**Contract for Independent Focus Group Facilitation with Lambeth’s Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) re New Infrastructure Support Service**

**The brief**

**1.Context**

As the Voluntary & Community Sector emerges from the pandemic, it is increasingly called upon to provide support for residents and communities most affected by the ongoing cost of living crisis.  To continue delivery of quality services and to address newer challenges, the Council recognises the VCS itself needs essential infrastructure support. These services are geared to support and sustain VCS groups that delivery services to Lambeth residents.

The current VCS support contract with Integrate Agency CIC comes to an end in April 2024 and the Council will be retendering for new service provision. We want to understand from Lambeth’s VCS what support needs should look like to meet future challenges. With the VCS, the Council wants to identify what and how we provide support and resources that will add value to the work of the VCS, and importantly strengthen delivery of shared partnership goals i.e. Lambeth 2030 Borough Plan and VCS Strategy. To this end, it is important to capture insights from those in the VCS that will serve to inform the wider consultation and engagement with other non-VCS stakeholders including the NHS and the funding community.

**2.0 Requirements**

**Focus Group Facilitation**

Lambeth Councils aims to commission a series of independently facilitated focus groups with the VCS that will provide information, data and insights into the needs of the voluntary and community sector. The purpose of these focus groups is to identify potential strategies to support quality service delivery, growth, innovation and sustainability of the VCS in Lambeth.

To achieve this, the researchers will organise and facilitate focus groups:-

x6 existing networks

x6 grassroots groups including Black Asian and Multi Ethnic led groups

Discussions with key stakeholders within the VCS will seek to gain a deeper understanding of the sector’s needs, priorities, and opportunities.

Focus group facilitation should consider a variety of areas /opportunities of VCS Infrastructure support, including but not exclusive of other considerations: investment and funding (bid writing); partnership / networking/ peer to peer mentoring; capacity building/ organisational development; advocacy/community engagement; voice and representation; social prescribing /volunteering, and digital transformation, and how these areas should be accessed / resourced to add value to the work of the VCS.

Finally, facilitators will compile a report collating views / feedback on how the sector can be supported to maximise its contribution to the wellbeing of Lambeth residents.

Support will be available from to secure participants at the focus groups, specifically in the supply of contact information.

**Table 1 - Questions for Evaluation:**

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| **No** | **Area** | **Question** | **Weighting** | **Word Count** |
| **1.0** | Experience | What is your experience of working with the Voluntary Sector from a Strategic and Operational Perspective. Please provide at least 2 examples from a VCS perspective in how you have enabled the Voluntary Sector to develop, strengthen and add Value to the wide range of Voluntary Sector Organisations? | 10% | 1500 Words |
| **2.0** | Facilitation | How will you seek to engage the Voluntary Sector Organisation to come to the Focus Groups and participate in a way that will deliver a clear plan for the next stage of development in the VCS for the London Borough of Lambeth | 15% | 1000 Words |
| **3.0** | Reaching Diverse Groups | How will you reach out to diverse groups especially those from Ethnic Minorities in order that they contribute to this development work? Please give an example of your experience in doing this. | 15% | 1000 Words |
| **4.0** | Project Delivery Plan | Please outline in a Brief Project Plan how you will deliver this brief? | 10% | Project Plan format (Outline with key milestones) |
| **5.0** | Challenges | Given the Socio-Political Context and in particular the Cost of Living Crisis what are the main themes for a VCS in the current situation -what are the practical outcomes for the VCS and how will you integrate this into this piece of work to deliver an overall view of how a new VCS should operate and the support that it brings to the Voluntary Sector Family | 10% | 1000 Words |
| **6.0** | Themes | Given the key themes outlined in the brief how will you ensure that these are built into the final Report & Recommendations | 10% | 1000 Words |

**3. Review Meetings**

The facilitators will be required to attend regular review meetings (2x 1 hour) to discuss progress and to ensure the Council’s LB Lambeth Officers are kept properly informed on progress.

The facilitators will be required to share progress on focus group facilitation work with others over the course of the work as necessary (2 x1 hour)

**4. Pricing for Facilitation Work**

* This should be considered and reasonable.
* We are seeking to work with experienced facilitators with knowledge and experience of Lambeth’s VCS or who have knowledge of Lambeths VCS network or have undertaken similar work in other Local Authority areas.

**5. Contract & Award Criteria**

Quality – 70%

Price – 30%

**6. Timeframe**

* Submission of Bids by 12 January at 12 noon
* Work to Commence late January 2024
* Completion of work by mid February 2024 in the form of a report that includes all of the information gathered and analysis of focus groups.

**7. Contacts**

If you have any questions please contact either Paul Fawcett or Grace Badamosi

Please contact Paul Fawcett on [pfawcett@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:pfawcett@lambeth.gov.uk)

Or

Please contact Grace Badamosi on [GGbadamosi@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:GGbadamosi@lambeth.gov.uk)