



Governance Principles and Commitments

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Background

Third sector organisations have long been valued, vital partners to the public sector in the delivery of support and services to communities and individuals, both in day-to-day life and in times of crisis.

The changing strategic and funding landscape is presenting new challenges and opportunities for the Third sector. Alongside the widely recognised increased competition for funding, these changes are also bringing about greater opportunity to influence future service development and forward strategy, particularly within the Health and Social Care Sector.

The increasing regionalisation of funding and strategic planning means that individual organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain effective relationships across the vast array of commissioners and organisations now present in the marketplace.

Statement of Intent

3ST has been formed primarily to provide a strategic and commissioning link between the Voluntary and Community (third) sector and the emerging Integrated Care System within the NHS across the North West London region.

We aim to be a strong, recognisable group able to represent the sector's voice and interests at a local and regional level and to maximise the opportunities presented by the NHS's Long Term Plan commitment to increased Third sector involvement.

We recognise that the diversity of our sector will mean that not all organisations can commit to full participation at all times. We have developed a series of commitments to ensure that we are able to support all organisations, regardless of size, and engage with our community at all levels.

Governance Principles

The following Commitments have been developed to provide a framework within which the activities, processes and operating principles of 3ST sit. The Commitments Framework development work was undertaken with the following guiding principles:

- **Representation** – it is important that all organisations who want to participate are enabled to do so in an accessible way.
- **Transparency** – 3ST will develop policies and procedures that ensure that all organisations can access and understand the decision-making processes and outcomes.
- **Communication** – Organisations who participate must be confident that their voices can be heard in everything that 3ST does and says.
- **Fairness** – 3ST will be careful to consider the impact of activities, particularly income generating, on all members and will establish processes that ensure that member organisations are not unfairly disadvantaged through participation with the Group.

Membership Commitments

Membership is open to all Third sector organisations based within the eight NWL boroughs. We recognise that the diversity of the sector means that not all organisations are able to participate equally but are committed to ensuring that all members are able to benefit from our activities.

- 1) **Commitment to inclusion.** To include:

- a. Enabling all Third sector organisations to benefit from 3ST's strategic and income generation activities.
- b. Actively seeking membership that is representative of the demographics of all our local communities.
- c. Actively representing the needs of our communities at a strategic level as well as through service development.

2) Commitment to enabling all Third Sector organisations to participate. To include:

- a. Developing structures to facilitate information and communication flow.
- b. Developing a tiered membership structure depending on time, capacity and capability.

3) Commitment to organisational development. To include:

- a. Developing processes whereby all organisations' voices can be heard.
- b. Supporting development of accessible income generating opportunities.

4) Commitment to active participation. To include:

- a. Allocating suitable time and resource to strategic and income generation activity.
- b. Timely sharing of information through appropriate channels.

5) Commitment to developing and holding an effective induction process for new members, supported by existing and outgoing members.

- a. Seeking to retain organisational memory and minimise disruption from member turnover.

Membership Types

There are three levels of membership:

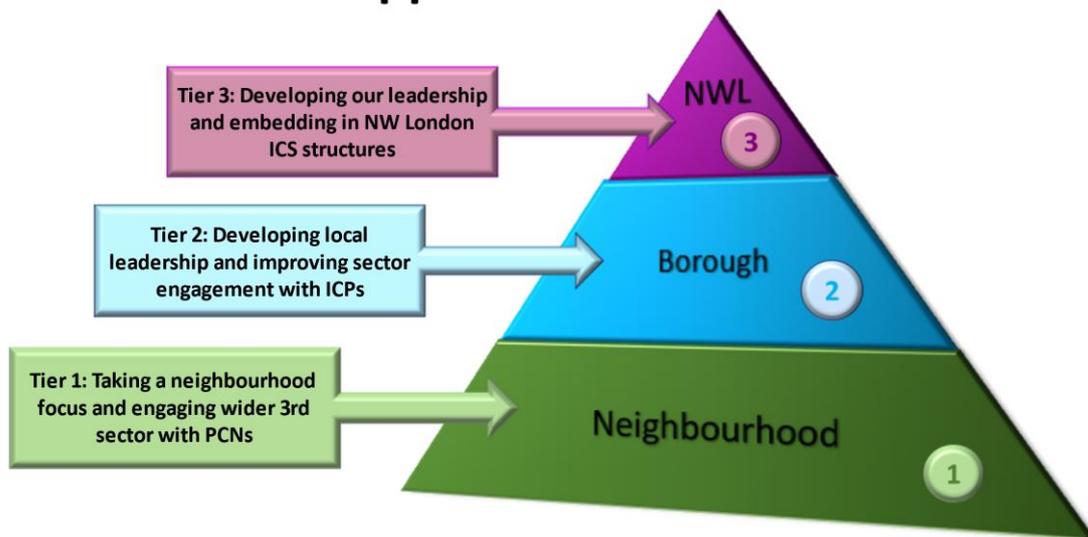
- **'Full'** – open to organisations able to commit senior leadership time to participate regularly in strategic and income generating activities. Expected to participate in Borough Leadership Teams, and Strategic Group (TBD).
- **'Associate'** – open to organisations not able to meet the commitments of full memberships but able to conduct local activity. Associate members are expected to be active at Borough level and participate in Borough Leadership Teams.
- **'Partner' / 'Affiliate'** – open to small and grassroots organisations unable to commit to regular engagement but delivering services and active at a PCN level at least.

Structure and Representation

Our structure has been designed to mirror that of the external stakeholders we most commonly interact with - the NHS and local authorities. It also reflects the diverse range of organisations we represent with regional, borough and neighbourhood level groups.

This ensures we develop and maintain effective, transparent communication channels, enabling all organisations to have a voice, regardless of size.

A threetiered approach:



Neighbourhood Structure

Highly localised Neighbourhood Groups of mainly smaller organisations; supported by local infrastructure support groups and larger members where necessary. Accessible to all members, including 'partners/affiliates'.

Borough Structure

Borough-based groups that are open to the diverse range of organisations operating in that borough, from which Borough Leadership Teams will be formed. Key activities to include engaging with external borough level stakeholders including ICPs and local authorities. Open to all 'Full' and 'Associate' members.

Borough Leadership Teams have a high degree of self-determination in terms of how they organise, but are expected as a minimum to:

- nominate three representatives for the Strategic Group, and
- to provide strategic and commercial updates to inform decision making and strategic planning for the Strategic and Leadership Groups.

NWL structure

Strategic Group: A 24-member group with three representatives from each of the eight boroughs in NWL. The strategic group will support the leadership group, conduct borough level strategic activity.

Representatives are selected by Borough Leadership Teams.

Leadership Group: A nine-member executive group, responsible for regional strategic and income generation activity and with oversight of borough and Neighbourhood activity. The leadership group will develop and maintain regional relationships with the NHS's Integrated Care System structures, representing the sector and influencing commissioning strategy.

Members are selected by the Strategic Group.

Decision Making Commitments

Decisions will be needed at all levels of the Group's operations, on both strategic and income generating activity. These commitments are designed to ensure that all members understand how and why decisions have been made and that there are mechanisms in place to enable constructive debate.

- 1) Commitment to full transparency of all decision making processes.**
 - a. Assumption that effective information sharing the default stance
- 2) Commitment to hold a regular independent reviews of the Leadership group membership and achievement.**
 - a. Review to be led by wider strategic group
- 3) Commitment to an effective dispute resolution process.**
 - a. The Strategic Group will be the primary accountable group when disputes arise
- 4) Commitment to robust conflict of interest process.**
 - a. Members are expected to declare and remove themselves from decisions as potential conflicts arise.

Income Generating Activity Commitments

The ability of the Group to promote the Third sector as a whole as a viable partner to the Health and Social Care sector and to undertake income generation activity is a key motivation factor for many members. We recognise that commercial partnerships can be highly beneficial but that it is inevitable that this will also create some tensions.

Our Income Generating Activity Commitments are designed to ensure that we uphold our key governing principles in this area so that member organisations are able to make informed decisions and so that external partners (including Commissioners) are able to be confident in our ability to deliver.

- 1) Commitment to work in partnership.** To include:
 - a. Members may opt out of joint bidding at bid qualification stage, but with an expectation of not competing if they withdraw after committing to participation.
 - b. Start-up commitment to ensuring existing contract holders retain current contract values/percentage share wherever possible, when group bids jointly.
 - c. Internal approval processes to enter into partnerships remain up to individual member organisations to determine.

- 2) Commitment to full cost recovery.** To include:
 - a. Agreed approaches to overheads, surplus, contribution to reserves, contingency.
 - b. Commercial behaviours including not over/under estimating charges.
 - c. Investment and development activities.

- 3) Commitment to consistent information governance.** To include:
 - a. Information and data sharing protocols between members.
 - b. Compliance with NHS principles/protocols.
 - c. Supporting members to be ready/compliant.

- 4) Commitment to oversight, quality and contract support.** To include:
 - a. Oversight of partnerships, governance, contract and performance management.
 - b. Dispute resolution.
 - c. Formation of dedicated board to mediate and/or rule on disputes arising between members operating under a contract, potentially with an independent member as lead and at least one Leadership Group member.

- 5) Commitment to supporting/capacity building members and wider Third sector organisations.**
 - a. Using innovative commissioning practices, e.g. grants for the smallest organisations.

- 6) Commitment to treating staff well.** To include:

London Living Wage – supporting others to achieve this and championing to commissioners.

Supporting organisations/members with best practice.

For more information visits our website: www.3stnwl.org.uk