

London Elections - What Mayoral Candidates said about the Women's Sector


As you are all aware, Londoners will be voting for Mayor of London, Greater London Assembly Members and Members of the European Parliament on Thursday June 10th 2004.



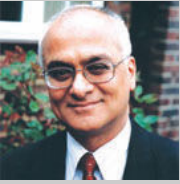
Many of you will be familiar with the Greater London Authority and have been consulted on the Mayor's various equalities strategies and other initiatives. Although the Mayor does not have any control over funding the voluntary and community sector, s/he does have lobbying/influencing power and also sets policy which affects both voluntary and community groups and their service users.

We asked Mayoral candidates the following questions about the women's voluntary and community sector:

1. **What practical steps would you take to strengthen women's voluntary and community organisations which are delivering valuable services as well as social and economic benefits across London?**
2. **Given the many difficulties related to funding, how would you use your lobbying and influencing remit to ensure fair access to funding by making women's groups a priority for local borough agencies, regional and central Government funders and charitable Trusts?**
3. **Voluntary and community sector workers are not considered to be 'key workers' despite the valuable and often 'life-saving' services they deliver. This impacts significantly on remuneration, conditions, recruitment and retention** (as detailed in a recent report published by the City Parochial Foundation, "Valuing Potential"). **What would you do to improve this situation?**

And here's what they said...

Candidate	Q1.	Q2.	Q3.
<p>Darren Johnson Green Party</p> <p>www.johnsonformayor.org.uk</p> 	<p>I strongly believe that women play a vitally important role in the in the voluntary and community sector and also in all areas of care and social issues. It is good to know that there are groups such as yours which are fighting to support these people and if I am elected as Mayor will strongly support you and them.</p> <p>The role that is played by these groups is so important and should be recognised as such. Without them our society would suffer severely and many people would suffer increased hardship. I believe these groups should have proper secure funding from the state, that there should be good</p>	<p>The Green Party has a commitment to increasing government funding and if I were elected Mayor I would forcefully lobby the government to look for that funding. London pays £ billions more in taxes than it receives and I believe our voluntary and community groups should have access to those funds.</p>	<p>Women working in the voluntary and community sector should be recognised as 'key workers' and deserve and must have the same pay and conditions. Again I would work to ensure sufficient funding to provide for these.</p>

	<p>quality training and capacity development and that they should not have to rely on external funding such as the ESF.</p>		
<p>Lindsey German Respect – The Unity Coalition</p> <p>www.respectcoalition.org</p> 	<p>I believe that these organisations should first and foremost be properly funded. The people who work in them should not have to spend their time worrying about where next year's money is coming from. In addition, the GLA and the mayor should encourage the development of such organisations, making sure their services are publicised, including in different languages where applicable.</p>	<p>I have a record of campaigning over a number of issues, against war primarily but also over a range of issues concerning women's equality, racism and civil liberties. I would use this experience to help campaign for full funding and also argue for a change of priorities to recognise the importance of these bodies to women in London.</p>	<p>Women workers in these sectors should be recognised as key workers. London is run by many thousands of people doing these sorts of jobs who work for low wages and carry out a great deal of work beyond their job description. This means people cannot often afford to work in some jobs and it impacts across the board. Again this requires a change of culture to give priority to the sorts of jobs that are done in this sector.</p>
<p>Simon Hughes Liberal Democrats</p> <p>www.simon4mayor.org.uk</p> 	<p>The voluntary sector, is an often under recognised sector, that plays an essential part in the lives of many Londoners. As Mayor I hope to work constructively with the voluntary sector so that between us we can improve the lives of Londoners. That is why in my London manifesto – For A London United – I outlined my plans for a voluntary sector consultative assembly, to inform and advise the mayor on issues affecting the voluntary sector.</p>	<p>There is a lot the Mayor can and should do in using his position of influence to fight for the interests of Londoners. As Mayor I would hope to work constructively with the voluntary sector, including assisting them where I can in gaining funding from local borough agencies, regional and central Government funders and charitable Trusts.</p>	<p>'Key workers' is a far to narrow a definition; there are many Londoners that do jobs that are essential to the lives of Londoners but are not considered 'key workers'. It is important that all Londoners have access to good quality affordable housing. That is why I will ensure that 50% of all new housing is affordable. I will also take action to end the scandal of empty homes and take to bring the thousands of empty homes in London back into use as affordable housing.</p>
<p>Ram Gidoomal Christian Peoples Alliance</p> <p>www.ramgidoomal4london.com</p> 	<p>I am committed to a radical re-evaluation of the role of voluntary organizations and volunteers in the economy of London. This includes all sectors – older volunteers, ethnic voluntary groups, and certainly women's voluntary and community organisations. My policies as Mayor will follow those I have already advocated when working with, for example, the National Volunteering Convention, TimeBank and The Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations.</p> <p>My policies recognise the immense social capital generated by volunteers, especially those 'hidden' to normal economic tracking. With</p>	<p>I would shift the funding responsible on to the shoulders of local authorities, business and public sector organisations, so I would not be looking for central government funding. Possibly a Voluntary local tax. My policies are based on the fact that funding voluntary and community groups should not be seen as a new claim on anybody's budget; the money already exists, in the social capital already generated. So I would be looking at Council Tax rebates, Congestion Charge relief for those doing voluntary and community work in charged zones, lobbying for</p>	<p>I would continue to promote, as I do at the moment, the value of workers in these sectors and to highlight ways in which they can and should be recognized and rewarded. My policy for converting voluntary work experience into a recognised qualification accreditation is one of several designed to improve the recognition and the appropriate rewards for voluntary and community sector workers. As Mayor of London I will have a responsibility to all sectors, but the women's sector will certainly be one of my</p>

	<p>over 20 million people in the UK involved in some kind of voluntary work this contribution needs to be recognised; the same goes for community organisations. So I will bring in Local Volunteering Reserve Funds, in which local authorities and local business – the chief beneficiaries of the social capital generated by volunteers and community organisations – will contribute to a fund which will be used in several ways: for example, voluntary work will count as accreditation towards a recognised qualification; volunteers can have their work credited against future further education funding; community organisations will be able to argue a case for priority funding because their contribution to social capital will be properly recognised and quantified.</p>	<p>tax relief credits for unemployed people who do voluntary work and subsequently find employment.</p> <p>The concept of deferred benefits – voluntary and community work done now qualifies for future relief and exemptions – is key to my policies, for many volunteers and community workers are not in an appropriate tax /income situation to benefit from such concessions at the time; but are entitled to draw later on the social credit they have created.</p> <p>My policies are not specifically targeted at the women’s sector. However, my long experience in volunteering organisations and in community organisations such as City Regeneration, London Community Foundation, London Sustainability Exchange and others, has made me well aware that women’s organisations have suffered in the distribution of resources and support and I would make it a priority to redress all such situations.</p>	<p>priorities.</p>
<p>Ken Livingstone Labour</p> <p>www.ken4london.org.uk</p> 	<p>I will work with the individual boroughs and the ALG to ensure that funding for first and second tier organisations can continue to capacity build.</p>	<p>I have lobbied for funding stability - i.e. guaranteed core funding for at least 3 years so that organisations can plan and develop. I have also pushed for greater core funding to enable organisations to carry out their functions.</p>	<p>I have already introduced a rule that all new build housing must include at least 50% that is affordable. I will work with the boroughs to address the housing shortage in London to increase building rates to 30,000 extra homes per year.</p>

Thanks to all Mayoral candidates who responded.

For more information on voting, candidates and their manifestos visit www.londonelects.org.uk or phone the helpline on **0800 3 280 280** or textphone **0800 3 280 838**