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**THIFF Forum Meeting Summary: London Fire Brigade and LBTH Fostering Team**

**Tuesday 16 January 2024, 6-8pm at Account 3, Bethnal Green**

A group of people sitting at a table with laptops

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**Welcome –** from Sufia Alam

**Paula Lyttle and Faisa Yusuf from LB Tower Hamlets Fostering Recruitment & Assessment Team,**

Paula and Faisa kindly presented on the issue of

* Foster carers and vulnerable children
* Foster carers for fostering family.
* Wide range of ages
* Range of reasons for children being taken into care
* Importance of family environment
* Recruitment challenges – lack of awareness – limited engagement opportunities
* Spreading awareness about fostering
* Highlighting importance of fostering- networking opportunities
* Social media platforms
* 0-18
* 21 min age
* Diverse families
* Short term and long-term fostering
* Foster incentives – monetary incentives – continuous training and support – care worker support – entering a community – wide range of training opportunities – supports for specialist needs -
* Honours and rewards
* Community conference focused on fostering – tackling the misconceptions.
* Social media content being sent over
* • Foster carers decreased and needs are increasing.

**Sam Crosby, Development Officer, Tower Hamlets CVS -see slides**

State of the Sector Report

* Key challenges – short term funding, recruitment, retaining staff.
* Financial issues were the focus, many charities reported that their organisation was secure only for two years or less – and 11% were close to closure
* Capacity is an issue for many when doing fundraising. Not many can afford to hire a dedicated fund raiser. Also impacts on awareness of other forums, training and funding.
* What support would you like from CVS?
* Connections with funders, however for smaller orgs the capacity building is more needed.
* CVS offering support for transition – training in diversifying income stream and how to demonstrate impact – coming up (see website)

*Comment from attendee – Help with local authority funding- does that reflect austerity so that help requested from orgs is not available?*

**Benedicta Dikeocha, Hate Crime Projects Officer, Tower Hamlets Council**

* Works for Tower Hamlets Council VAWG and Hate Crime Team as hate crime projects officer. Role is to coordinate the partnerships that address hate crime and VAWG.
* Coordinates monthly incident panel for victims of hate crime. Looks at how they can resolve situation.
* Also organised quarterly No Place for Hate forum – a number of orgs – share best practice and have an annual delivery plan where different orgs can come together and share aims to address hate crime.
* Mark key dates in the hate crime calendar, eg Holocaust memorial, LGBT History Month, etc ….October – National Hate Crime Awareness Week….also No Place for Hate Champions Training – recruit residents, professionals so that people can become ambassadors in their own community, school or faith setting.

**Atikur Rahman, Trustee, Wapping Noorani Masjid & Cultural Centre & Wapping Bangladesh Association, received funding from Mayors Community Grant Programme.**

* Organisation gradually grew, important to be hopeful about gaining funding. Have received various funds in the past, inc Henry Smith funding.
* Always be mindful of capacity – and approach other organisations to work in partnership.
* Need strong management team - sometimes it is hard to get the right people.
* Engage people that have been with the organisation for a long time.
* Match funding has advantages.
* If no funding available, try to continue running project with existing services and volunteers. Work from the ground level and don’t give up hope.

**Information Sharing**

*Comment from Leon Silver, Steering Group Member – We are living in terrible times and feel grief for all of the innocent people in both Israel and Gaza. We are all human beings and horrified – let it not tear our communities* *apart.*

*German Lutheran Church, in Alie Street, holds talks once a month, one tomorrow (17th) at 7pm on Royal London Hospital. Also online. 15th November: talk on Clement Attlee? MP for Limehouse.* [*All events can be found here*](https://www.stgeorgesgermanchurch.org.uk/events)*.*

*East London Mosque Community Health Fair, 21st October - lots of health partners are involved, free food, and upcoming CPR training.*