the process of developing a trading arm to ensure future sustainability.

**Cranfield Trust** is providing more skilled volunteer consultants to act as mentors and trustees and offering more general support across a range of issues other than its typical consultancy projects.

**CommUNITY Barnet** made efficiency savings in terms of its premises and operational costs. It is working with the council to open up significant opportunities for local VCS organisations to share back office functions through opening up a community hub.

**Mind your Head** is exploring opportunities to offer services which facilitate a back-to-work opportunity on the one hand, but also prepare individuals for employment through offering social, educational and ancillary activities. **The Royal Association for Deaf People** is working harder to develop services that could be eligible for new funding streams, to do more partnership working and also networking, which is taking up the time of senior employees. **Enfield Mencap** is placing an emphasis on cost-cutting and increased efficiency by switching permanent staff to part-time or temporary staff, looking for increased volunteer contribution and attempting to diversify into services where funding is still available. **Spitalfields City Farm** has had to reduce hours and make some posts redundant. It also successfully applied to the Government's Hardship Fund, which has given it a lifeline. **Universal Beneficent Society (UBS)** is investigating loans for projects.



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### The wider picture

Other research shows that many organisations are considering collaboration or mergers in order to tackle the impact of the recession. For example recent research by Capacitybuilders found that 85% of its 389 respondents are exploring greater collaboration (73% in its last survey).<sup>41</sup> 54% are planning mergers, which is an 18% increase from the last survey. Baker Tilly's research confirms this trend but found that 15% of those responding to its survey (175 responses by charity leaders) are considering partnerships with commercial organisations.<sup>42</sup>

However Imkaan's research examining the eradication of specific specialist services for women expressed concern about the trend towards mergers. The report argues that mergers could "threaten and represent a challenge to identity, flexibility and autonomy" and that they are in fact "takeovers" as opposed to mergers.<sup>43</sup> The research claims that those larger "mainstream" organisations do not always have the expertise to run specialist services.

### Compared to 2009–10, what do you expect to happen to your funding from the public sector in 2010–11?

About 12% of respondents said that they have already cut back staff or fear that further reductions in income will lead to staff loss, reliance on part-time staff and volunteers or having to close down. **One respondent** told us that two of its projects funded from statutory sources would be shut in March 2010 despite meeting all their targets.

**Ealing CVS** is preparing for a decrease in income of at least 10%. It is negotiating with its local authority to press for an "across the board" cut, protecting small organisations. It believes the impact will be most greatly felt by smaller organisations that provide high quality services to unemployed people. It is also concerned that personalised budgets will be under-funded and vulnerable people will not receive the support that they need to manage them.

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<sup>41</sup>Capacitybuilders (November 2009) Second Survey of Local Third Sector Support providers: The Impact of the Economic Downturn. Available from: [http://www.improvingsupport.org.uk/resources\\_by\\_topic/building\\_resilience.aspx](http://www.improvingsupport.org.uk/resources_by_topic/building_resilience.aspx) (25th April 2010)

<sup>42</sup>Baker Tilly (December 2009) Managing Charity Finances through Uncertain Times. Available from: <http://www.bakertilly.co.uk/publications/Managing-charity-finances-through-uncertain-times.aspx> (25th April 2010)

**LASA** is affected by moves to commissioning and fears that there may be huge cuts in funding for second-tier organisations in particular those providing advice. Similarly, **SHARE Community** believes that, because of large-scale commissioning processes, Welfare to Work contracts are all going to large, mostly private sector multi-national, companies and where these do look to subcontract to organisations like **SHARE**, the terms are totally unsustainable. If it became a sub-contractor for the Flexible New Deal it would run the risk of losing money, if people did not then move into sustainable employment.<sup>44</sup> **Havering Citizens Advice Bureau** says the move towards commissioning will begin in 2011/12 and that its three-year Service Level Agreement (SLA) will not then be renewed. **Brent Mind Contact Service** feels it cannot take on public sector contracts, as to take on more commercial risk would be outside their corporate governance terms.

**London Play** says that the big fear is for 2011–12 and beyond as current funding is secured to mid 2012. It also fears that changing priorities could affect it, as more preventative services such as its own will lose out to the more ‘fire-fighting’ issues of the day. **Voluntary Action Lewisham** says that apart from small pots of funding, larger organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain funds to continue their projects. However, **Community Development Network London (CDNL)** is concerned that larger organisations are monopolising funding leading to a lack of money for community development and smaller groups.

**Camden Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations** still has local authority funding but expects it to be cut severely after the election. Its being held to a zero increase budget (a cut in real terms) which means it has no funds to cope with inflation and is being asked to do more for the same money. **Stonewall Housing** states that public sector funding at best will stay the same, which will mean a cut in real terms. Small advice organisations are unlikely to survive as salary costs are cut and inflation goes up. **The Minster Centre – Families without Fear** had a grant from the Department for Children Schools & Families (DCSF) at one point but this was not repeated and it now finds it almost impossible to access public sector funding.

<sup>43</sup>Anjum Mui, Imkaan (January 2008) A Right to Exist, a Paper Looking at the Eradication of Specialist Services to BAMER Women and Children Fleeing Violence. Website temporarily inaccessible (25th April 2010)

<sup>44</sup>MiNet (and other partners) event (February 2010) Influencing Change: Improving the Dialogue between BAME Communities and the Public Sector. Jenny Willott, Shadow MP for Liberal Democrats and Spokesperson for Charities spoke of welfare to work often being contracted out to larger organisations. She also said that it is very difficult for smaller organisations to compete and that as the cost is very high, numbers of people will fall through the gap.

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**The Royal Association for Deaf People** anticipates a change from grant funding to commissioning which will disadvantage it. Even those who commission services for disabled people, tend to treat deaf people, wheelchair users and people with mental health problems as a homogenous group. **Another respondent** refers to cuts in resources at day centres and residential homes impacting on adults with learning disabilities. **Enfield MENCAP** reports cuts in LA funding or more stringent application of eligibility criteria to limit funded access to care services.

**Clothes Aid Service** puts more time into working with local authorities. Its charities are likely to be affected by a drop in funding for recycling credits. This may result in less textiles being collected for recycling and reuse and lead to an increase in the amount of textile waste going into landfills.

#### The wider picture

Our survey has shown widespread concerns amongst VCS groups that public sector funding will be reduced in London over the next year. Although many London LAs are maintaining their budget for the VCS this year, Westminster council has cut over £500,000 from their budget for VCS groups in the borough reducing its overall spending on the sector from £5.3 million in 2009/10 to £4.7million in 2010/11.<sup>45</sup>

**Voluntary Action Westminster's** recent research argued that medium-sized organisations (income of £25,000 to £1million) are particularly vulnerable. They are more grant dependent than larger organisations or small volunteer-led community organisations, and therefore hardest hit by cuts.<sup>46</sup> Yet, research conducted by Third Sector and nfp Synergy finds that large organisations with a turnover of £6 million plus are experiencing a greater reduction in income, job losses and cuts to services compared to smaller organisations following this recession.<sup>47</sup>

Interestingly, the same research found that 29% of respondents said that they did not feel that the Government's recession action plan had provided sufficient support, whilst 65% reported that the plan had not helped them at all. Only 3% said it helped the sector as a whole very much or a lot, and only 2% stated it had benefited their organisation very much or a lot. Only two Big Squeeze respondents referred to Government support.<sup>48</sup> **SpitalFields City Farm** says that a successful application to the Hardship Fund has given them "a lifeline". **SHARE Community** has benefited from the Future Jobs Fund, and hopes to use it to fund a new reception post.

Compared to 2009–10, what do you expect to happen to your funding from trust funders in 2010–11?

**Stonewall Housing** predicts trust funding will continue as before but fears that as trust-funded projects are time-limited and project-driven, they will not increase the capacity of their organisation.

**Another respondent** says that it would expect a change in the criteria to access funding and that it would receive about 20% less per project than it applies for. **One-to-One (Enfield)** finds it hard to secure follow-on projects for when currently funded ones are completed. **Laburnum Boat Club** acknowledges that many trusts and charities are experiencing a downturn in their savings revenue. It expects to apply for more, smaller grants over the next eighteen months. The **Royal Association for Deaf People** also says that as many trusts have had their income knocked by falling share prices and returns on investments, most are giving smaller or fewer grants.

**Toynbee Hall** finds that more applications are being turned down than normal suggesting that funding is becoming more competitive and funders have less money to give out. **Voluntary Action Lewisham** says that the abolition of the Learning and Skills Council will affect frontline organisations, as the new Skills Funding Agency takes over. **Volunteer Centre Greenwich** reports that some previous supporters now do not fund volunteer centres.

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<sup>45</sup>Westminster Chronicle (January 2010). Voluntary Sector budget slashed in Westminster Available from: [http://westminster.londoninformer.co.uk/2010/01/voluntary-sector-budget-slashe.html?dm\\_t=0,0,0,0](http://westminster.londoninformer.co.uk/2010/01/voluntary-sector-budget-slashe.html?dm_t=0,0,0,0) (27 April 2010)

<sup>46</sup>Voluntary Action Westminster (2009) The Recession yet to Come. Planning for Resilience in the Voluntary & Community Sector in Westminster. Available from: google name of report or contact VAW on 020 7723 1216 (26 April 2010)

<sup>47</sup>Third Sector and nfp Synergy (January 2010) State of the Sector survey: how has the recession affected your charity? Seven hundred organisations responded to the survey. Available from: <http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/BigIssues/Details/78631/state-sector-survey-results/Article/976625/State-Sector-survey-recession-affected-charity/> (26th April 2010)

<sup>48</sup>A note of caution as our survey did not specifically request this information

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### The wider picture

Analysis by the Charity Market Monitor 2009 showed that 41% of the main trusts saw a drop in the value of their grant making in 2008. The research also confirmed a general reduction in donations but that corporate giving had increased in 2007–2008. However, “grant making trusts and foundations showed at most no increase in the aggregate investment income”.<sup>49</sup> The Directory of Social Change has also published research looking at how the recession is affecting the funding of trusts and foundations. They found that the top 400 grant-making trusts and foundations are continuing to increase their giving, despite a fall in the collective value of their assets of around £4 billion in 2007/8. In London, City Parochial Foundation increased its grant-making from £9.7 million to £11.5 million.<sup>50</sup> There is some early evidence from London Funders’ recent survey that suggests that independent foundations intend to maintain or increase their funding for the sector.<sup>51</sup>

### 5.2 The funding picture

It is likely that from March 2011, there will be a cut of at least 7% in real terms across all government departments, but with both Conservative and Labour parties intending to preserve the international aid and health budgets, cuts will be felt disproportionately in other departments. Local authority budgets are increasingly coming under threat with 78% stating that they have had to revise their budget position since the start of the 2009–10 financial year as a result of the economic downturn.<sup>52</sup> As mentioned previously in this report, LB Westminster has already reduced its budget to the VCS by over 10% from 2009–10.

The future of regional development agencies is also uncertain after the election. The London Development Agency’s indicative planning budgets show that investment in Sustained Employment is set to fall dramatically from £52m in 2010/11 to £27m in 2013/14.<sup>53</sup>

Despite the commitments to maintain health budgets, these are likely to see a decrease in real terms, as costs for services and the number of users are predicted to increase.<sup>54</sup> In addition, Primary Care Trusts have a history of reducing funding for preventative services, some provided by VCS organisations, which are seen as low priority when budgets are tight.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Pharoah C. (2009) Charity Market Monitor. Available from: <http://www.knowhownonprofit.org/news/value-of-charitable-trusts-falls-10-percent-due-to-recession> (26th April 2010)

<sup>50</sup>Directory of Social Change (2010) Trusts weathering the storm for now. Available from: [http://www.dsc.org.uk/NewsandInformation/News/Trustsweatheringthestormfornow?dm\\_i=618,48F4,08Y2C,D4YT,1](http://www.dsc.org.uk/NewsandInformation/News/Trustsweatheringthestormfornow?dm_i=618,48F4,08Y2C,D4YT,1) (26th April 2010)

<sup>51</sup>This research has not been published. Contact London Funders: <http://www.londonfunders.org.uk/>

### Infrastructure funding

Some major funding streams have ended or will end within the next financial year. For example, BASIS (Big Lottery) has provided huge resources to infrastructure organisations across the UK over the last four years.<sup>56</sup> BASIS aimed to ensure that voluntary and community organisations had access to high quality support to help them be more effective. In financial terms round one was worth £101 million across the UK (£10,516,717 in London) and round two £50 million (£9,869,219 in London). The ending of this and other funding will impact on the services provided by the sector and the people it serves even more during and after a major recession.

The Government also introduced an £80 million programme to support infrastructure, originally called Change Up, now Capacitybuilders.<sup>57</sup> The future of this is now uncertain.

The lack of infrastructure funding in the future can impede essential support provided to frontline organisations. For example, The **Women's Resource Centre** says that it may have to restrict the amount of support it can give to members as energy and resources will be focused on its fight for survival over the next twelve months.

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<sup>52</sup>Local Government Association (March 2009). Council Leader Survey on the Impact of the Economic Downturn on Local Authorities. Available from: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/1701316> (26th April 2010)

<sup>53</sup>London Development Agency (2010) Investment Strategy, Business Plan 2010/11 to 2013/14 (Public item 02.2, Appendix 9). Available from: [http://www.lda.gov.uk/upload/pdf/Public\\_Item\\_02\\_2\\_9\\_Appendix\\_9\\_-\\_Commitments\\_against\\_future\\_years\\_planning\\_totals.pdf](http://www.lda.gov.uk/upload/pdf/Public_Item_02_2_9_Appendix_9_-_Commitments_against_future_years_planning_totals.pdf) (26th April 2010)

<sup>54</sup>Appleby, J., Crawford, R. and Emmerson, C. The King's Fund and Institute for Fiscal Studies (2009) How cold will it be? Prospects for NHS funding 2011–2017. Available to order for £5 from: [http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/how\\_cold\\_will\\_it\\_be.html](http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/how_cold_will_it_be.html) (26th April 2010)

<sup>55</sup>Henry Featherstone & Natalie Evans, Public Exchange (January 2010). Controlling Public Spending: The NHS in a Period of Tight Funding. Available from: [http://www.policyexchange.org.uk/images/publications/pdfs/The\\_NHS\\_in...\\_Jan\\_\\_10.pdf](http://www.policyexchange.org.uk/images/publications/pdfs/The_NHS_in..._Jan__10.pdf) (26th April 2010)

<sup>56</sup>[http://www2.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog\\_basis](http://www2.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_basis)

<sup>57</sup>See Capacitybuilders and Changeup Framework for more information. Available from: [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third\\_sector/funding\\_finance\\_support/changeup\\_and\\_capacitybuilders/background.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/funding_finance_support/changeup_and_capacitybuilders/background.aspx) (26th April 2010)

### Councils for Voluntary Services (CVS) funding picture in London 2006-2009

LVSC's desk research into the CVS funding position from 2006–2009 has shown an overall decline in funding. We looked at national, regional and local statutory and non-statutory funding.

	06/07	07/08	08/09
Local Statutory	£7,099,414	£8,657,978	£9,165,510
Regional Statutory	£4,807,142	£3,122,770	£2,582,975
National Statutory	£1,267,078	£2,778,282	£2,314,417
Regional Non-Statutory	£1,111,169	£976,513	£874,709
National Non-Statutory	£2,136,995	£1,661,525	£1,312,288

Our figures show that statutory funding at local and national level has remained relatively stable in real terms over these three years. However, regional statutory sector funding has decreased dramatically, possibly as a result of reduced emphasis on regional structures. Trust funding shows a significant decrease over these three years. While this data is limited to funding for CVSs, it suggests that while fixed public sector funding through the Comprehensive Spending Review has been protected between 2008–11, there was an immediate effect on trust funding when the stock market crashed.

### 5.3 Impact of the recession on staff and trustees

Stonewall Housing says that some staff members have to deal with the stress of partners or family members who have lost their jobs during the recession. London Play refers to uncertainties affecting staff morale and more stress.

## Case study: PEACe

Certain requests for help that PEACe received over the past year came either from mental health charities or from organisations employing people with mental health impairments. Employers who contact PEACe, whether managers or trustees, frequently find dealing with some management issues stressful. **Many experience conflict or difficulty in managing a redundancy or instigating a change process to the extent that it may make them ill, most commonly with stress or anxiety or both.**

It has also been shown that someone who has suffered from mental distress in the past may have a recurrence triggered by this kind of situation. Aside from the levels of stress which are being experienced by staff in general arising from uncertainty, many employers are also experiencing stress in managing this process. **PEACe has many conversations with organisations who are struggling to cope as key personnel are on sick leave with stress and anxiety, triggered by having to deal with issues like cuts in funding and the need to restructure.**

PEACe has helped a number of organisations plan a redundancy timetable and a consultation process. This can be particularly difficult for small organisations when trustees need to carry out the entire process with no HR support. PEACe has been able to provide support in creating a fair process and enabling them to deal with the situation appropriately, fairly and sensitively. This has included the additional issues for consideration when an employee being considered for redundancy is disabled.

PEACe sometimes advises organisations who have postponed the redundancy consultation process or dealt with it badly. This can lead to, for example, employees then taking out a grievance against their employer and the situation becoming more stressful and complex to deal with. Increasingly, PEACe is receiving enquiries where support is needed around redundancy appeals or redundancy-related grievances. **PEACe recently advised an organisation with a reasonably sized management committee which was reduced to one member as the other trustees were suffering from stress or anxiety triggered by the redundancy situation they were dealing with.**



### The wider picture

Recent research by Third Sector and Birdsong Charity Consultancy confirms that more employees are concerned about job security than a year ago.<sup>58</sup> A report by Unison<sup>59</sup> also warns that the combination of public spending cuts and increased competition for larger public sector contracts is likely to see VCS organisations affected by:

- job losses, lower wages and reduced employer pension contributions;
- less staff training and the use of less qualified staff;
- increasing threats to specialist service provision;
- increasing job insecurity and stress; and
- more potential for conflict between staff and their employers.

### 5.4 Summary of the key findings

#### Impact of the recession on organisations, the communities they serve and increased workload

- Unemployment is particularly affecting young people and organisations are concerned their health and well-being is suffering.
- Low-income families are becoming even poorer.
- Organisations are experiencing increased workloads, often exacerbated by reduced staff levels and reliance on volunteers and trustees.
- There are increased pressures on staff, endangering the quality of support to the communities they serve.
- There are changes in demands to services: staff and volunteers have to deal with new and emerging issues with limited time and resources.
- Funders are putting more emphasis on outcomes and some are putting greater demands on those they fund. This can produce great challenges for smaller organisations that have limited capacity and resources.

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<sup>58</sup>Hurst F and Attenborough S, Birdsong Charity Consultancy, Third Sector (2009) Impact of the Recession on Voluntary Sector Staff Satisfaction. Charity Pulse, sector wide report. Available from: <http://www.bird-song.co.uk/reportsandguides.html> (26th April 2010)

<sup>59</sup>Davies, S. (2009) Government policy, recession and the voluntary sector Unison: London. Available from: [http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/18938.pdf?dm\\_i=618,48F4,08Y2C,DANS,1](http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/18938.pdf?dm_i=618,48F4,08Y2C,DANS,1) (27th April 2010)

### Organisations taking action to survive the recession

Even more respondents than last year are taking action to continue to meet the needs of Londoners. However, even when positive action has been taken, the majority still struggle to maintain or increase their levels of service provision and maintain adequate staff levels.

- Organisations are developing innovative approaches to combat the recession from which many lessons can be learnt. These include: looking at social enterprise initiatives, loans for projects, using volunteer consultants to act as mentors and trustees and setting up trading arms.
- Some organisations are exploring mergers and collaborations to better meet the needs of Londoners. Respondents generally see this as a positive action, but other research warns that mergers could lead to loss of independence, specialist services and potential takeovers.
- There is concern that even though positive and innovative approaches are taken to survive the recession, these actions are often not sustainable. Adequate levels of resources need to be maintained in order to meet the needs of Londoners.
- Many organisations are unable to take effective action to serve their users due to lack of resources and capacity. They currently depend on fewer full-time staff, more volunteers and experience low staff morale. They also have to deal with the impact of redundancies.

### Public sector and trust funding expectations

- Respondents report concerns that public sector funding will be cut drastically or will only be maintained at current levels resulting in a cut in real terms.
- Even before the recession began there was a growing trend for grant funding to be replaced by the commissioning of services, which appears to have the worst effect on smaller and specialist organisations. There is a limited capacity for these organisations to tender for the increasingly larger contracts that are being offered. Commissioning processes are often deemed inaccessible with a growing use of “free market approaches”.<sup>60</sup> The shift to fewer and larger contracts is likely to increase as part of government efficiency savings.

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<sup>60</sup>Voluntary Action Westminster (2009) The Recession yet to Come. Planning for Resilience in the Voluntary and Community Sector in Westminster. Available from: [google name of report or contact VAW on 020 7723 1216](#) (26th April 2010)

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- There is concern that commissioners treat specific communities as homogenous, e.g. deaf and disabled people, BAME and LGBT communities.
  - In terms of funding, preventative services may be disproportionately affected in favour of those dealing with “fire fighting” issues.
  - The ending of some of major funding programmes is likely to have a negative impact on the sector during the recession.
  - According to some of our respondents, there appears to be less trust funding around as a result of the recession. However other research shows that the top trusts and foundations continue to increase their giving.

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# Appendix 1

## Our respondents

Here is a full list of our respondents. A document containing their feedback, excepting those organisations that wished to remain anonymous, will become available soon.

For more information contact:  
**research@lvsc.org.uk**

African Refugee Community Health and Research Organisation  
Barnardo's LeaSE  
Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre  
Brent Mind Contact Service  
Camden Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations  
Centre for Armenian Information & Advice  
Clothes Aid Service  
CommUNITY Barnet  
Community Development Network London (CDNL)  
Community Links  
Contact a Family  
The Cranfield Trust  
Disability Network Hounslow  
Disability Action Waltham Forest  
Ealing CVS  
Educating for Equality  
Enfield MENCAP  
Greenwich Action for Voluntary Service (GAVS)  
HAVCO (Havering)  
Havering Citizens Advice Bureau  
Hillingdon Association of Voluntary Services  
Inclusion London  
Islington Law Centre  
Kingston CAB  
Laburnum Boat Club  
LASA  
London Community Resource Network  
London Play  
London Youth  
Mind Your Head  
The Minster Centre, Families Without Fear Project  
One-to-One (Enfield)  
The Prince's Trust  
Rambler's Greater London  
RedR  
Royal Association for Deaf People  
SHARE Community  
South Bank Group Ramblers

Spitalfields City Farm  
St Mary Magdalene Centre for Refugees and Asylum Seekers  
Stonewall Housing  
Teviot Action Group  
Toynbee Hall  
Universal Beneficent Society (UBS)  
Voluntary Action Islington  
Voluntary Action Lewisham  
Volunteer Centre Greenwich  
Volunteer Centre Kensington & Chelsea  
Wandsworth Voluntary Sector Development Agency  
West London Network  
Women's Resource Centre

There were an additional six organisations that wished to remain anonymous.

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# Appendix 2

## Signposting to other research and resources

Organisation/Source	Description/links
LVSC	<p>Economic downturn research summaries and links: <a href="http://www.lvsc.org.uk/Templates/information.asp?NodeId=90619">http://www.lvsc.org.uk/Templates/information.asp?NodeId=90619</a> (follow links to: Research &amp; Resources/external links relating to LVCS priority areas/economic downturn)</p> <p>A brief report summarising recent and current research relating to the recession will become available on LVSC's website shortly</p> <p>For more information: <a href="mailto:research@lvsc.org.uk">research@lvsc.org.uk</a></p>
ACEVO	<p>Recession support: <a href="http://www.recessionsupport.org.uk/main/">http://www.recessionsupport.org.uk/main/</a></p>
Wandsworth Voluntary Sector Development Agency	<p>Recession tools: <a href="http://recessiontools.wordpress.com/">http://recessiontools.wordpress.com/</a></p>
Consumer Direct London, London Councils	<p>Recession support from Consumer Direct London for London's voluntary and community sector: <a href="http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/media/current/pressdetail.htm?pk=824">http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/media/current/pressdetail.htm?pk=824</a></p>
NAVCA	<p>Recession resources and support: <a href="http://www.navca.org.uk/localvs/recession/impact/">http://www.navca.org.uk/localvs/recession/impact/</a></p>
NCVO	<p>Recession resources: <a href="http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/advice-support/recession-resources">http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/advice-support/recession-resources</a></p>

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# Appendix 3

## Acknowledgements

### Contributors

Our sincerest thanks to all the London VCS groups who responded to the Big Squeeze survey. Without their invaluable contribution, this report would not have been possible. We would also like to thank Jan Irwin, Families without Fear Project, Minster Centre and Sumantha Roy, Imkaan for providing additional advice. We would also like to thank Graham Fisher, Toynbee Hall for his recommendations regarding debt and advice.

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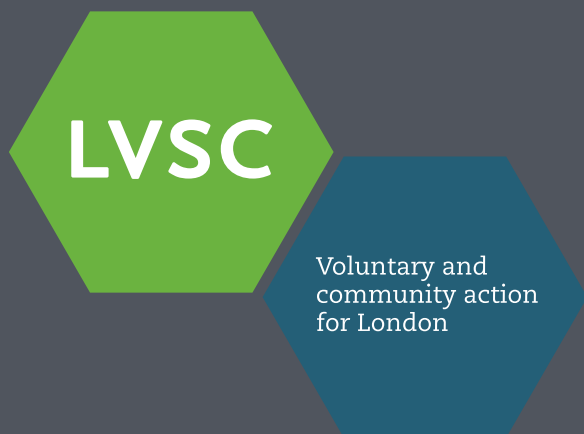
### LVSC

This report was produced by Sandra van der Feen, Research and Capacity Building Development Officer.

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- Tim Brogden and Marie-Anne Diedhiou-Roy for proofreading the final report.

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