

## **Joint Statement between Woodberry Aid (WA) and Manor House Development Trust (MHDT)**

Following the comments and questions asked in October WDCO board meeting, by a board member and the perception few members of the community have about the level of support being given to Woodberry Aid from MHDT which are highly inaccurate we felt it was necessary to have clarify that and give you clearer understanding on the partnership between Woodberry Aid and MHDT.

WA would like to start by saying that MHDT did an amazing job during the height of the pandemic. As you all know Woodberry Down is a big area and MHDT supported those that they were able to support. WA identified a gap as a lot of vulnerable elderly and disabled members of the community was not receiving the support they needed, and WA was set up to close that slightly. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) funded £80,000 to deliver emergency food provision across Hackney. This project operated over 6 weeks in summer 2020, it was delivered by a consortium of eight organisations, with MHDT being the lead partner. As a grassroot organisation much smaller than MHDT we recognise the importance of such partnership working. Furthermore, this form of consortium-based partnership working is beneficial to the London Borough of Hackney (LBH) because it means they have further reach into communities (larger organisations don't have as good a reach as smaller community-led organisations) and to develop working relationships between voluntary and community sector (VCS) groups independent of the Council.

This approach also enables more VCS partners in the borough to share funding (in a move away from preferencing larger organisations for funding). It also benefits smaller community-based food providers who can deliver nuanced and culturally specific food and care to their communities. Many of these smaller partners would not have been eligible for funding directly from government bodies. In September 2020 Hackney Council invited applications from local consortia interested in delivering food to local residents asked to isolate due to Covid. Six consortia were successful representing geographic areas of the borough (North West, North East, Central, Central West, South East and South West). There are a total of six food consortia across the borough working in different areas. Our North West consortia covers the wards of Brownswood, Woodberry Down and Stamford Hill West. MHDT are the lead partners in the consortium. As a consortium, we receive confidential referrals from the Hackney Council Covid-19 helpline. These are people who have been told to self-isolate, but are struggling to feed themselves. We get the referrals in the form of a spreadsheet which is checked daily and deliver the food and provisions within 36 hours. These consortia working has been funded by the Central Government isolation framework, Hackney Public Health and City and Hackney CCG. Part of the learning from the emergency food service since the days of summer 2020, has been how much additional work all the food providers and partners put into this 'wrap around care'. From winter 2021, this has been remunerated with an additional budget for each referral.

Across the borough, all consortia have a lead partner. The lead partner is usually the largest of the organisations, with the largest financial and organisational capacity. In our case, this is MHDT. LBH transfer the funding for the food parcels, travel expenses and the wrap around care to MHDT's bank account. In effect, MHDT are the host funders. The funding for the food provision and wrap around care is divided equally per referral and divided between the other partners in the consortium through a process of invoicing.

For all the food parcel provision and wrap around care, the consortia work together in partnership. Each partner is funded equally for the work that they do. The lead partner in each consortium is the one who holds the responsibility for ensuring that all the level of care is consistent across the area. They are the ones who are required to have more stringent

levels of financial accountability. For this, they receive a management fee for managing the project, which is standard practice within partnership working between organisations. All the consortia in Hackney work in the same way.

And finally, WA learnt that many people in the community believe that MHDT donate food to WA on a regular basis. We want to clarify that all the weekly food donations comes from the Felix Project, an independent, London food waste and distribution charity started in 2016. Surplus supermarket and restaurant food is distributed to schools, holiday programmes, food banks and community centres like the Redmond Community Centre. Food that would have otherwise gone to waste is then distributed by community groups. As part of the Hackney Food Network WA was added to the list by Lisa-Raine Hunt to receive food from the Felix Project. MHDT are one of the three designated food hubs in the borough that receive food from the Felix to then organize and distribute to local groups.

We hope that this gives you clearer picture of the work and partnership of WA and MHDT, we will not be taking any questions here but if you require further clarifications, we are happy to refer you to Lisa-Raine Hunt the Strategic Delivery Manager from LBH.

Thank you for your time.