**Economic Support Network**

**Building an ecosystem of economic support that values worth beyond wealth and maximises opportunities to tackle scarcity.**

The Economic Support Network exists to facilitate collaborative work between community, voluntary, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector organisations and volunteers who are supporting people around money, benefits, income, financial hardship and support needs and/or skills, volunteering and work.

The network holds a collective understanding of what’s available and what is needed to support people. This includes understanding of peoples personal, social and cultural needs to develop ‘community wealth’ as well as financial needs. The network is responding to COVID-19 and its related furlough schemes, working restrictions and impact of shielding alongside structural inequalities caused by years of shortages and inequality.

**Together**

The Economic Support Network (VCFSE providers) will work with statutory partners within COVID-19 Community Responses, and wider Economic, Health and Community Recovery Planning, Work, Health and Skills statutory services.

The network can link to and support existing work such as Real Change Rochdale and the Community Champion model, support the development of local ‘COVID-19 response’ initiatives such as Household Hardship Fund, Community Wealth Building schemes and Food Cooperative Warehouse. It will develop collective initiatives such as signposting/ triage tools or products, and establish economic support pathways to enhance signposting.

By working together, we are able to:

* Build supportive, reliable, inclusive systems of support that focus on worth not wealth
* Progress grassroots ideas into action quickly and effectively by making the most of assets held within the group
* Connect the work of VCFSE organisations and collective work of the Economic Support Network with statutory services and plans

**Membership**

Co-facilitated by Action Together and Citizens Advice. Open membership to all VCFSE organisations and citizens, interested contributing to the group’s priorities.

**2020 Priorities**

1. Develop community-led economic support pathways and work together to promote, resource and strengthen these
2. Support the Community Champions model (people with lived experience enabled to help people navigate systems) and connect to VCFSE provision
3. Connect volunteering, training and employment to the Food Cooperative Warehouse initiative
4. Develop a ‘funding mentor scheme’ programme to maximise funding coming into the borough for VCFSE organisations, with a focus on supporting under-represented groups access funding, to support people around financial hardship