

# Our impact in 2010-11

The people & organisations  
we've worked with, and the  
difference we've made.



# About us

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Voluntary Action Westminster is a charity working with voluntary organisations and community groups in Westminster and beyond.

## **Organisational development**

During the year we provided 279 support sessions to 112 local voluntary and community groups. We continued to offer a free training programme, rated as good or excellent by 90% of participants. The launch of a new online grants directory has been well-received, and we continue to develop our expertise in monitoring and evaluation. **Read more on pages 6–7 and 8–9.**

## **Enabling voice**

As the host for the Westminster and City of London Local Involvement Networks, we have supported hundreds of people to have a say about their local health and care services. In facilitating the Westminster Community Network we have provided regular opportunities for voluntary organisations to hear about policy changes, and to influence local decision-making. **Read more on pages 4–5.**

## **Services in the community**

Our children's centre outreach teams contacted over 6,500 parents and children during the year. Work to involve fathers and support for parent forums

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continued. Partnership working with colleagues in the voluntary and statutory sector has been a main focus during the year, leading to better information-sharing between organisations, and a wider range of activities for families. **Read more on page 10–11.**



*Anisa Chentouf and daughter Aliyah*

# Influencing

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**By bringing together voluntary and community groups through the Westminster Community Network we provide opportunities for information-sharing and for influence in local decision-making.**

Over 300 voluntary sector participants attended Network events during 2010-11. Our programme of assemblies and seminars focused on a range of issues, from Housing Benefit changes and GP commissioning to Big Society policies and the new Work Programme. Overall, nine out of ten participants rated our events as good or very good.

During the year we continued to facilitate the children and young people forum, and to support elected representatives on over 40 local strategic partnerships, giving the voluntary sector an accountable voice in local decision-making.



“The WCN gives elected representatives a legitimate and equal standing, alongside statutory partners, in developing effective policy that addresses the needs of local people.”

*Shirley Springer, Vice-Chair of WCN.*



Shirley Springer, WCN Vice-Chair and Chief Executive of Westminster Citizens Advice Bureau

# Group development

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**Providing advice and support to voluntary and community organisations remains at the heart of what we do.**

Focusing on topics chosen by voluntary organisations, our programme of training continues to be well-received, with 255 participants attending a course in 2010-11.

Pimlico Toy Library was one of 112 organisations that contacted us for one to one support during the year. Over a series of meetings, we worked with some of the Library's trustees to help them understand their responsibilities, and to answer their questions about the role of the trustee board, and the requirements of their governing document.



“My time with Angela gave me the confidence and encouragement I needed to progress as a trustee. I now have a clearer understanding of my role.”

*Anisa Chentouf, Pimlico Toy Library.*



Anisa Chentouf, Trustee  
Pimlico Toy Library

# Energy auditing

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**Everyone can do their bit to reduce Westminster's carbon footprint. Over the last year we've worked with voluntary and community organisations to help them save energy and reduce waste.**

An energy audit begins with a site visit. We look at energy use, and spot energy waste. Are lights left on? Are the windows drafty? How high is the heating set?

After the site visit we make a series of recommendations on what an organisation can do to reduce its energy use, and stay on hand to offer ongoing support for up to a year after the initial visit.

All Souls Clubhouse, is one of over 20 organisations we worked with in 2010-11, and over the last months has taken some impressive steps in becoming more environmentally friendly.



“We’ve had been working to improve our carbon footprint and cost effectiveness but having an eco-audit revealed all sorts of hidden possibilities for change. Implementing these changes has cut our energy use and boosted our recycling efficiency.”

*Wilf Parsons, All Souls Clubhouse.*

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Wilf Parsons, Volunteer,  
All Souls Clubhouse.

# Family outreach

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**Our children's centre outreach teams work with Westminster families to make sure they know about the services and family activities available locally.**

We continue to build closer relationships with colleagues in the voluntary and statutory sectors, and have seen families benefit from improved referral systems. Our partnerships have also led to new services, including family-friendly computer classes, yoga, and children's activities in a women's refuge.

We worked with Vital Regeneration to run a family photography project on issues around belonging and housing. Equipped with loaned cameras, groups of parents and children went out into the neighbourhood to take photographs of what it's like to live in Westminster. As well as being fun, the project allowed us to discuss changes to Housing Benefit, which many parents have been concerned about.



“The photography project was a new experience for me and my children. I like to be socially active, and it was good to get out and about taking photographs.”

*Najah Yousef, local parent.*



Najah Yousef and her son Ayad.



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