



Local Community Fund and Infrastructure & Capacity Building Fund Annual Report – Oct 20–Sep 21

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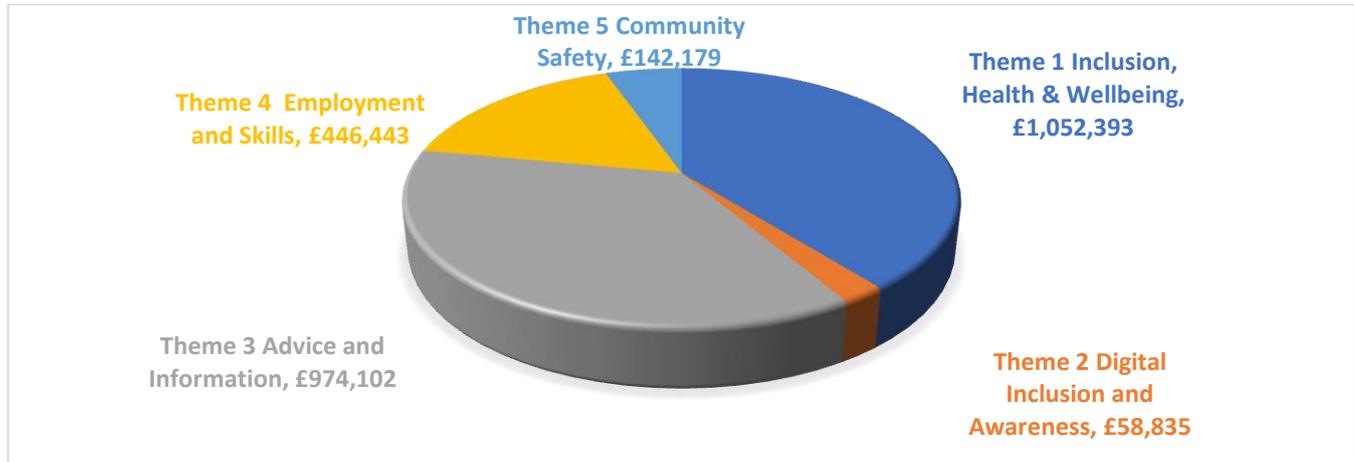
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“Thank you to all the all Voluntary and Community Sector organisations for the use of their photos and images used in this report”.

Programme Overview

Welcome to the second annual report for the **Local Community Fund (LCF)** and Infrastructure and Capacity Building Fund. LCF began implementation on the 1 October 2019 with 39 Voluntary and Community Sector organisations awarded funding totalling **£2.67m** per year to deliver 50 projects across five themes.



At the same time, **£260,000** per year was awarded from the **Infrastructure and Capacity Building Fund** to the Tower Hamlets Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Partnership project, led by Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service (THCVS) to support not for profit organisations across the borough.

This annual report relates to the second year of delivery of LCF projects, from October 2020 to September 2021. During this year, the LCF programme has supported over 27,500 residents from across the Borough through 13 schemes.

Theme 1

- Scheme A Children, Young People and Families
- Scheme B Older People
- Scheme C Access, Information and Self-Management
- Scheme D Healthy living and healthy choices
- Scheme E Improved inclusion, health and well-being outcomes for disabled people and people experiencing mental health issues

Theme 2

- Scheme A ICT skills and digital careers
- Scheme B Online Safety

Theme 3

- Advice and Information

Theme 4

- Scheme A Developing and embedding good practice in the workplace for people with disabilities, learning difficulties and physical and mental health barriers to work
- Scheme B Reducing barriers to employment for disadvantaged groups
- Scheme C Support focused on increasing access to art and cultural industries

Theme 5

- Scheme A Reduction in the exploitation of children, young people, and other vulnerable groups
- Scheme B Improving the perception of young people in the community
- Scheme C Services for people affected by domestic violence or other unsafe circumstance.

Work achieved this year by funded projects continues to demonstrate the importance of our local voluntary and community sector in providing specialist professional services that improve quality of life, address issues brought about by inequality, and respond to the needs of marginalised groups. Organisations have really stepped up, demonstrating the flexible, strong, and cohesive Voluntary Sector that we fortunately have in the Borough.

We were under some form of Covid restrictions for over six months of this funding year. Before October regional Covid restrictions had already tightened, and people were prohibited from meeting more than six people. Restrictions continued to change and increase limiting project delivery. On the 6 January the third national lockdown was put in place and people were told to “stay at home”. Restrictions started to lift in March when schools returned, but it was not until the 19 July that inside face-to-face restricted project activities could start to be reintroduced.

Despite the continued Covid challenges experienced, funded organisations have shown innovation and flexibility in responding to the challenges of working with participants remotely. As part of this they strengthened and developed new partnership working to support residents. Most organisations increased their volunteer capacity and brought in additional funding to meet new and increased demand. They concentrated on project activities they could achieve and provided Covid response services that supported participants and other local residents.

“Society Links secured over £30,000 worth of covid response funding which has been spent on food parcels, nappies and baby milk parcels”.

Older people’s projects have been affected to a greater extent because of high levels of digital exclusion and increased restrictions for vulnerable people. Projects continued to provide activities that supported their participants. Some projects enabled digitally excluded residents to access online services by providing equipment and training.

“Throughout the year staff have made regular phone calls to service users to support them through difficult times. Most of the time users were OK and just wanted to have someone to talk to and if they wanted, we would refer them to befriending services”. St Hilda’s East Community Centre Project Worker.

Since the end of lockdown, projects have retained some of the successful methods of engaging virtually as well as returning to their buildings and offices to deliver in-person activities. Many have increased delivery to meet the needs of participants that had started projects but had been unable to continue in lockdown months.

Remote working has brought about additional challenges for organisations, such as collecting equalities monitoring for online events. Yet, overall monitoring clearly reveals that residents participating in funded projects continued to have better outcomes.

Theme 1 – Inclusion, Health & Wellbeing

Theme 1 incorporates 5 schemes funding 28 projects that have an empowering person-centred approach, making a tangible and positive difference to participants lives.

The table below provides a breakdown of this theme.

Theme	Scheme	Priority	Number of Projects
	Scheme 1A – Children, Young People and Families	Increase access to Youth Services	8
		Provision of Early Help support to families	
		Support for young carers	
	Scheme 1B – Older People	Ageing well and reducing social isolation	7
		Provision of physical and health-promotion activities for older people	
	Scheme 1C – Access, information, and self-management	Residents better informed/equipped to manage health conditions	2
	Scheme 1D - Healthy living and healthy choices	Residents better informed to make healthier choices	6
		Increased engagement in physical activity	
	Scheme 1E – Improved inclusion, health and well-being outcomes for disabled people and people experiencing mental health issues	Improved health outcomes for disabled people	5

Scheme A - Children, Young People & Families

There are 8 projects within this scheme.



Scheme annual achievements included:

Youth Projects have enabled an increase in the number of girls and young women accessing youth facilities and training as youth workers. They have empowered these participants to have higher life aspirations by providing opportunities for development resulting in increased confidence, life skills and interests.



4,989 beneficiaries supported by theme 1 projects in the last 12 months

Opportunities provided in our support-based projects, working with families, have enabled the young people to thrive in more positive family environments.



Arts based projects have provided fun experiences bringing about participants developing a trust in their ideas and abilities, increasing confidence. Participants have engaged in discussions, feedback, rehearsing, and performance, resulting in increased concentration, greater language and communication skills, and improved cooperation.

Half Moon Young Peoples Theatre

48 girls completed ASDAN Leadership course

21 families reported more educational engagement by their children

32 girls have gone on to train as youth workers or develop their own business

Over 1000 people have participated in commemorative events at 2 theatre organisations

Project examples

Canaan Project / Canaan Project - Isle of Dogs



Working with George Green's school and Café Forever. The project offers activities including cooking, craft, sports, and inspirational workshops at weekly lunch and after school clubs as well as opportunities to go on regular trips.

The project also provided days of activities and workshops during summer.

Girls were able to identify what they wanted to do in the future, including: be a games designer, chef, astronaut, owning a stable... Project worker.

Outcomes included:

15 of the 21 young women who completed feedback forms at the fun days noted they learned something new, 14 learned to feel more comfortable in their own skin.

21 had fun.

Achievements included:

77% of the young women and girls who regularly attend the workshops have developed skills through the activities to be a support system for others

80% of the regular attendees demonstrated an enhanced level of resilience

St. Hilda's Girls Driven Project



An initiative designed to support, inspire, drive girls and young women to reach their full potential and realise their authentic ambitious life goals.

Case study Half Moon', link to 30 year celebration video

"As spring turned into summer and then transformed into autumn, we realised that we would be celebrating our 30th birthday a little later than expected". Half Moon Theatre



"It's been an extremely stressful few months and I cannot thank you enough for putting a smile on my daughters' faces. I really love the way they engage with the games; they help me forget how grim the present situation is".
Parent, Half Moon Theatre



Playing out at Mudchute

Returning to in person activities

"July 2021 saw the return of our face-to-face contact with children and their parents. During August and September, projects alternated between the stable yard and picnic area where we were able to set up activities on the plentiful picnic tables available in the area. Numbers of participants were high with several families returning several times.
Activities were child led; tabletop craft based with minimum direction from adults. The aim was to create a peaceful, nurturing environment which children could mess around with until they found what worked for them and how to adapt it to suit".

Information, quotes and pictures from other organisations

"I believe my ideas were heard. I enjoyed the collaborative nature of the show as it added more ideas."
Participant



"I changed to be funnier and more creative, also confident."
Participant

The Yard

Look Ahead Care and Support

A specialist Domestic Abuse Children's Worker to support children who are vulnerable due to early exposure to domestic abuse. Providing emotional support through age appropriate engagement, e.g. play, to address challenges faced by children living in their refuge and in the community.

"Mums have communicated during 121 sessions that there have been improvements in their children's' communication and emotional wellbeing during their stay at the refuge and that the support given has helped"

Scheme B – Older People

There are 7 projects within this scheme.



Scheme annual achievements included:

Funded projects have supported older people to maintain independence through community-based services and befriending projects. Activities promoted wellbeing and a longer healthy life through reducing social isolation, increasing physical activity, and providing opportunities for participants to make a positive contribution to their communities.


1,383 beneficiaries supported by all theme 1 scheme B projects in the last 12 months

Responding to loneliness experienced by elders, befriending projects have delivered companionship for isolated people. They have resulted in new relationships developing and, in many instances, have resulted in participants participating in wider social activities.

345 older people supported by befriending services

89% of older people engaged feel closer to other people

110 service users provided with Christmas hampers

Project examples

Community of Refugees from Vietnam - East London Vietnamese and Chinese Lunch and Social Club



During this year the project continued to provide services through online means, telephone, and some face-to-face sessions. 60 older people were supported by providing appropriate health and social care information, safe access to nutritious food, basic supplies, money and medicine. Project activities included: ballroom dancing, tai chi, table tennis, befriending contacts, walks and information session on diet, healthy cooking habits and work on health conditions affecting older people.

Outcomes included:

- 15 participants living on their own or housebound reported feeling less isolated
- 65% of participants reported they have an improved diet and healthier eating habits
- 65% of participants report improved psychological wellbeing through increased friendships and sharing of experiences

“The seated yoga makes me keep fit and active during the lock down”

“Enables me to socialise with other members despite covid, the zoom sessions are really helpful”

Age UK East London / Caxton Hall

In Caxton Hall



Every Friday

1.00 am - 12.00 am **English Conversation for Beginners**
one and learn the basics and practice your English.

00 pm - 3.00 pm **Picture IT**
6 week course to build your photography skills in our digital photography sessions. Booking required.

1st and 3rd Friday

30 pm - 2.30 pm **Indoor Bowls**
playful game of indoor bowls where most of us are beginners

2nd Friday

30 pm - 2.30 pm **Bingo**
in us for a few sets of Bingo with useful prizes. £1

4th Friday

30 pm - 2.30 pm **Karaoke**
in Laurence with our monthly sing-song

• This year the project delivered a combination of online activities and indoor activities with small groups of 6 people and outdoor activities. These included social walking groups, cycling groups and Freedom Pass Group which organise trips to attractions in and around London.

Outcomes included:

305 people report that they feel less lonely as result of accessing Caxton Hall activities.

137 older people report feeling more included and integrated

Case study: The Wellbeing Centre Project at Toynbee Hall

X is 70 years old and lives on his own. X suffers from anxiety and mild depression and has many health issues which restrict him on a day-to-day basis. He was referred to us in December 2020. X was matched with a volunteer befriender in early January 2021, and he continues to speak with his befriender once a week. X has mentioned on several occasions when speaking with his befriender that he is very grateful for the phone calls and even though lockdown has now eased he believes the phone calls make a huge difference to him as they are “encouraging and uplifting especially on days where I feel down and alone”. From the befriending calls it transpired that X loved to paint and we were able to register X to the painting sessions taking place in the Toynbee Hall Wellbeing Centre. X has attended some of the sessions and he is booked in to attend further sessions. He thoroughly enjoys the sessions especially as it makes him feel connected with others and he hopes to continue with these sessions and with the befriending phone calls in the months to come.



“Loving Monday afternoon and evening, feel so privileged to have found such a safe progressive, professional creative mental health and emotional well-being LGBTQ I space”

Participant East London Out Project

Scheme C – Access, Information and Self-Management

There are 2 projects within this scheme supporting residents with complex needs to be better able to manage health conditions. Both projects have improved the quality of life of service users.



Globe Community Project Take Back Your Life



Real Taking control of your life

Scheme outcomes and achievements included

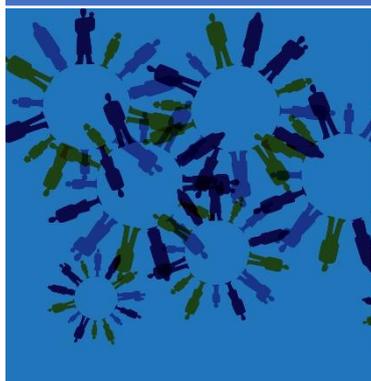
126 beneficiaries supported in the last 12 months

37 action plans that provided high-level support to clients with complex needs

88% agreed that they were able to do more activities despite their pain or poor health

Project example

Globe Community Project / Take Back Your Life



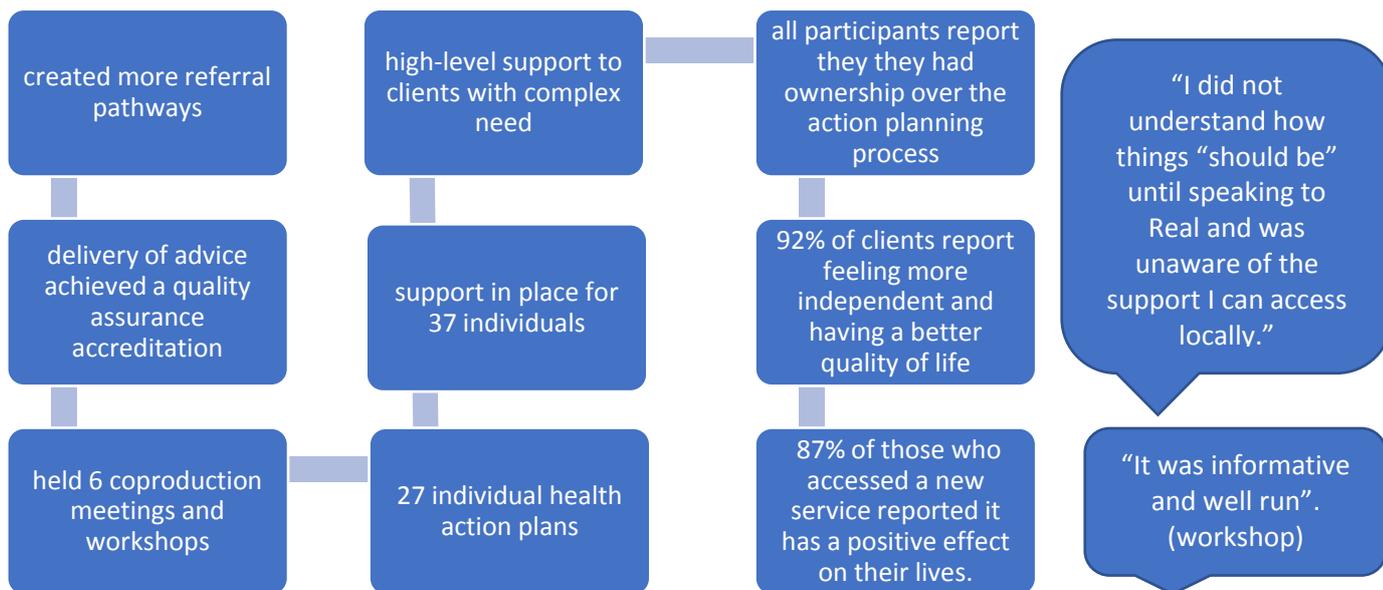
- A mindfulness-based pain management programme, addressing chronic pain/illness, related social isolation and inactivity.
- 89 people were supported through Take Back Your Life during Year 2. Four online courses were delivered, alongside weekly online follow-on sessions for participants who had completed courses.

“My pain is so much better now. Work is so much easier. My attitude has changed. I believe I can do the things I want to do and this has helped my pain.”
Participant

Outcomes included:

89% of participants report they have learned new ways to cope with (or manage) their health.

Real year 2 - Taking control of your life project journey



Scheme D – Healthy living and healthy choices

There are 6 projects within this scheme. The focus is for residents to be better informed to make healthier choices, as well as increase engagement in physical activity.



Scheme annual outcomes and achievements included:

Projects in this scheme have made a positive impact on health and wellbeing of residents by increased physical activity provided through sports, exercise, and leisure activities. They have resulted in social inclusion, improved mental and physical health, and brought about increased participation of residents from marginalised groups.



2,262 beneficiaries supported by all theme 1 scheme D projects in the last 12 months

4 participants have completed their Level 2 Exercise to Music courses

20 volunteers recruited and trained to build their skills and confidence

811 reported improved fitness and mental wellbeing, reduced isolation and loneliness

18 blind and partially sighted participants gained 2 or more qualifications in Health and Well Being programmes

Project examples

London Tigers
Exercise for health: BAME women, children and young people.



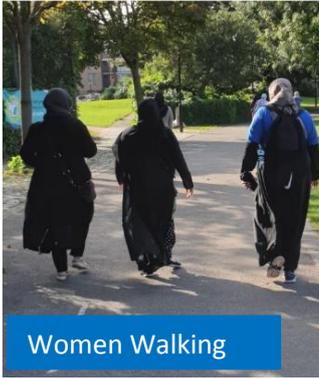
•The project provides sports, physical activities and health-related workshops for women, young people and children to enable them to make positive choices about their health and wellbeing. This year 125 children and 174 women were engaged in activities.

“As parents we have seen huge attitudinal changes in our children who regularly attend sports activities. They are more able to focus on what they are doing such as maths and any kinds of physical activity. It addition, it helps their mental health....”

Outcomes included:

81% of children and 98% of women participating reported improved health and wellbeing

93% of women participants reported feeling that they are more connected to the community



Women Walking

A project engaging inactive young people and their families in regular sports and physical activities to improve health and wellbeing, and reduce isolation and exclusion.

149 children, young people and adults registered on the project this year. In addition the project continued working with 121 people from the first year.

X registered for the Sunday football session at Stepney Green astro pitch. X is mildly autistic and has learning difficulty. His father was worried that X would not be accepted at the sessions. Newark is an inclusive youth organisation and has provided extra support for X.

He has motivation to improve and loves being part of his group and looks up to his football coaches and very responsive to coaches' instructions. X is making steady progress and is clearly benefiting from attending the session.

Case study

Healthy Lifestyle Partnership Programme:

Stifford Centre (Lead partner) and delivery partners: Stepney City Farm, Shadwell Basin Activity Centre, Black Women's Health and Family Support and Dorset Community Association have worked as a consortium to deliver a program of healthy lifestyle activities, classes, inspiration, and opportunities across the Southwest and Northwest localities of Tower Hamlets.



The partnership engaged 440 participants throughout the year. Until the summer, it had delivered digitally due to lockdown and government restriction. During the summer period it returned to delivering face-to-face sessions.

Lifestyle changes included increased walking and additional exercise, diet changes, encouraging others to exercise and beginning to prioritise exercise. Participants reported improved physical and mental health, including improved abilities and fitness levels, increased energy, losing weight, feeling happier, being more able to deal with challenges and feeling more relaxed when exercising after a stressful day.

"It has been a tough year for all of us due to the Coronavirus. I was at home for over a year and the physical activity sessions have really helped me to become more active. I think the benefit is to get people to actually change their lifestyle, change the way they look at exercise, for one. It requires a trigger. If not, you're probably not going to find the motivation, no matter how, no matter how much the people around you are trying to motivate you. The most important part is changing the mindset". – Participant.

"As you get older, you kind of slow down and even though I don't look that old, I feel old. So, it's important for me to look after myself as I get older. I just find that I get really get into it, but then if my health's not so great, then obviously I don't exercise for a few weeks, and then I'm back to square one. I sort of lose the enthusiasm a little bit. There are other people like me who've not done exercise sessions, or, you know, are not fit. And so just accept that you know there's going to be other people in the room that are similar to you. It's a great programme that is providing excellent support to our community. I would say it's a lifeline for our health". – Participant.

"After the lockdown ended there were some onsite sessions, which was a positive end to the year for everyone. It has been great to see both the young people and adults getting a lot of enjoyment out of taking part in regular activity". Shadwell Basin worker.



Scheme E - Improved inclusion, health and wellbeing outcomes for disabled people and people experiencing mental health issues

There are 5 projects within this scheme.



Scheme annual outcomes and achievements included:

Funded projects are working with adults with complex needs resulting in better health outcomes and improved life expectancy. As well as providing activities and support for users, projects funded under this scheme have enabled participants to access relevant support services.



635 beneficiaries supported by all theme 1 scheme E projects in the last 12 months

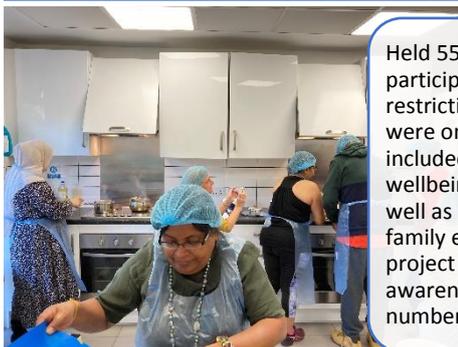
13 women reported increased confidence and self-esteem

12 deaf and hard of hearing participants have increased their participation in a range of activities

12 people with learning disabilities have increased participation and reduced social isolation

Project examples

deafPLUS / Improving Health and Wellbeing for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in Tower Hamlets



Held 55 events, benefitting 48 participants . Due to COVID restrictions 75% of events were online. Sessions included health talks, wellbeing focused sessions as well as physical activities and family events. Additionally the project provided deaf awareness training to a number of organisations .

Outcomes included:

45 people reported improved mental health

62 people reported feeling less isolated

5 organisations aim to improve access for the deaf and hard of hearing communities

ICM Foundation CIC - CORE Projects Get Active Newspaper - Promoting Healthy and Active Lifestyles



Adults with learning disabilities from Tower Hamlets have worked in partnership with the ICM Foundation to produce 2 accessible newspapers, on the theme of health and wellbeing reaching over 50 people.

In addition they organised and ran 6 online events which included dance, cooking, sports, quizzes, games, film nights and art.

Outcomes included:

87% of clients reported their stress and anxiety levels had either improved or not worsened.

94% of clients had either ceased having suicidal thoughts or had not become suicidal.

72% reported they either had more control over their future or felt this had stayed the same

Therapeutic Support Groups for women affected by Domestic Abuse



A safe, moderated space for female survivors of domestic abuse to share experiences and support each other. 26 women participated in support groups which began and ended in this period.

“... the group facilitator creates a very clear, safe space. They make it possible for us to feel listened to and understood”.

Case study Working Well Trust – Upskill:

Client H had been struggling with her well-being and feelings of isolation. She was a creative person who was looking for an outlet for her creativity. Referred to Upskill she began working with Ashley to identify her interests and look for a suitable work placement. She loved flowers and flower arranging.

Together they approached a well know florist based in Tower Hamlets. She began to volunteer and soon impressed the company with her skills. Last week she prepared the arrangements for the Hello Inspiration Awards attended by many celebrities including the Duchess of York. She invited Ashley and Sarah from Upskill down to see her work.

At the end of the event, she was able to take home some of the arrangements to give out to friends and neighbours. She has grown so much in confidence in such a short space of time said Ashley it was so lovely to spend the morning with her in such a glamorous setting.

Theme 2 – Digital Inclusion & Awareness

Theme 2 has two schemes supporting 5 projects.

Scheme A: ICT skills and digital careers

Scheme B - Digital Inclusion & Awareness

Residents benefitted from scheme A by acquiring ICT skills and knowledge giving them the confidence to use digital devices to access online activities and health information. Older people have been empowered to do a wide array of things online from making GP appointments to accessing online employment support workshops.



770 beneficiaries supported by all theme 2 projects in the last 12 months

Using digital services for personal and professional purposes has improved participants wellbeing and sense of connection. They have become digitally and socially included, essential during the pandemic lockdowns when most services moved on-line.

Scheme B has empowered children to recognise and deal with the impact of online abuse, resulting in young people speaking out and getting the help they need, including from their families. Parents have gained skills and knowledge to keep their children safer online.

Scheme A: ICT skills and digital careers

We fund 3 projects under this scheme:



Limehouse Project DigiTIES



Newham New Deal Partnership @online club network Tower Hamlets



Wapping Bangladesh Association Digital First

Scheme annual outcomes and achievements included:

The 3 projects funded under this scheme have supported a total of 128 beneficiaries

IT devices and data support were provided for some participants.

Web

Project example

Newham New Deal Partnership / @online club network Tower Hamlets



- The @online club network builds the confidence of older residents to go online in small friendly groups, through taster sessions and workshops based on the needs and interests of participants.
- This year the project delivered 84 customer learning hours.

'All I needed finally was someone to show me the steps of sending an email and joining a Zoom meeting in person and so I am happy now.' Participant.

Outcomes include:

17 beneficiaries over the year have reported more confidence in IT skills to apply for jobs

Recruited 6 volunteers who provided 34 hours of support to clients, mainly through the digital buddy scheme

"I'm not isolated anymore as I can talk to my friends and relatives via FaceTime calls and see their faces which is great..." Participant

Outcomes included:

75% of participants acquired new ICT skills such as having the confidence to use the keyboard, typing, using smartphones and browsing the internet.

40% of older participants use online services to manage their daily life tasks.

Wapping Bangladesh Association / Digital First



Digital First engages socially isolated BME older adults who are not computer literate and are digitally excluded.

The Project delivers ICT and Internet training that will help older adults to cope with facing key life transitions or challenges.

Participant quote Limehouse Project: DigiTIES:

"I'm grateful. I didn't think I would ever get this kind of support coming here. I feel like I've been given time to build my confidence and understand getting online. It's so important these days, especially when you can't reach anyone over the phone for appointments or help. I was feeling left behind and lately not knowing where to go to get help. I've enjoyed having people getting in touch and getting me up to speed with using a tablet. I'm understanding more about technology and how I can use it for every day. I'm very happy. Thank you all" SV, August 2021.

Scheme B – Online Safety

The schemes priority is children and young peoples’ online safety. Activities raised awareness of potential dangers online among children and supported parents and carers implement suitable prevention measures. We fund 2 projects under this scheme.

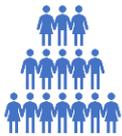


SocietyLinks Tower Hamlets
E-Safety Champions



Sporting Foundation
Building Digital Resilience

Scheme annual outcomes and achievements included:



600 beneficiaries supported since the start of the programme



17 project champions have reported feeling confident enough to make a change and tell others to do so too

Project example

Sporting Foundation / Building Digital Resilience



The project delivered 10 structure workshops and 48 informal learning sessions via Zoom and at different sporting venues. They cover a variety of topics including online applications, social media, awareness of online risks including online grooming.

A had experienced on-line bullying by her peers and was able to discuss the matter in the workshops. She developed the confidence to inform her parents about her online bullying. This resulted in her parents joining workshops.

Outcomes include:

Parents and young people are now more aware of risks pertaining to on-line activity

Parents report being more confident on applications that young people access

Case Study E-Safety Champions project SocietyLinks

L is a single mother of three children. She is not confident online at all and confesses to not being stringent enough to monitor her children’s activities online as she doesn’t understand it herself. L shared her concerns about her eldest daughter spending a lot of time on her new phone. L’s daughter had then got into some online conflict with some girls from another school. A comment she made on snapchat was screenshotted and used against her and a physical fight took place outside her school. L was very much affected by this incident- she felt guilty and although her daughter said that the other girls had said horrible things to her too, she had no proof as snapchat messages disappear.

‘We did a one-to-one session for both L and her daughter; we went over what had happened and how it could be prevented in the future. We helped L understand how to implement strategies to monitor her children’s online presence and we helped her children understand the risks’ (Project worker).

Theme 3 – Advice and Information

Theme 3 funds local advice and information services. East End Citizens Advice leads a consortium of advice organisations to deliver a borough-wide integrated service for local residents, providing advice on welfare benefits, housing, debt, money management, employment, immigration, consumer, family, personal, education and community care. Within this theme we also fund Island Advice Centre to support the capacity and quality of the borough's advice services. Services include recruitment and training for volunteers, facilitation of the advice network, advice website updates, factsheets, and staff training.

Scheme Highlights Year 2



19,735 clients assisted through **17,016** hours of advice services

11,663 clients supported to increase / maximise incomes.



£25,455,375. client's income increased and / or backdated.

£2,548,841 debt reduction/write offs resulting in reduction in amounts of personal debt

"He reported he felt a weight off his shoulders, and he was able to breathe again".

5 advice volunteers found paid work

30 advice workshops delivered to **382** participants on benefits issues.

16 Learning to Advise certificates were awarded (5 to volunteers and 11 for staff)

Advice consortium partners



"thank you for supporting me and looking after me in my tough times. You have helped me during such challenging times, when I did not have any money or support. Thank you for taking care of me and speaking to the local authority on my behalf, as my English is not good.

With your help I have been able to get emergency help and access the food bank support and travelling money to the hospital. I am grateful as you have helped me to fill out the Personal Independence Payment form and this will help me to take care of my health needs" Participant

Theme 4 – Employment and Skills

Theme 4 has three schemes supporting 9 projects.

Scheme A - Developing and embedding good practice in the workplace for people with disabilities, learning difficulties and physical and mental health barriers to work

Scheme B - Reducing barriers to employment for disadvantaged groups

Scheme C - Support focused on increasing access to art and cultural industries

The project in Scheme A continued to focus on improving employment and progression opportunities for disabled residents. Activities have enabled employers to be more inclusive resulting in disabled people having better employment opportunities.



1003 beneficiaries supported in the last 12 months

Projects in Scheme B have increased opportunities for women and young people by addressing the barriers to employment they face. Projects have provided work experience, information, advice and guidance, and access to training that addressing individual needs. They have resulted in participants gaining work based accreditation and securing employment.

Projects in Scheme C have provided opportunities for residents to access a career in the creative sector. Activities have resulted in participants accessing industry level training and employment.

Scheme A – Developing and embedding good practice in the workplace for people with disabilities, learning difficulties and physical and mental health barriers to work

97 beneficiaries supported on the project in the year

The project supported cases relating to employment matters raised by a disabled Tower Hamlets resident

62 cases have directly led to a disabled resident accessing or retaining employment



‘THEN and NOW’ employment project empowers organisations to confidently recruit, employ and retain disabled staff. The project also aims to better support local disabled people into work by addressing the barriers and promoting positive change.

“We feel much more confident (and supported) in being able to employ and support members of staff with additional needs. The 1-2-1 advice has been excellent. Luke and Wendy have even helped to ensure our job applications are inclusive for all and kindly offered to look closely at the job advert before posting”.

“The project has been vital to us as an organisation and has enabled us to achieve a lot in terms of creating broad policies, as well as supporting staff members on an individual level! We have had positive feedback from Disabled People for our recruitment processes since we have been working with Real, so we're really pleased that we have been able to come such a long way in a relatively short period of time with their support. Really looking forward to being able to continue to remove disabling barriers across our organisation with the support of THEN!”

Scheme B – Reducing barriers to employment for disadvantaged groups

This scheme has 4 projects who have different target groups. Two projects focus on young people while the other two on BAME women.



Scheme annual outcomes and achievements included:

430 beneficiaries supported	29 young people reported improved levels of wellbeing and mental health	15 young people who are NEETs have either secured employment or have completed training courses	24 women report an improvement in their employability skills	16 women with limited educational experiences and gained accredited qualifications
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Project examples

“We are offering training and support to enable many candidates to become work ready through ESOL, Childcare training, short courses and IT classes that are delivered from our centre”. Project worker.

SocietyLinks Tower / Job Club



Online Job Club

WE OFFER:

- TRAINING
- CV BUILDING
- INTERVIEW PRACTICE
- APPLICATION SUPPORT
- ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORT
- JOB SEARCH

FREE ACCREDITED COURSES SUCH AS FIRST AID, HEALTH AND SAFETY & MORE

MONS: 9:00AM-12:00PM
TUES: 12:00PM-3:00PM

CURRENTLY ALL CONTACT IS ONLINE

Are you aged 16+ unemployed and a Tower Hamlet resident?
Are you looking for a job but need support?
Contact us today!
IT'S ALL FOR FREE!
Call 0207 702 0901
07585854724
project@societylinks.org
SOCIETYLINKS TOWER HAMLETS
80 John Fisher Street
E1 8JL

- 118 individuals accessed the job club and increased their prospects of employment
- 15 young people who are NEET and/or from workless households are more motivated with higher aspirations for their future employment

Outcomes included

- 6 local residents completed an accredited course this year
- 5 individuals secured employment

Limehouse Project / Developing Potential



Developing Potential
Access to employment

Developing Potential is an integrated programme of personal skills development designed to enable women to make informed choices on their futures, supporting them into training, volunteering and work. This project links with the existing provision and acts as a progression route towards new opportunities for women in Tower Hamlets.

Outcomes included

- 156 individuals engaged on the programme
- 26 women accessing volunteering opportunities
- 33 women have enhanced employability through acquisition of a qualification
- 10 women progressed into paid employment

“I’ve surprised myself. I was scared of committing to a programme as a single parent but the support I have received is amazing. I can’t believe I am where I am today...” Participant

Case study St Giles Trust – Choices Tower Hamlets:

The client was initially referred by a contact who works for an organisation called Safe East. The client is currently living at home with his mum and wasn't in education, employment, or training. The client felt that if he didn't find something to occupy his time then he would fall into bad habits and start to hang around the wrong crowd like so many of his other friends had done. The client was concerned that he didn't have enough qualifications or experience to get a job and he had no interest in going back into education.

"I'm thankful for the support of St Giles trust who helped me achieve my goals"

At our first session we came up with an action plan. The client's CV was updated, and we made a list of the type of jobs the client was interested in. The client stated at the beginning that his main focus was his music and that he wanted a job that was flexible and not too time consuming. We found a new company called GETIR who operate in a similar way. I asked the client if he was happy for me to apply on his behalf and he said yes. Within a week he was contacted by the company and offered an interview. The client was successful. The client stated that they have also giving him a bike. The client also stated that he gets paid weekly which suits his lifestyle better. The client has now been working there for a few months and has kept to the goals we made in his action plan and has saved enough money to buy the music equipment he desired.

Participants quote Stifford Centre

"I think this is a great course. It enhanced my skills and improved my confidence level. I had low self-esteem but now I feel more confident. I have gained digital skills. Now I know how to create email address and email correspondence with others. I know how to search and apply for a job. Mock interview session helped me to understand how to face interview with employer". Participant of BAME Women's Employment Support Programme

Scheme C – Support focused on increasing access to art and cultural industries

This scheme aims to increase numbers of people participating in arts activities and schemes that lead to training and employment in the creative sectors.

There are 4 projects within this scheme.



Auto Italia South East
Learning Live!



Four Corners Ltd
ZOOM Film School



Magic Me
Artworks



The Bromley by Bow Centre
Creative Communities

Scheme annual outcomes and achievements included:

476 beneficiaries supported

107 people participated in arts projects for the first time

4 individuals gained paid employment

51 people increased access to industry level training

Examples of achievements and case studies

four corners



- 5 residents from Tower Hamlets engaged in arts-related skills for the first time
- 12 residents from Tower Hamlets, in particular those of BAME background, women and people with disabilities gained improved skills and confidence needed to access work in the creative media sector
- 7 trainees reported an increase in positive outcomes including volunteering, training & education

Auto Italia,



- 26 young people in Tower Hamlets participated in arts and cultural Projects, in particular BAME and working class
- 51 young people accessed industry level training

Case study The Bromley By Bow Centre – Creative Communities:

A was encouraged to join the programme as a progression from 'Together in Tower Hamlets' (TITH) project. The TITH project supported ESOL participants for 30 hours. When A left this programme, she felt the need to continue to develop her confidence in English, discover a new activity, find enjoyment, and make new friends. A joined the community Choir programme. Understandably, she felt very shy in the beginning, and was very nervous practicing any vocal activities in the group. With gentle encouragement and consistent attendance, A gradually found her voice and real enjoyment in singing. She is now a key member of the group and has taken part in additional activities, including prop and design work, a song writing workshop and performing in front of a public audience. She continues to grow in confidence and has become an ambassador of the programme. A is now working with the Employability team to start seeking employment and would like to progress in the world of Arts.

"I met and worked with a lot of great people during my time here and have learnt something from each of them. Magic Me is a great working environment, with such an inclusive staff team who are always ready to advise or assist you. Even as just a trainee, the team values your input and gives you room to voice your opinion and feedback which helps you a lot with your confidence. I really discovered my passions and dislikes and I'm grateful for the doors it's opened for me, it's really given me that head start I needed for my journey in the arts. Shout out to Catherine for being the best line manager, who understood and helped me when I needed and to Programme Director Bethany who's really just been great in setting me up for the world and encouraging me to try things I probably wouldn't have.

For anyone who's just starting in the arts and needs some insight, this traineeship is for you and I hope you enjoy it as much as I have!" Participant Magic Me Artworks

Theme 5 – Community Safety

Theme 5 has three schemes supporting 6 projects.

Scheme A Reduction in the exploitation of children, young people and other vulnerable groups

Scheme B Improving the perception of young people in the community

Scheme C Services for people affected by domestic violence or other unsafe circumstance.

Projects in scheme A, continued to work in schools, including the Pupils Referral Unit for young people excluded from mainstream school, and within the community. Participants' have been provided with positive opportunities resulting in them having the increased confidence, skills, and vocabulary, to understand what is happening to them and make positive life choices.



934 beneficiaries supported by all theme 5 projects this year

Providing activities that enable young people and older people to work together, projects funded through scheme B have increased meaningful intergenerational contact. Being able to return to face-to-face delivery has been a relief to all, particularly the older participants who have been isolated for such a long period. Older participants clearly demonstrate they see the younger participants in a more positive way and are less wary.

The project funded by scheme C provides early intervention and support to families who have fled to one of our refuges for protection. All women who moved on from the refuge and participated in the project have gone on to move into their own property. None have returned to their perpetrators. Events and campaigns have been held in the community to raise awareness and knowledge of all types of domestic abuse. Local safe reporting facilities have increased enabling more residents to access support.

Scheme A – Reduction in the exploitation of children, young people, and other vulnerable groups

There are 3 projects within this scheme.



Kazzum Arts Build



Osmani Trust Schools and Community Resilience Programme



Streets of Growth Young Influencers

Scheme annual outcomes and achievements included:

185 beneficiaries supported

Grooming of young people's involvement in drug selling prevented through knowled gained

85% of participants from the Pupils Referral Unit reported increased understanding of unhealthy relationships

39 participants gained ASDAN leadership accreditation

Project example

Osmani Trusts/ School Resilience Programme

Peer work programme element of project



2 new peer groups engaged in positive activities including sports and voluntary work. This led the peer workers to initiate their bit of community giveback by collecting baby clothes for a charity and dedicating their Wednesday afternoon to the Osmani foodbank.

“X disclosed that a local drug dealer approached him with the opportunity to make money. X said that although he was pressured, he was able to say no as the mentoring sessions had helped him to calculate costs and gains in taking that path”.
Youth Worker.

Outcomes include:

No peer worker engaged in serious violence or got into trouble with the law whilst on the programme

Peer leaders completed the accredited Asdan Sports Leadership Programme and volunteered for detached youth work activities during the summer

Case study Streets of Growth Young Influences:

This tells the story of just one of the projects run by participants this year:

Young influencers participated in leadership training developing skills in planning, coordination, outreach, identifying target groups, risk assessment, working with partners and professionals.

10 of them used the skills and knowledge gained to hold an event in busy and hotspot area in Shadwell where there are a lot of Young People.

Activities included BBQ, sports, flower arranging, t shirt spraying, music tasters, arts and crafts and information stall on Streets of Growth, the project and other opportunities available for Young People.

Over 120 people participated in the event planned and delivered by the young influencers.



“No young people involved in the Young Influences programme have been cautioned, issued with an ASB warning or arrested while on the programme”. Manager

Quote Kazzum Arts - Build

"The group really gets the boys' talking, I thought the same thing last year. They don't really have another space quite like this. It's really important they have a space to think about their experiences and reflect on that" Key Adult supporting participant

Scheme B – Improving the perception of young people in the community

2 intergenerational projects are funded under this scheme enabling young people to be seen to be a positive part of the community.



Four Corners Ltd
Into Focus photography project



Leaders in Community
Mind the Gap

Scheme annual outcomes and achievements included:



Supported 193
participants



100% of older people engaged in
the projects have a more positive
view of young people.

Project example

Leaders in Community / Mind the Gap



•A project designed to bridge form meaningful relationships between two disconnected groups, the young and the elderly.

“In July, we held our first in-person event this year. We were unsure how participants would feel about a face-to-face event due to the pandemic and were overwhelmed by the joyous and celebratory atmosphere that was generated by our older residents as soon as they arrived at the centre. It was wonderful to see both older and younger people, appreciated being able to share a space with one another”.

“I realised there is community spirit and people out there to provide support. It made a difference.” Elderly participant.

Outcomes include:

77% of Elders now feeling they can comfortably speak to young people they don't know.

Case study Four Corners – Into Focus Photography Project:

L is 50 years old. She lives in Shadwell. She had no previous photography training. She had never used a photographic lighting studio and never printed in a darkroom, although she had developed some Photoshop skills by herself. L applied for the programme because her son X had a very keen interest in analogue photography, and they wanted to explore the medium and experiment together.

They enjoyed interacting and working with people in both age groups to produce photographic prints and organised their exhibition. They purchased several film cameras, which they learnt to use during the project. They presented work enthusiastically at Zoom meetings during lockdown. When lockdown relaxed, they used the darkrooms regularly and produced six prints each for the group exhibition held in October 2020.

Scheme C – Services for people affected by domestic violence or other unsafe circumstances

The priority of this scheme is services for people affected by domestic abuse and to increase understanding of it in the wider community. It aims to increase the extent to which young people and families, affected by domestic abuse, feel safe.

The project funded under this scheme is provided by Hestia Housing and Support.

Scheme annual outcomes and achievements included:

The project has supported 556 beneficiaries.	Delivered 3 domestic abuse community awareness workshops benefitting 53 attendees this year.	Residents can now access physical Safe Spaces at 7 locations in Tower Hamlets.	Over 140 residents have visited the physical Safe Spaces in the borough during the year.	16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence in November / December 2020
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Families Safe and Secure in Tower Hamlets



This project supports families, who have experienced DVSA and who are living in a local refuge, address the trauma they've faced and to learn about what a healthy relationship looks like. It also raises awareness amongst the Tower Hamlets community of domestic abuse and how to report it.

Outcomes included:

- 90% of attendees of awareness raising events say their understand of Domestic Abuse has increased.
- Following a workshop in the refuge, 93% stated that they understood gaslighting and psychological abuse.
- Following a session for children in the refuge 87.5% of the children expressed that the session has provided them with confidence to access support if required.

Following sessions participants made the following comments:

"The session has given me the confidence to understand that perpetrators can be manipulative and that it was not my fault. It has helped me to forgive myself as I have been dealing with feelings around guilt."

"The session has helped me to understand how my child views the situation"

"I did not even know about Bright Sky App. Now I have the app, I feel a bit better".

"I'm glad my dad can't find us. I've made friends here and I like this session. I think it's good".

Are you concerned that someone you know one is experiencing **domestic abuse?**

Access the free **Bright Sky** app and website, which provide support and information on how to respond to domestic abuse.

Use Bright Sky on a device you feel safe using, and that only you have access to

[Hestia.org/BrightSky](https://www.hestia.org/BrightSky)

"I will look out for the warning signs of psychological abuse. I don't know if I'm strong enough to confront these behaviours in future. I would like to attend more sessions."

Infrastructure & Capacity Building Fund

Tower Hamlets Voluntary and Community Sector (THVCS) Infrastructure Partnership

THVCS Infrastructure Partnership brings together Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) infrastructure support agencies to increase the range and number of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations that are well-run, resilient, and sustainable; and to strengthen the VCS as key public sector strategic delivery partners in Tower Hamlets.

Overall, the Infrastructure Partnership has achieved the desired outcomes:

- Increased proportion of organisations are well run and better managed
- Broader pool of VCS organisations accessing public service funding
- Increased resources in terms of funding, volunteers, or in-kind support
- VCS organisations have better planning and resilience arrangements

THCVS and VCTH maintained service throughout the period by moving to online working, with minimum disruption to access. They have also responded to Covid by taking on additional work, some that is funded (the Volunteer Hub), and some of which has been absorbed within existing resources, for example, involvement in borough wide Covid-19 response planning meetings.

THCVS worked together with the Communities Team and surveyed VCS groups to identify needs arising from Covid-19 and have adapted service delivery accordingly.



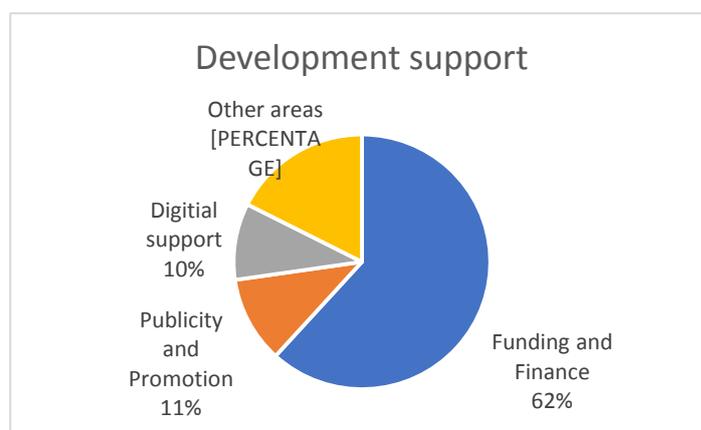
THCVS supports the Voluntary and Community Sector to have a greater impact for residents of the Borough. They achieve this by building the capacity of local voluntary and community sector organisations.

Annual achievements included:

Provided casework and support to 131 unique organisations in total of 319 engagements	Supported Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to secure £750,000 from external sources	Increased support provided to BAME community groups from 24% to 35% of the groups supported	Publish a fortnightly bulletin with funding information an average of 2,000 recipients each issue.	8,216 unique users have accessed the newly created website Events Calendar which shares training and learning
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During Covid local VCS organisations reported a deteriorating financial position through loss of self-generated income, financing Covid response initiatives and limited availability of funding sources. Many feared they would no longer be operating in a year. Moving services online also presented issues about digital capacity.

This is reflected in the areas of development support provide by THCVS over the year.



THCVS has developed a range of different funding support sessions - for example, splitting the Bid writing training into shorter sessions covering different aspects of the bid writing process and running these more frequently. This included sessions on specific funding opportunities which were well attended.

Provides a comprehensive and responsive volunteering infrastructure service to all volunteer-involving organisations in Tower Hamlets.

Annual achievements included:

27 organisations/79 unique Volunteer Managers trained to increase knowledge or making a change in their organisation	12 e-bulletins published in the year and circulated to over 700 organisations	100% said they would recommend VCTH's advice service to other voluntary and community sector groups	92% organisations implemented improvements or changes to their volunteering programme, policies or practice	100% of respondents to the organisations impact survey found VCTH's advice service useful
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VCTH undertook a long-term impact survey with organisations that received 1:1 best practice advice on their volunteer programmes. The survey was completed by 13 of 27 organisations (48%) that received advice. 12 out of 13 organisations responding (92%) implemented improvements or changes to their volunteering programme, policies, or practices. The one remaining organisation was unable to implement changes citing not enough staffing capacity to make effective changes.

Feedback from participants:

<p>... "I enjoyed learning about employment law and how it affects volunteers and enjoyed talking about the challenges with other recruiters. I will look at our volunteer agreements and reword some of the statements to make it more friendly and approachable to do so".</p>	<p>"I feel staff at VCTH are extremely professional and knowledgeable. The support received is on the right level and it is great to get in touch when needed. Thank you for all you do".</p>	<p>"Gaining volunteer management accreditation shows our professionalism and high standards for effective management of volunteers, through staff and the organisation as a whole, taking into account volunteer needs and improves our reputation with funders".</p>
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For the first half of the year - October 2020 to March 2021, Tower Hamlets Community Transport supported food distribution and other volunteer activities, co-ordinated by the Council. This involved 2 vehicles going out 2 times per week with volunteer driver.



Geographical and Equalities Data.

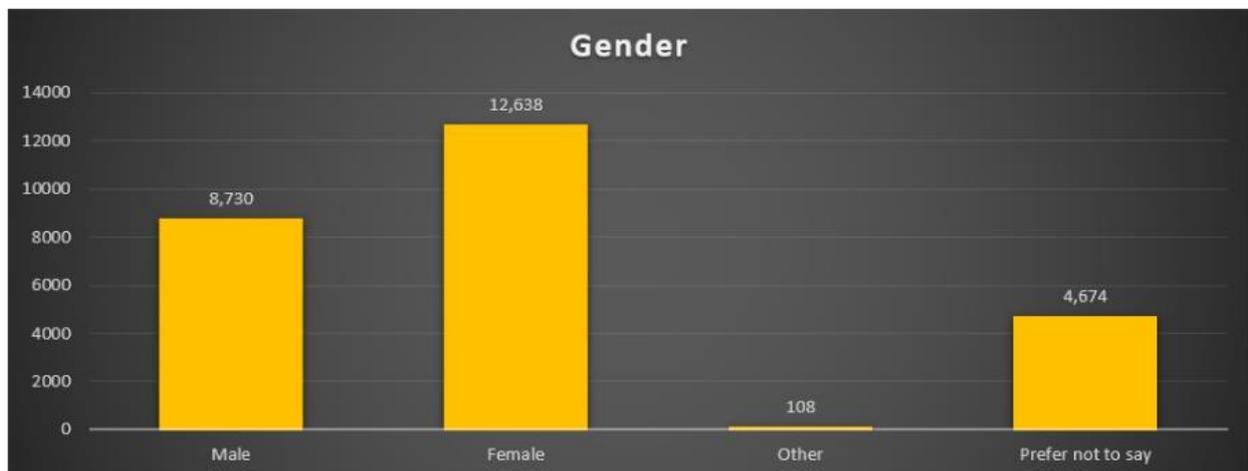
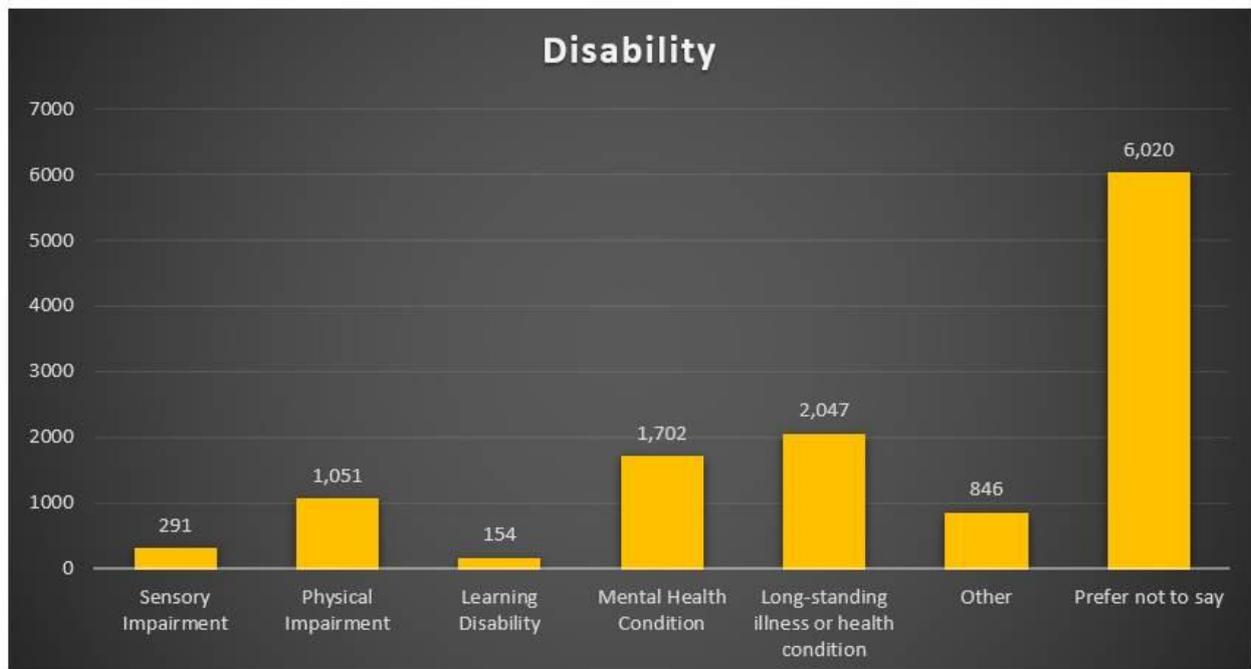
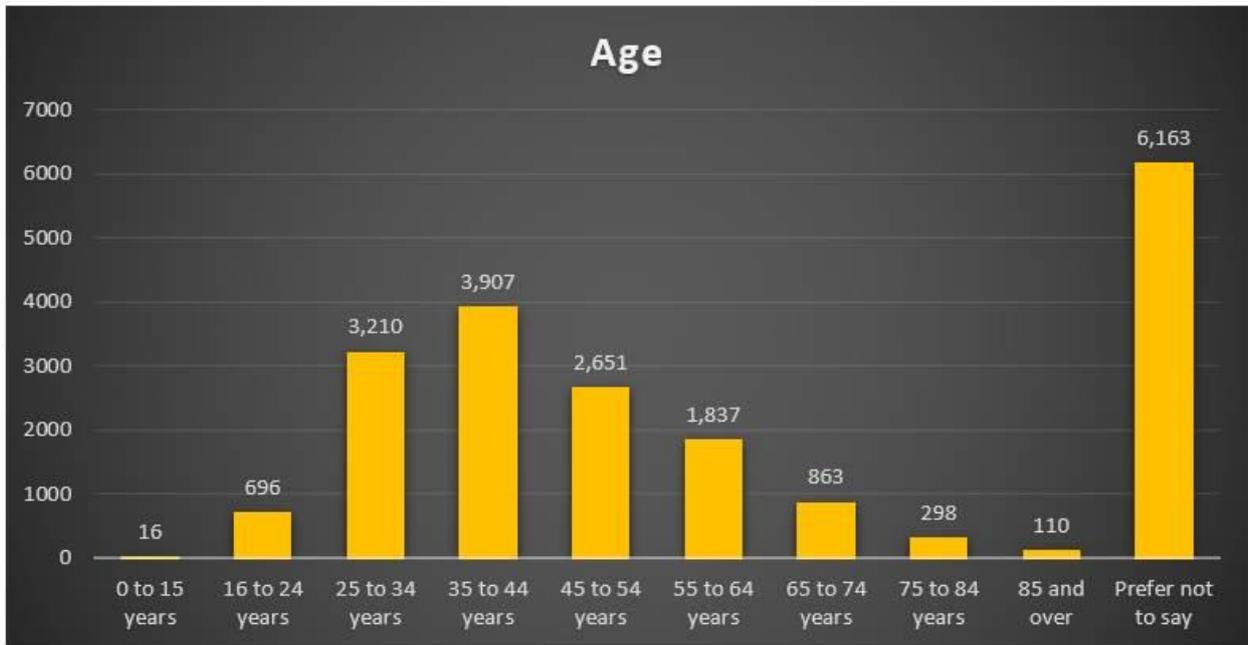
5,275 in the NW cluster
(Bethnal Green, Spitalfields & Banglatown, St Peter's, Weavers)

5,397 in the NE cluster
(Bow East / West, Bromley North / South, Mile End)

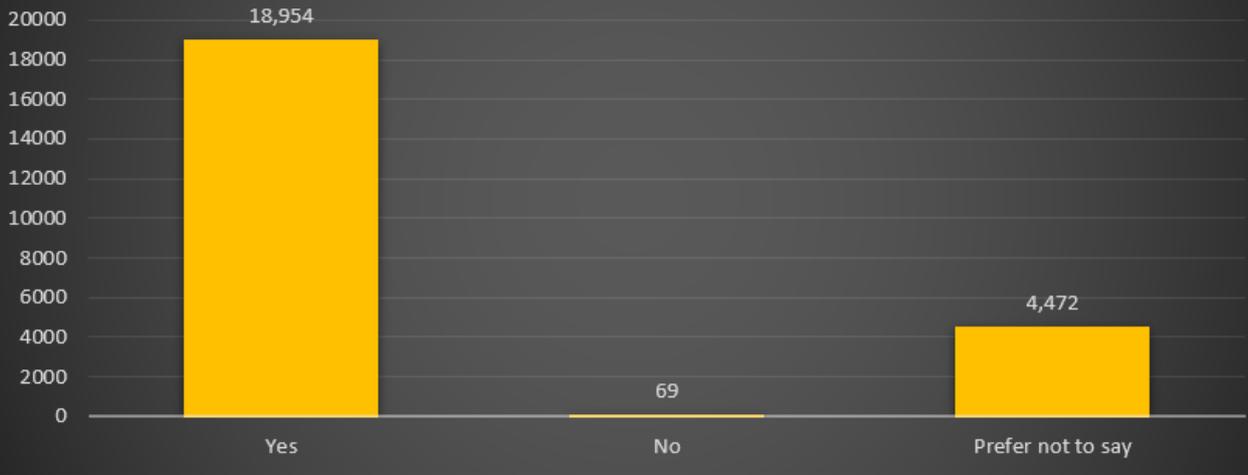
5,595 in the SW cluster
(Shadwell, St Dunstan's, St Katharine & Wapping, Whitechapel)

4,898 in the SE cluster
(Blackwall & Cubitt Town, Canary Wharf, Island Gardens, Lansbury, Limehouse, Poplar)

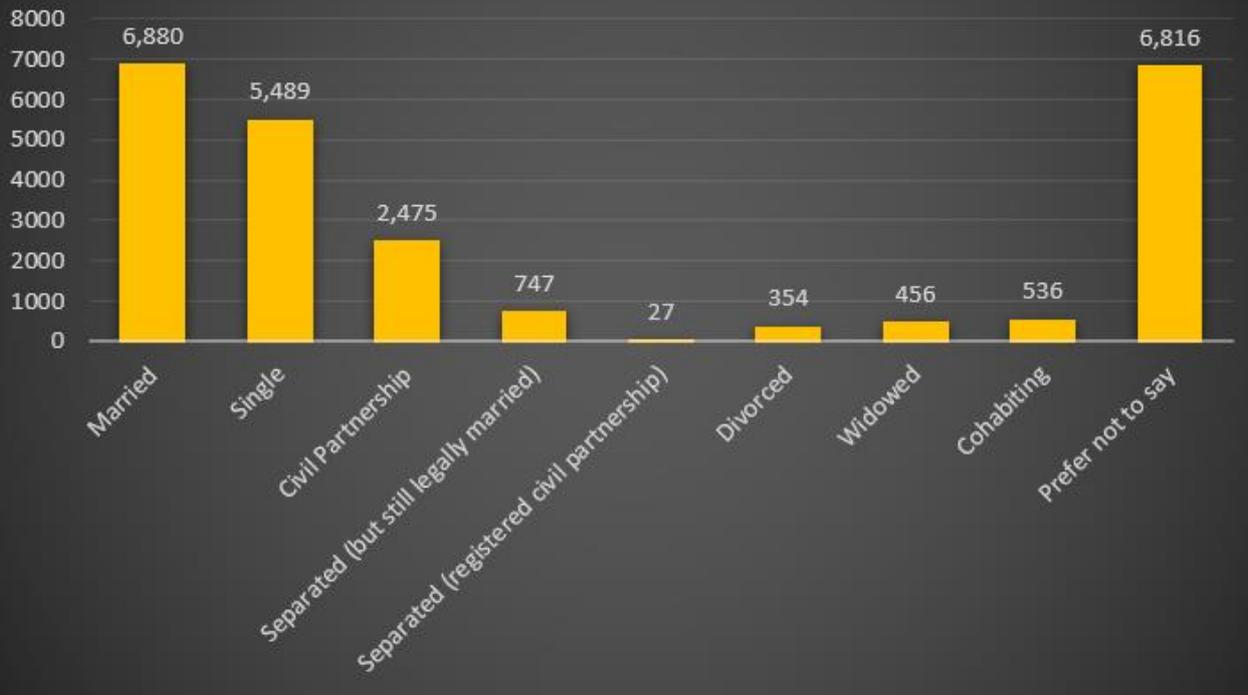




Gender identity the same as assigned at birth



Marriage and Civil Partnerships



Pregnancy and Maternity

