

**Health Scrutiny
Committee:**
Scrutiny Review on the
potential of the
Voluntary and
Community Sector
2022/23

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Introduction

Barking and Dagenham remains one of the most economically-deprived boroughs in London, and subsequently has some of the greatest health inequalities in London and England.

The need to ensure sufficient healthcare provision that works best for residents only grows more imperative, especially in light of the challenges faced by residents due to the cost-of-living crisis.

Community partners play a critical role in supporting our residents with their health and wellbeing. These organisations maintain strong connections with those that they help and uphold knowledge of the needs and demands of their specific communities. These groups are particularly helpful for residents who are harder to contact or those who have little trust in the Council or statutory partners.

In the 2022 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), a gap of meeting the demands of those with greatest need was identified – health and wellbeing remains a key priority for the Council and Borough. A transformation of existing services will be needed to bridge this gap, whilst also highlighting the work already provided by the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector and establishing better relationships between statutory partners and community groups.

The VCSE can play a role in providing what statutory partners cannot.

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Key Lines of Enquiry

The Terms of Reference agreed by the Committee that the scrutiny review will seek to evaluate are as follows:

- i. How is the VCSE helping to reduce health inequalities within communities, both separately and in partnership with the statutory sector; and
- ii. How can we work better at 'place' (Barking and Dagenham) and sub-borough levels to ensure that the VCSE and residents have an active and meaningful role in informing and shaping future strategy / service delivery?

The scrutiny review will be concluded by the end of this municipal year.

National and Local Health Context

- Health inequalities have widened in England. Addressing health inequalities at scale requires a place-based approach of interventions across systems.
- There is now a greater focus on placing people and communities at the heart of decision-making regarding services and community-centred approaches to health and wellbeing.
- Local government is the primary funder of VCSE organisations (68% of contracts). LBBB has an existing strong relationship with this sector, but more can be done to explore how best to support health and wellbeing in the community alongside the social care commissioning contracts that are already in place.
- VCSE organisations face several challenges regarding public sector procurement. Local engagement and co-production are recommended by the report to explore how to support the VCSE in public sector procurement, to address capacity concerns, and with contract readiness.
- Since Integrated Care Systems (ICS) became statutory in England in July 2022, there is greater opportunity for the VCSE sector to become more embedded in service design and decision-making for health and wellbeing.

The existing VCSE landscape in Barking and Dagenham

- The capacity of the VCSE in LBBD has grown massively over the past few years.
- Some of the projects we have been working on include:
 - **BD Collective** – commissioning of a new social infrastructure contract and the development of a collaborative model of support for each other and residents.
 - **BD Giving** – the setting up of a participatory grant funding organisation, allowing residents to get involved with funding what matters to them.
 - **Every One Every Day** - a partnership with Participatory City Foundation to grow the biggest peer-to-peer participation programme in the country, with a network of activity project shops across the Borough.
 - **Community Resources** – the development of a locality leads model which has helped to address health inequalities and provide support in regards to the cost-of-living crisis.

Strategic context and outcomes for action

- Borough manifesto goals regarding health and wellbeing to be achieved by 2037:
 - Healthy weight will be better than the East London average
 - Personal wellbeing and happiness will be above the London average
 - Healthy Life Expectancy will be better than the London average
 - The rate of regular physical exercise will be higher than the East London average
- There are 5 priorities or 'giants' for social progress in LBBD – these drive health inequalities and so we aim to challenge these:
 - Domestic abuse
 - Social isolation
 - Unemployment
 - Debt
 - Neighbourhood crime
- The focus of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2023 is the prevention of ill-health. Priority themes mentioned in this Strategy are:
 - Best Start in Life
 - Early Diagnosis and Intervention
 - Building Resilience

Methodology and timeline

- The evidence sessions will include presentation-style scoping and discussion as well as Q&A opportunities and action planning.
- A final report will be produced, detailing the findings from the evidence gathering period and recommendations for future health strategy and collaboration work with the VCSE.
- The key lines of enquiry mentioned previously will be explored at these sessions.

Month	Title	Details
February	Evidence Session 1	Introductory session with key VCSE organisations and leads, exploring the current health infrastructure, remit, and context to inform and shape the review
February	Evidence Session 2	Session with key health and system partners to understand how the statutory health system works and its role in strategy, commissioning, and funding
March	Evidence Session 3	Delivery showcase and Q&A to reveal best practice, case studies, how to build on current context, and scale and embed good ethos
March	Evidence Session 4	Action planning with statutory partners with a focus on how we can work better at ensuring that the VCS and residents have an active and meaningful role in informing and shaping future strategy and service delivery
April	Evidence Session 5	Action planning with the VCS on the above
TBC	Final report and presentation	A report drafted including the findings from the consultation sessions and recommendations for the future

Questions

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