

VOLUNTARY ACTION ISLINGTON

Community Buildings Project Case Study

Caxton House

About the Organisation	Caxton House is a community centre that provides a home for organisations providing activities for Asian elderly people, environmental education, activities for the under fives, women affected by violence and the local credit union and time bank. It is also hired for a wide range of activities by individual and groups in the area.
Their Building	A 1970's building with associated parking; it offers a large hall, kitchen, and cafeteria for hire.
Numbers of staff	9 staff and 21 volunteers
Address	129 St John's Way, N19 3RQ
Contact	www.caxtonhouse.org Tel: 020 7263 3151
Type of Organisation	Charity and unincorporated trust
Annual Income	£201,661 (2012)

Why the Caxton House needed the Buildings Project

Caxton House contacted the Building Project after seeing its services advertised on the Voluntary Action Islington web site. They wanted help with a complete review of the organisation. They had recently been through financial uncertainties and needed to deal with staffing issues and making better use of their building to generate income and increase the use of their building. When they were chosen by Islington Council as a Hub for the Borough they also needed help to achieve the VISIBLE accreditation – one of the requirements for receiving funding to be a Hub.

How the Buildings Project helped Caxton House

Caxton has made use of a wide variety of support from the Buildings Project. To help them with the push to increase usage of the building they participated in both the **marketing** programme which included work on **using social media** for promotion and got advice on their **hiring processes**.

They also got support with **bidding for funds** and a thorough review of their **health and safety practices around fire safety, food hygiene and control of hazardous substances**.

To ensure that Trustees were fulfilling their duties towards employees, the Building Project **provided information on a Human Resources firm** that Caxton then took forward. This resulted in changes to their **grievance and disciplinary policies and the staff handbook** to ensure that they were relevant and up to date.

Caxton House was also **referred to Law Works** to help them with potential changes to their legal form, helped to update their **Trustee Induction Pack** and documenting their **financial procedures and reserves policy**.

All this has helped them to **prepare for their VISIBLE assessments** so that they can achieve this important accreditation.

What Caxton House said about the help they got from the Buildings Project

“The support was personally supportive and provided positive ideas and input about the building and promoting it to users. We think that we are really good at promoting and hiring out the building now”

“With rising unrestricted income from hiring we can now look at investing in the building”

“It really helped to get Trustees on Board with the strategy to increase trading and income and to cut costs on utilities bills”

“It helped us to look at the space we have and bring dead and underused area of the building back to life”

“The support came at a very good time for us because we had lost some key staff and wanted to renew and reinvigorate the building with new users”

“A source of independent external advice helped staff and trustees to take advice on board and focus on the issues they needed to address”

“The training and support on marketing, our hiring and letting policies and the use of social media has really helped and energised staff”

“We have saved money by looking at our costs which was really useful to our bookkeeper”

“The Building Project has helped organisations running community buildings share information and learn from each other”