Exploring the Health of Southwark's Civil Society

Working collaboratively with the London Borough of Southwark, Community Southwark and place-based funders, on the 25 November, City Hall's community engagement team hosted a Data Expedition exploring the health of Southwark's Civil Society.

This innovative approach allowed for knowledge sharing between participants and showcased the impact of cross-sector working when it comes to using data. Southwark Civil Society organisations and funders had the opportunity to work with data volunteers to develop data skills whilst also exploring the size and shape of the sector, the need in the borough and understanding the diversity of funding available to the sector.

Participants explored new datasets, learnt new data skills and used data visulisation tools to share their findings at the end of the day.

Below we have summarised key challenges, recommendations and next steps for partners to take forward in order to improve the quality and use of data across the borough, contributing to creating a collaborative data culture within the borough.

Challenges

- Postcodes data for charities show where charities are registered not where they deliver their services and this data also does not capture the nuances of organisations who deliver across borough boundaries.
- Understanding when and why charities close is difficult due to the delay in their removal from the Charity Commission site and how reason for closure is captured.
- Although specialist/user-led organisations for both LGBT+ and BAME communities were identified there were challenges in understanding levels of awareness of these organisations; whether they are meeting the need of the local populations and how sustainable they are in comparison to other organisations.
- The borough JSNA shows a growing older population which is currently not matched by organisation type in the borough.
- 360Giving data and information from local funders gives only a partial picture of the type and level of funding coming into Southwark.

Recommendations & Actions

Recommendation 1

If there was a CVS data standard across London Boroughs, organisations would be able to compare the sector and capture the nuances of where organisations deliver. This would allow for:

- The CVS having a downloadable lists of membership organisations with basic information included, such as number of volunteers, annual turnover, age of the organisations etc.
- Capturing when organisations close to allow for clearer capture of reasons why organisations close so any areas in need of additional support could be identified.

Actions:

- Datawise London led by Superhighways are best placed to explore developing a CVS data standard, due to the Pan-London nature of their programme and the work they do with CVS's across London.
- Community Southwark to trial making their membership list downloadable and pilot a new data standard developed with CVS's across London.

Recommendation 2

Building on volunteering research completed by London Plus to begin to understand volunteering on a borough level and also begin to explore the impact of corporate volunteering. This should also be done in a way so that it can be compared across London Boroughs

Action:

- London Plus to build on their previous volunteering research, exploring in more depth volunteering on a borough level and in the private sector.

Recommendation 3

Further research on specialist organisations should be conducted to feed into wider ongoing work.

Action:

- Civil Society Data Officer at City Hall to conduct further research into LGBT+ and BAME organisations in Southwark and share findings with Community Southwark.

Recommendation 4

City Hall is working towards becoming an age friendly City led by the Equality and Fairness team, we should share initial findings around the lack of services for older people in areas with growing elderly populations potentially with mental health conditions and living in areas of multiple deprivation, to ensure these layers of nuance are captured.

Action:

- Civil Society Data Officer to share these findings with Equality and Fairness team at the GLA.

Recommendation 5

Share the flourish data visulisations with the wider funding group in Southwark and support them to publish their grants data on 360 Giving to improve the cover of the data and therefore the understanding of the funding ecosystem in Southwark.

Action:

- United Saint Saviours should share the data visualisation with Southwark's funding hub and call upon 360 Giving to offer their support in expanding the number of local based funders publishing of GrantNav.