



croydon**voluntary**action
since 1907

***Building
Stronger Communities
for Social Change***

The 2020-2023 Strategic Plan



Introduction

CVA has been supporting people in Croydon to take on leadership roles in their communities for over 100 years. We give our backing to people who see in their communities a wealth of talent and resources that when connected up can bring a place to life and transform the experiences of people living there. CVA's work comes into play when people join together to find a common purpose and to celebrate their community in all its diversity. Our mission is to support those communities from the inside out to take on lead responsibilities when it comes to meeting the social, economic, environmental, health, safety and leisure interests of local people.

Our new Strategic Plan concentrates CVA's resources on that mission – to build stronger communities for social change. Our values – as a team of trustees, staff and volunteers – reflects this mission and our strategic aims go into the detail of how we intend to put principles like prevention, co-production and partnership-working into practice. We also include the theory of social change that underpins our community development approach.

This approach takes different forms – from working directly alongside local people in their communities, to supporting partner organisations that also take an asset-based approach and from creating volunteering opportunities for people wanting to get more involved, to negotiating with funders that are keen to invest in community leadership.

The best way of capturing the value of what we do is to show our team and the communities we work alongside in action – and we invite you at intervals to follow links to CVA's social media platforms showcasing videos that profile some of CVA's current projects.

CVA's role is to represent and champion the whole of Croydon's voluntary and community sector (VCS). We hold strong views on the challenges facing our sector and in closing we share our thoughts on how the VCS can build on its foundations in citizen and community-led action to achieve genuinely transformative change. In doing so we invite you to share your thoughts – on our plans, our role and on how together we can build stronger communities in Croydon for social change.

Our Mission Statement

CVA builds stronger communities for social change by supporting citizens to take active roles in their neighbourhoods and by championing community organisations that nurture and celebrate local strengths

Our Values

We are citizen-led - putting local people at the heart of what we do

We are inclusive - building honest, open and trusting relationships across communities

We are transformational - enabling local communities to deliver sustainable social change

We are leaders – who also lead by stepping back and putting our partners centre-stage

We are one team – of trustees, staff and volunteers with a common purpose

Our Strategic Aims

To empower Croydon's communities

To strengthen volunteering in the community

To support the growth and development of community organisations in Croydon

To advocate on behalf of Croydon's community organisations

To work in partnership across the VCS and all sectors

Our Strategic Aims

To empower Croydon's communities

Find out How [HERE](#)

- We will promote community leadership in Croydon, making communities the primary units of change by building up their strengths and assets and launching community led projects across every locality
- We will strengthen CVA's capacity to work alongside communities in driving social change. We will deliver asset based community development (ABCD) projects in Croydon with Community Builders appointed by CVA to support leadership in the community – and we will support our community sector partners to work effectively alongside communities by appointing their own staff mentored and supported by CVA
- We will support our Primary Care Network (PCN) partners to use Social Prescribing to work effectively alongside communities in building relationships beyond referrals, providing training and mentoring for link workers and practice staff including Health Beyond Healthcare days and walkabouts to give frontline staff an overview of Croydon's local community offer – from informal connections to specialist services as profiled on our Connect Well database
- We will support the Faiths Together in Croydon (FTiC) network to work effectively along-side communities in promoting community cohesion and resilience, delivering inter-faith events and FTiC newsletters
- We will support Croydon's Refugees and asylum seekers to integrate effectively into the wider community by holding Refugee Forum meetings to strengthen the collective voice and individual effectiveness of refugee-led and refugee-support organisations in Croydon; applying for Borough of Sanctuary status in partnership with the City of Sanctuary movement; and delivering the We Stand Together project using sport as a tool to improve social integration between refugees and mainstream sports clubs
- We will support communities to Think Globally, Act Locally to make a greater impact in protecting the environment by reducing resource use, energy consumption and waste levels - and increasing ethical purchasing, recycling and sustainable travel



Our Strategic Aims

To strengthen volunteering in the community

Find out how [HERE](#)

- We will support more people to volunteer in their communities by maximising the number of people accessing quality volunteer opportunities in Croydon using face-to-face advice interviews with a wide variety of live volunteer opportunities maintained on our website
- We will maximise the number of community organisations offering quality volunteer opportunities – supporting them with regular training sessions, information bulletins, Volunteer Organisers Forum meetings and an annual conference on volunteer management
- We will deliver volunteer-led projects that support under-represented groups, expanding on our current portfolio which includes the Appropriate Adults Scheme and the We Stand Together project
- We will provide Croydon’s nationally accredited Volunteer Centre brokerage service, meeting national standards in brokerage, campaigning, good practice and volunteer management through NCVO’s quality assurance process
- We will lead by example in supporting and managing our volunteers effectively – both to ensure that they have a positive experience with us and that CVA benefits fully from the experience and expertise volunteers bring to the organisation



Our Strategic Aims

To support the growth and development of community organisations in Croydon

Find out how [HERE](#)

- We will support Croydon's VCS to bring local people from under-represented groups into the life of the borough as active communities driving social change
- We will lever external funding into Croydon's VCS by coordinating partnership bids and developing strong relationships with key funders to exceed the £1,784,000 brought into Croydon in 2018
- We will support local commissioning, with workshop/information sessions on LBC's Community Fund, the One Croydon Alliance and the Grassroots Grants small-grants programme
- We will deliver training to meet the priority needs of community organisations in Croydon including our Safeguarding Children, Basic Fundraising, Setting-up Charities and Social Enterprises, and Monitoring and Evaluating courses – with ABCD methodology shared through our UK Learning Centre collaboration with Nurture Development
- We will build the capacity of community organisations by providing customized support to promote best practice in governance, business planning, project and staff management
- We will run Community Centres in Croydon providing hubs of activity run by local people
- We will keep community organisations well-informed and aware of local events and opportunities through our e-bulletins and newsletters on funding opportunities; children, young people and families; and faith communities
- We will maintain and update CVA's own models of good practice on governance, financial and information management systems, policies and procedures - for sharing with community partners
- We will support Croydon's community organisations who are using sport to achieve social change, with the Sports Forum strengthening the collective voice and effectiveness of VCS sports clubs and a campaign to encourage sports clubs to become welcoming of all people in Croydon offering a place of safety, support and development



Our Strategic Aims

To advocate on behalf of Croydon's community organisations

[Find out how HERE](#)

- We will champion Croydon's VCS as the best-positioned enablers of community leadership in the borough
- We will provide leadership on behalf of Croydon's VCS at meetings of the Croydon Strategic Partnership (CSP) and its thematic partnerships
- We will enable the VCS to influence policy-makers with wider community sector representation on all CSP thematic partnerships
- We will facilitate a strong, independent community voice through network and forum meetings, including the Croydon Voluntary Sector Alliance; the Refugee Forum; Faiths Together in Croydon; the Children, Young People & Family Network (incorporating the Young Londoners Fund Local Network) and the Community Sports Forum
- We will promote what's going on in Croydon's VCS, profiling live activities on the Connect Well database



Our Strategic Aims

To work in partnership across the VCS and all sectors

[Find out how HERE](#)

- We will work in partnership with specialist infrastructure groups – the BME Forum, the Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association and the Asian Resource Centre - to provide coordinated support services for Croydon's VCS
- We will assemble VCS delivery-partnerships uniting grassroots groups with national charities to tackle the root causes of inequality in Croydon
- We will lead VCS partnership bids to leverage external funding into Croydon's local communities
- We will partner Age UK Croydon in enabling the VCS to play its full part via the One Croydon Alliance in delivering person-centred and preventative models of health and social care
- We will support the Croydon Partnership to ensure that local communities from across the whole borough have a real stake in the redevelopment of Croydon's town centre



Community Leadership

Theory of Change

CVA has been supporting citizen and community-led action in Croydon for well over a hundred years. We've set up and supported many of the best-known charities in Croydon, working with local people from across the borough to build up and strengthen their communities. As we move towards a new decade the voluntary and community sector (VCS) faces another of the challenges that have defined its modern role. Previous challenges have been set by central government or funders - from the contract culture and the big society to the current post-austerity focus on transforming local services. This time the challenge is community-led. Social movements around the world are transforming how democracy works and local communities are testing out social, environmental, economic and health solutions of their own. The VCS, when it accepts the challenge, will provide a natural home for these bottom-up, citizen-led initiatives backing social change.

The challenge is clear – subscribing to principles like innovation, prevention and early intervention is one thing, but putting them into practice is quite another. Right at the heart of this practice is relationship-building - bringing like-minded people together, linking them up across communities and creating spaces in which they can find common cause. In stepping up alongside people who are doing it for themselves the VCS will make connections go further,

join up conversations, persuade more people to listen, put wheels in motion and remove roadblocks. Most importantly, when it comes to tackling the root causes of social problems, the VCS can ensure that local people remain in the driving seat and are given right of way. This is a challenge that renews the VCS focus on building strong relationships in the community and on acting as navigators to support both personal development and the collective actions that spring from peer-support groups.

When the VCS invests in nurturing the trust and self-confidence that makes people more active and better-networked it gives rise to greater independence, wider connections, less isolation, proactive care, health and wellbeing, more active communities, community resilience and community safety. In short, all the outcomes that government attaches to prevention and early-intervention programmes.

Taking up its latest challenge will require from the VCS a steadfast faith in communities, a healthy scepticism about interventions and programmes and a conditional sign-up only to principles like co-production, partnership-working, integrated localities and community hubs. The condition is this - that communities must provide the lead in both designing and delivering local activities. These are the terms of engagement for the VCS, as it takes on the key challenge of committing its expertise in relationship-building and community connections to the cause of local people providing leadership from within.





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Please email your comments on CVA's Draft Strategic Plan to
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For more information on CVA and a summary of our 2018/19 activities
please see this year's Annual Report and visit us at
www.cvalive.org.uk



WE **STAND**
TOGETHER



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