

“ *It's great to have your support through all of these stormy times. You are a reassuring constant!* ”
River Thames Boat Project

RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS IN 2020

This is a brief snapshot of some of our activity and responses to support our amazing local voluntary and community sector.

March

From February onwards we were highly alert to the escalating situation and began thinking ahead to the implications of the crisis and how we could continue to best operate and support the local community and sector. We joined the **LBRuT Covid Community Response** which the Council led to bring together key local VCS and statutory groups to plan, coordinate and communicate the local support effort. We collectively shared information at regular briefings and ensured strong **representation of local groups**.

We fast tracked our digital learning and created new **online information and signposting**. We helped to embed robust **co-ordinated links between our network and the LBRUT Community Hub for residents**.

We raised the voice of patients and carers in the development of local health plans and **worked with Healthwatch** and the **CCG**. We met with and **kept local funders informed** of challenges and concerns.

People rushed to help, **new volunteer registrations surged – 1,607 in the first two weeks of lockdown**.

April

We **proactively researched and contacted eligible organisations** to ensure they were informed and benefited from **Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant funding**, helping them to gain **£410,000+**



Charity Tax Group @CharityTaxGroup · May 5

Special mention to @RCVS_Richmond which has been very proactive in ensuring as many local charity properties as possible (including scout huts/leisure facilities etc) have claimed the #RetailHospitalityLeisureGrantFund. If your charity is eligible apply ASAP!

The **Volunteer Service** responded to **unprecedented demand**, supporting organisations to **develop emerging new roles and recruit new volunteers for crisis-related opportunities**, as well as **assisting informal grassroots groups**. Resources were created and shared to **encourage safe community engagement**. **Effective communication with 3,000+ potential new volunteers** was established.

Our **advice and training support** service responded with many new initiatives and events including:

- virtual **1-2-1 funding advice** sessions
- **specialist HR webinar** with Duty of Care International (Job Retention Scheme) with follow-on support
- launch of a **telephone helpline** for local organisations with dedicated operating hours
- **new fundraising training** – How to Fundraise in Lockdown and Beyond (100+ views of pre-recorded video / 38 participants in 'live' follow-up sessions)
- **a range of free new resources** for both organisations, trustees and individuals, including funding, HR, Wellbeing and Data Protection plus work with Achieving for Children on new safeguarding resources.

“ *Thanks very much for encouraging us - we now have £25,000 in our bank account!* ”
Castelnau Centre (advice support)

May onwards

We have connected with more groups and individuals – since lockdown:

- 27,500 website pageviews – 813 views of volunteering pages and 2,171 of Covid pages
- 188 new Twitter followers
- 90 new Facebook followers

“ *Thank you for organising the session and for being such a valuable source of help and advice* ”
Richmond Back Pain Group (Trustee Network)



All our peer network events were moved online – CEO, Health and Wellbeing, Trustee and Volunteer Co-ordinators. We supported the Community Centres network by hosting and facilitating meetings.

Richmond CVS helped...



- local organisations raise over £465,000 in funding
- 43 organisations with 1-2-1 advice across 69 advice sessions (Mar-May)
- 2,500 registered volunteers find ways to help in their community
- 1,000 new volunteers found a role
- 30+ focused information updates (organisations & new volunteer support)
- 14 training and event sessions with 277 individual registered attendees
- safely mobilise community initiatives, eg. OSO Arts foodbank /crisis kitchen



“ *The Richmond CVS emails have been brilliant, a great way to hear about local charities & ways to get involved* ” (Covid response volunteer)

Moving forwards...



“ *We are in a good place with a clear agenda of what we need to do* ”
ETNA Centre (specialist HR support)

We are continuing to respond, plan and adapt our services. Volunteers remain in high demand and many organisations are seeing changes on their Boards. Our annual **Trustee Recruitment event** was brought forward to October to support demand from organisations and new interest from potential volunteers. The event and our **introductory trusteeship training** sessions were made available online.

In response to new levels of enquiries, we have developed a **Starting Up workshop** to specifically help local people who are interested in setting up a new charity or social enterprise.

Importantly for the future, we are developing evidence of the impacts of Covid responses on the relationships between organisations and their clients/members, including work with Richmond Council on the **Social Service's Front Door pilot**.

Thank you to the voluntary sector for your tireless work to support the community. The crisis has highlighted our collective immeasurable value – #NeverMoreNeeded.

If your organisation would like help or has an enquiry, email action@richmondcvcs.org.uk



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