



VCS Grants Programme 2024-2031

Camden Council

Aims of the Paper



This paper

- Provides an overview of Camden's VCS grant programme 2024-2031
- Summarises the insights from partner engagement in shaping the proposals

VCS Investment Overview 2024-2031



In February 2023 Full Council agreed a new 7 year, annual £4m grants programme to Camden's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). This provides scope to develop a range of grant programmes to respond to the needs of the sector and Camden Communities.

The council continues to remain committed to our investment in the VCS in Camden, not least because of the role the sector plays in delivering the ambitions set out in [We Make Camden](#) and their role in leading the community responses to the pandemic, refugee and cost of living crises.

We Make Camden Vision 2030

[We Make Camden](#) is the vision for the borough until 2030. The VCS funding programme helps to achieve **We Make Camden**. Especially to:

- **Tackle injustice and inequality, creating safe, strong, and open communities where everyone can contribute**
- **Support good health, wellbeing, and connection for everyone so that they can start well, live well, and age well**



We're developing the grants programme, to align with the missions and challenges in We Make Camden

Engagement on future plans



Engagement Events	Responses
Research and insights on good practice funding February-April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A range of good practice examples and research reviewed• Insights from funded organisations annual reviews• Insights from SPF and Resilience Funds grantees• Internal Community Partnership Team views
VCS Survey on top line proposals March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 47 responses from organisations
Workshop with council services April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30 people attended from across the council
VCS workshops May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 32 people attended in total across 3 online and in person workshops
Camden Funder workshop April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 funders from Camden and beyond

Insights from Engagement

1. A funding 'eco system'

- From small micro-grants through to larger multi year funding
- Recognising the diversity of the sector and changing context

2. Aligning priorities

- Strong link to We Make Camden – corporate ownership of the programme
- Reflects the language and priorities of different parts of the council

3. Pooling Resources

- Opportunity to pool project funding resources to tackle the key social challenges

4. Support for smaller and emerging organisations

- Gaps in funding for smaller organisations who are looking for project delivery or to scale up their ideas
- Organisations- large and small- flagged the need for funding for their work

5. Organisational Development

- Extremely challenging financial context requires a continued focus on organisational sustainability.

6. From Strategic Partner to Community Partner

- Avoid the term 'strategic partner' as this sounds too exclusive
- Avoid the term 'community leadership' this doesn't reflect working together with the community

7. Grant processes

- Simplifying applications and align approaches across funders
- Greater clarity on rationale for funding levels and criteria for decisions

8. Measuring Impact

- Support organisations to tell their impact stories.
- Streamline reporting to support VCS with comms, branding, learning and accountability

Proposed We Make Camden VCS Investment Programme 2024-2031



There was strong endorsement of the three funding streams and proposed funds at the workshops and in the survey

Organisational Foundations Funds- Circa £550K

Infrastructure

Organisational
Sustainability and
Development

Partnerships and
Networks

Community Partner Fund- Circa £2.9 Million

Multi-year,
unrestricted funding
for VCS partners who
play a key role in their
community

Camden Advice
Network

Community Project Funds- Circa £550K

Community Impact
Project Fund

Micro grants: We
Make Camden Kit

London Councils
Grants Programme

Core Principles



At the workshops we shared a proposal to use core principles 1-4 to:

- Develop clear **outcomes** for grants;
- Guide our assessment processes
- **Provide a structure for measuring impact**

There was widespread support for these principles, but a request for more detail, especially around prioritising prevention.

As a result of feedback we also added a core principle around Sustainable organisations

1. Prioritising Prevention

2. Empowering Communities and supporting social action

3. Tackling Inequalities and Disproportionality

4. Collaboration

5. Sustainable organisations



Next Steps



A range of grants will be launched in 2023 and 2024.

Please do continue to check on [our website](#) and sign up for our newsletter [here](#) for the latest announcements. We will also promote our funding in the VAC and YCF newsletters.

If you have any upcoming network meetings we would be happy to attend and speak about future grants. Please email vcs@camden.gov.uk

