

Local Community Fund and Infrastructure & Capacity Building Fund Annual Report – Oct19–Sep20

26/11/2020



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Foreword

Welcome to the first annual report for the Local Community Fund and Infrastructure and Capacity Building Fund.

These programmes began delivery in October 2019 in what became a challenging first 12 months. The organisations funded to deliver these programmes rose to the challenge to support residents over and above their planned activities.

During April to June in particular, organisations supported the borough's response to Covid-19 through delivering food parcels and medicines, providing online and telephone support through befriending, advice provision and with volunteers.

This willingness to participate and help others demonstrates the community spirit and 'can do' attitude that is a credit to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations supported by these schemes.

We recognised that Voluntary and Community Sector organisations had been impacted by the pandemic and it was important that we continued to fund organisations more flexibly through this period. The Mayor confirmed this in the letter on 27 March 2020 sent to funded groups and the Council has signed up to London Funders ["We stand with the sector"](#) funder response to Covid-19 statement.

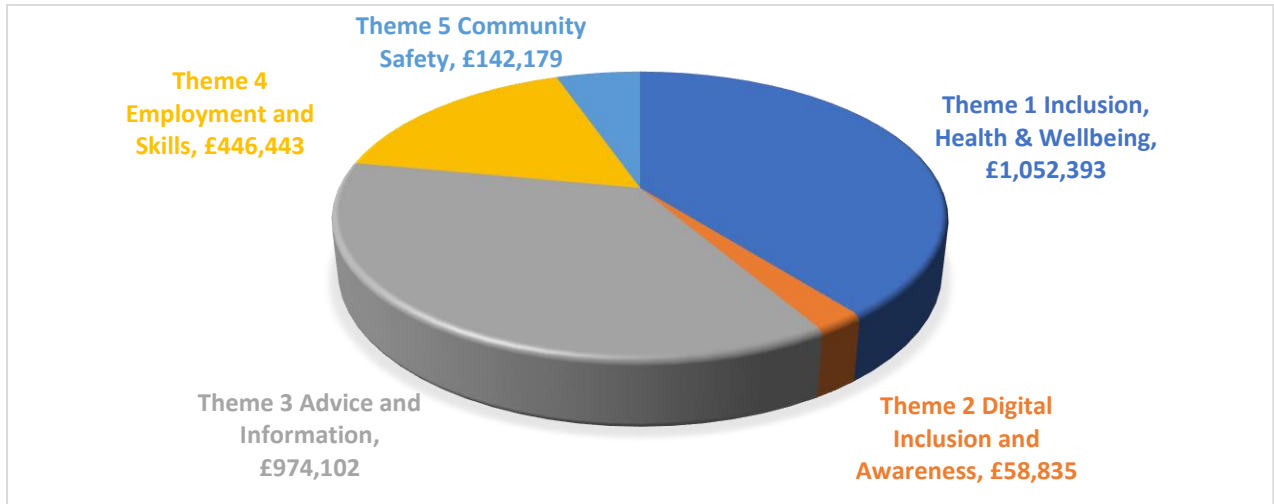
Despite the impact there have been clear successes through the first year of the programme highlighted in this report. This annual report demonstrates the range of projects and many of their achievements. Thank you to funded organisation for the photos and quotes.

It has been important to balance the support to residents dealing with Covid with enabling the organisations to deliver the Local Community Fund aims and objectives. The Council will continue to support organisations to strike that balance.

The next 12 months are starting off in an equally challenging environment but the priorities of the programme including digital inclusion, welfare advice provision, employment support and reducing isolation have never been more important.

Programme Overview

The **Local Community Fund** began implementation 1st October 2019 with 39 organisations awarded funding totalling **£2.67m** per year to deliver 50 projects across five themes.



At the same time the **£260k** per year was awarded from the **Infrastructure & Capacity Building Fund** to Tower Hamlets Voluntary and Community Sector (THVCS) Infrastructure Partnership project to support organisations across the borough.

During the first year of the Local Community Fund programme over 20,000 residents have been supported through the programme from all ages and throughout the borough with delivery 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: Scheme A 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

Theme 1 – Inclusion, Health & Wellbeing

Theme 1 incorporates a range of schemes supporting children and families, older people and people with disabilities from across the borough. We fund 28 projects, focusing on improving the health and wellbeing of residents and the quality of the care services they receive. The table below provides a breakdown of this theme.

| Theme | Scheme | Priority | Number of Projects |
|---------------------------------|---|--|--------------------|
| Inclusion, Health and Wellbeing | 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 |

Theme one projects made progress in engaging with their service users. Projects had an empowering person-centred approach, making a tangible and positive difference to people's lives. Providers collaborated with community and statutory agencies to ensure the best outcomes for residents. Funded activities included:

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Leadership programmes | Lunch club enrichment sessions with year 7 | Fitness and sports sessions for children and women | Therapeutic activities for children and mothers who are victims of domestic violence |
| Digital newspaper for people with learning disabilities | Young Farmer and Forest School sessions | Workshops on safeguarding and personal safety | Support planning for disabled people |
| Bollywood Dance Classes, Tai Chi and Yoga sessions | Healthy Cooking course and Health talks | Volunteering opportunities for older people | Trips to the Tower Bridge exhibition and fun interactive family activity |

Impact of Covid-19

Projects adapted their services; some more quickly as they already had systems in place to do so. Others needed extra resources (laptops / mobile phones) to provide tangible and effective support to residents. Examples of adapted activities:

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Online interactive creative sessions for families | Girls Club Online for young women on the Isle of Dogs | <p>Socially distanced activities at St Hilda's</p>  |
| Performance that examined the impact of technology on teenagers' lives | Video of some easy to follow mindfulness activities and tips on managing feelings of anxiety | |

Impact on adapted activities:



Some organisations indicated that this period has enabled them to forge a strong alliance with the Council's Early Help team and Social Services. Resulting in Working with Early Interventions Support Workers to ensure support for the families deemed most in need.

There have been mixed reactions to how online services have worked. Some organisations have taken the opportunity to develop this as an additional resource.

Feedback from service users during lockdown included:

"we are all here for each other's wellbeing"

"Isolation is hard and being in the same room helps"

"It's amazing. Thank you, for not letting me go"

"Some service users have found this particularly difficult, being in isolation and experiencing 'screen fatigue'".

The onset of the coronavirus pandemic part way through the year had a big impact in the borough, on organisations, and on residents. Project resources were, in some cases, diverted to provide Covid response. This included co-ordinating, food delivery and providing medicine delivery to residents who were shielding, alongside advice and support over the phone.

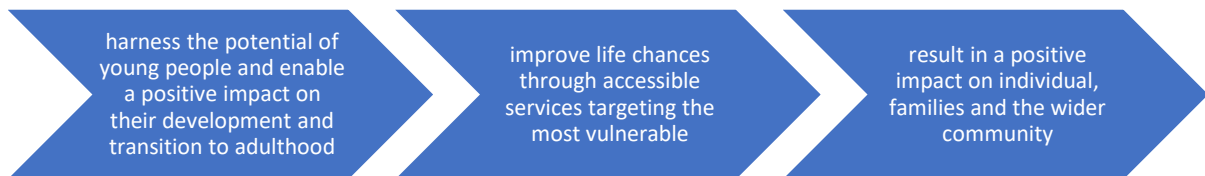


Hot meal home deliveries to service users and other vulnerable residents.

Scheme A – Children Young People & Families

There are 8 projects within this scheme. The focus is to a) increase access to Youth Services, b) provide Early Help support to families, c) support for young carers.

Projects are intended to:



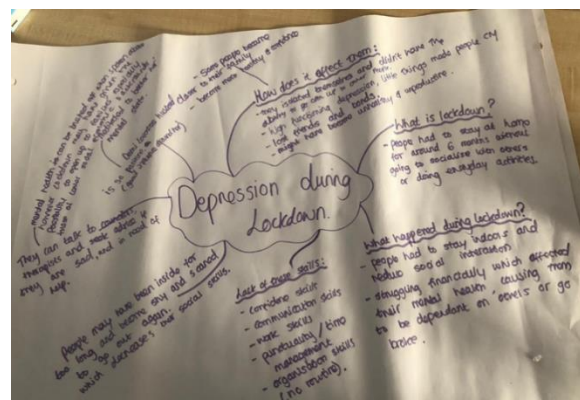
Projects in this scheme progressed well, achieving priorities and outcomes. In this first year, over 600 children and women were supported to explore experiences of self-worth and confidence.

Outcomes and achievements include:



Girls in Action

8 girls report they can cope better with mental health issues after participating in workshops





Tower Hamlets Teens

18 young people have benefited from in-depth, one-to-one coaching and support.

“This year I have come closer to reaching my potential, creating pieces I can actually be proud of, and it’s all thanks to you,” and “I don’t think I really would have discovered and expressed my creative side if it wasn’t for all of you, so thank you.” - participant



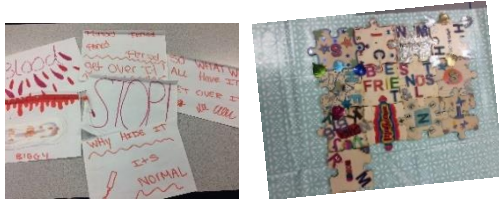
Family Mentoring Project supported 30 families.



38 girls participated in the leisure, health and creative activities of the Young Girl's Project.



83% of young women report they feel more positive and confident to sort out conflict with family or friends



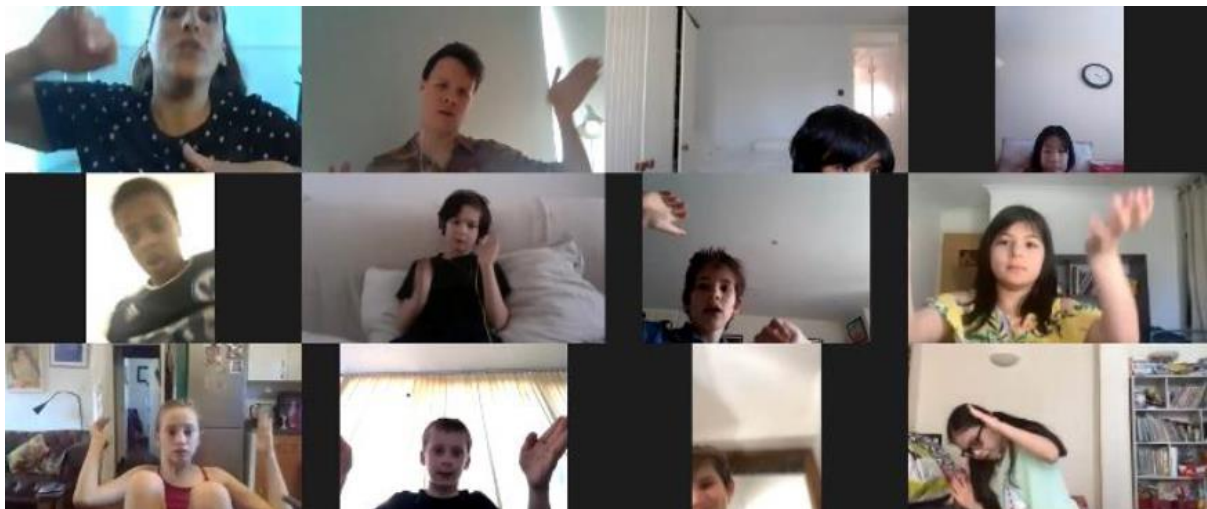
Domestic Abuse Children's Worker

42 children supported in the refuge



198 young people participated in Youth Theatre sessions, 4929 audience members. 88 families took part in Creative Play.

“I loved the games we played and everyone is always so nice to me. Thank you everyone I hope to see you in Sept 2020.”



Scheme B – Older People

There are 7 projects within this scheme. The focus is to provide a programme of a) ageing well and reducing social isolation, b) physical and health-promotion activities for older people.

In the first year, over 800 beneficiaries were supported to build stronger networks of information sharing and peer-support between users and those not accessing services. Below are some of the achievements of this scheme:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| increased engagement | maintained relationships | less loneliness | improved mental health | increased confidence |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------|

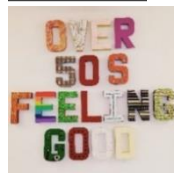


Consultation discussion group on transportation to key services at the Vietnamese and Chinese Lunch and Social Club.



Tower Hamlets LGBT Support Project

23 people have developed social connections that they have maintained outside of the group.



"I love how St Hilda's is all about bringing people together no matter your age or backgrounds – for me, this is the very essence of great community."



Friend at Home

120 volunteers active, with 71 new matches since October 2019

'Being a befriender is more than I anticipated. Our weekly chats are something I look forward to as well as the client looking forward to it. My client is lovely and has lots of funny stories to tell.'

Caxton Hall Activity Centre
led by older people.

Help run the Hub café, proving a warm welcome and healthy snacks, enabling local people to connect with others, young and old, in the community. The cafe was closed due to the lock-down and the project applied actions to support each other. As a result of the project, 225 old older people were supported and report feeling less isolated.



Older Peoples Befriending Project

- 50 older residents visited, report feeling less loneliness through greater contact with other older people
- 2 older people were recruited as new volunteers during the lockdown and report making a positive contribution to their communities.



The Wellbeing Centre at Toynbee Hall

- 120 people aged 50+ report increased social networks and have maintained these relationships outside the project
- 80 older people report feeling confident to take control of their health and tackle challenges



Scheme C – Access, Information and Self-Management

There are 2 projects within this scheme. The focus is for older residents to be better informed and equipped to manage health conditions.



Take Back Your Life, a mindfulness-based pain management programme, addressing chronic pain, related social isolation and inactivity.

58 people were supported through five pain management courses, alongside additional one to one telephone support during the COVID-19 pandemic.



“The course was good because I learned so many things.... like how to calm down yourself... your mind”



The **"Taking control of your life"** project delivers planning support alongside a user-led co-production group harnessing the views of people with lived experience of disability. This project started in April.




Scheme D – Healthy living and healthy choices

There are 6 projects within this scheme. The focus is for a) Residents to be better informed to make healthier choices, b) Increase engagement in physical activity


The projects in this scheme have progressed in achieving priorities and outcomes. In the first year, 1900 beneficiaries have been supported to make informed choices on keeping fit and healthy. Below are some of the achievements of this scheme.







Exercise for health project

- 158 women participating report feeling less lonely and isolated
- 60% reported feeling more positively connected




Street Art 'play on our streets'

Playing out at Mudchute project using Mudchute's unique natural facilities to provide a range of freely chosen play opportunities in a safe, stimulating environment.


1300 residents participated in a wide range of culture, play, physical activity, leisure and sport inclusive for all

RSBC Royal Society for Blind Children Live Active, Live Well Tower Hamlets

“20 Blind and partially sighted children and young people living in Tower Hamlets have improved ability to make healthy life decisions”.



- 127 children, young people and adults registered on the project.
- The summer programme sports sessions brought families to come together to play and build relationships.



Live Healthy Enjoy Life

152 women participated in various health and well-being activities and report they increased ability to care for their health needs and those of their families.

Healthy Lifestyle Partnership Programme



A consortium of local organisations delivering a programme of healthy lifestyle activities, classes and opportunities. The partnership supported 401 residents, of whom:

85% report higher levels of wellbeing after six weeks of membership

90% report that they have experienced improved symptoms of ill-health

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

There are 5 projects within this scheme. The focus is improved health outcomes for disabled people. In the first year, over 340 disabled people and their families have been supported to make informed choices on their wellbeing. Below examples of scheme achievements:

15 therapeutic support sessions for women affected by domestic abuse

72 clients attended a workshop on how to stay safe in relationships

produced an online newspaper for people with learning disability

6-weeks Bollywood dance class



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

61 beneficiaries participated in various activities such as wellbeing workshops.



10 over 50s accessed volunteer placements including Covid-19 response placements. 6 clients accessed paid work.



Get Active Newspaper

- 40 people with learning difficulties attended the initial newspaper launch
- 13 beneficiaries reduce social isolation



'Being a befriender is more than I anticipated... My client is lovely and has lots of funny stories to tell.'

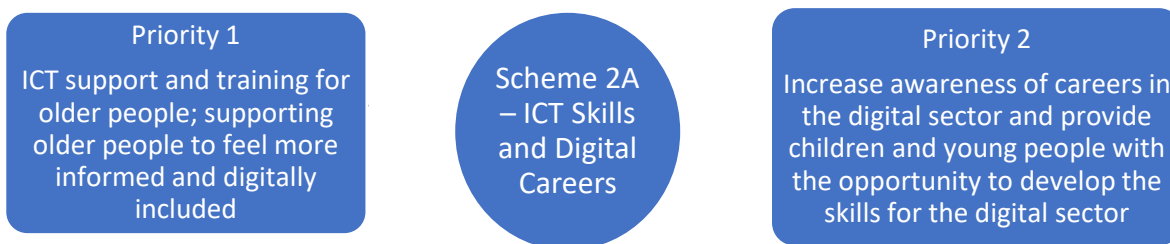


Therapeutic support for women affected by Domestic Abuse

- 9 out of 15 service users reported reduced stress and anxiety
- 10 reported improved confidence and self-esteem and feelings of control over their future

Theme 2 – Digital Inclusion & Awareness

We fund five Digital Inclusion and Awareness projects. All Theme 2 projects performed satisfactorily up to the end of March 2020.



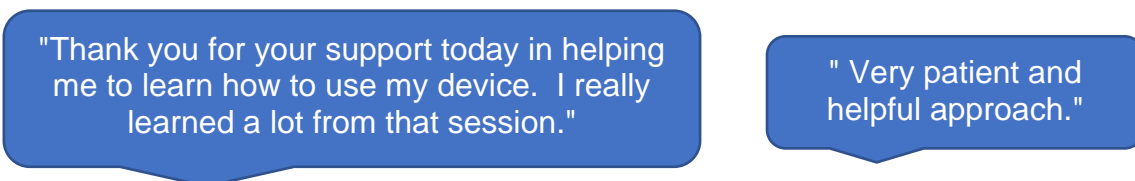
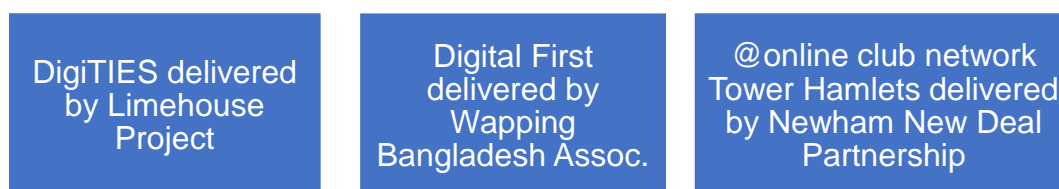
Intended outcomes for participants:



The Covid-19 lockdown measures had an impact with organisations contributing to the Borough's Covid-19 response with services paused or adapted from April. Increased use of IT to stay in touch highlights the importance of this theme to enable increased inclusion of older people and safety of children.

Scheme A: ICT skills and digital careers

Projects deliver sessions that enable older people to be confident in using ICT programmes, going online safely and learning to use social media platforms to communicate and connect with people. We fund 3 projects under this scheme:







“I have been able to go online alone, something I didn't think I could do! ... Taking part in this free course has been good for me and something I haven't been able to do before. I enjoyed the learning with a young volunteer to talk me through what to do. I am now going to study another course online”

Scheme B – Online Safety

The schemes priority is the online safety of children and young people. Activities raise awareness of potential dangers and supports parents and carers to implement suitable prevention measures.

Projects funded in this scheme are:

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>E-Safety Champions delivered by</p>  <p>SocietyLinks</p> | <p>Building Digital Resilience delivered by</p>  |
|---|---|

Projects continue to:

- provide activities online
- share resources and links to useful websites with adult service users
- respond to enquiries and requests for support
- encouraged their users to share tips that they do with their children to maintain a safe online environment



“Mary told the group that she was very happy to have been made aware of how she could protect her children as she hadn't realised the dangers that are present online”.

Theme 3 – Advice and Information

Theme 3 funds local advice and information services. A consortium of advice organisations is funded to provide local people advice on welfare benefits, housing, debt, employment rights, immigration and other social welfare issues. Within this theme we support the Tower Hamlets Advice Training and Capacity Building Project that provides training for volunteers embarking on advice careers.

Scheme Highlights

Advice Tower Hamlets – 13 organisations in partnership - **£3,234,357** funding up to March 2023



19,828 clients assisted with social welfare advice in the first 12 months

4,772 clients supported to increase and maximise incomes in the first 12 months



£18,578,281 client's income increased and or backdated in the first 12 months

£2,901,815 debt reductions or write offs resulting in reduction in amounts of personal debt

Tower Hamlets Advice Training and Capacity Building Project – £175,000 funding up to March 2023

7 volunteers found **paid work** within the first 12 months of the programme

19 Learning to Advise **certificates** were **awarded** (11 to volunteers and 8 for staff)

Advice consortium partners



St Peters Bengali Association



Case study Toynbee Hall - Client is 31-year -old female of Bangladeshi origin, divorced, unemployed with long term mental health condition and lives in a Hostel with no dependent family. Client presented us with a debt of £2,900 which was made of money owed to utility companies and rent arrears from previous accommodation which she doesn't know how she accrued. The client also feels suicidal because of the rejection from her ex-husband after 16 years of marriage. We advised and assisted our client to negotiate payment arrangement plans with her debtors and helped her to contest some debts to be written off. The client is relieved of the outcome of her case and has expressed her gratitude to Toynbee Hall for the empathy and assistance she received.

Theme 4 – Employment and Skills

Theme 4 has three schemes supporting 9 projects.

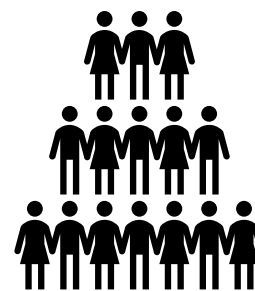
Scheme A - Developing and embedding good practice in the workplace for people with disabilities, learning difficulties and physical and mental health barriers to work

Scheme B - Reducing barriers to employment for disadvantaged groups

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

Projects adapted well due to Covid-19 and delivered revised project activity. Scheme A started in April 2020, by setting up and maintaining two networking groups consisting of people with disabilities and employers.

Projects in scheme B and C managed to secure laptops, tablets and smart phones from various places and organisations so that both their staff and participants had the tools needed to progress virtually. Some organisations focussed their energy and resources in providing front-line Covid-19 response work.



485 beneficiaries supported in the last 12 months

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

The project funded under this scheme, started in April 2020, and has carried out significant work over the last 6 months. Achievements include:

Direct contact with 77 potential employers, with more intensive follow up with 11 employers

Setting up two networks made up of disabled workers and employers called Network of Workers (NOW) and the Tower Hamlets Employers Network (THEN)

Refining focus to respond to the changing needs of employers while they make organisational change due to Covid-19



'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.

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 women. Projects have progressed well in order to achieve set outcomes. Below are some of the annual achievements:



Examples of projects and achievements



“Building my skills and gaining my qualifications shows my children if I can do it they can to. I hope to work in a school with children and help them grow and learn. I am proud of what I achieved and couldn't have without Limehouse” Project’. August 2020



SocietyLinks

The poster for Online Job Club includes the following text: "Online Job Club", "WE OFFER:", "TRAINING", "CV BUILDING", "INTERVIEW PRACTICE", "APPLICATION SUPPORT", "ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORT", "JOB SEARCH", "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 07565854724", "project@societylinks.org.uk", "SOCIETYLINKS TOWER HAMLETS 80 John Fisher Street E1 5JP".

- 84 individuals accessed the job club
- 75 people supported to develop their CV
- 43 individuals supported in setting up email systems or in learning how to navigate their email
- 17 individuals gained accredited outcomes

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.



195 beneficiaries supported

Projects in this scheme started off well setting up a series of workshops, exhibitions and events to encourage participants to fully access the opportunities available in the arts and cultural industries.

81 people participated in arts projects for the first time



In March, projects quickly adapted to remote ways of working in order to maintain the interests, motivation and participation of their beneficiaries.



108 people gained increased opportunities in the arts and cultural industries

108 people increased access to industry level training



Project examples and achievements:

[Auto Italia](#)



73 young Tower Hamlets residents from Black and Minority Ethnic and working-class backgrounds participated in art and cultural projects



Artworks

“The first trainee's experience was interrupted by covid 19; she has not completed her traineeship yet. The picture to the right links to the work she has completed. She filmed and edited this herself”.



Theme 5 – Community Safety

Theme 5 has three schemes supporting six 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 circumstances

Resilience and a willingness to find new ways of working during the lockdown was demonstrated by organisations funded under Theme 5. Implementing strategies and actions to guarantee continued engagement whilst at the same time responding to needs demonstrated by participants. Flexibility was in place of when planned project activities happened. Organisations used project time and additional hours to provide Covid-19 support to residents as well as responding to the widening inequalities experienced by participants.

Examples of work carried out during the first Covid lockdown

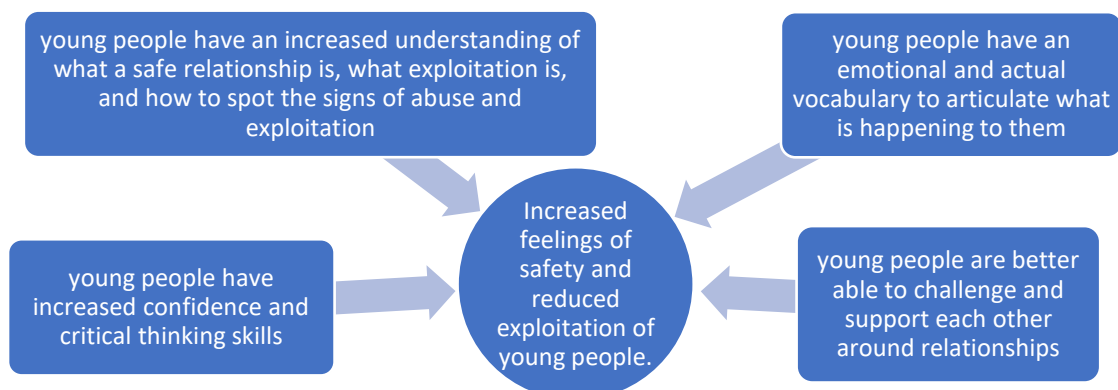
- A new domestic violence reporting service in six local pharmacies
- Care parcels to vulnerable residents and activity packs to young people without digital availability
- Continuing regular contact with participants and to take new referrals allowing response to crisis situations.

When allowed projects returned to a mix of safe face to face work alongside online activities developed during the lockdown. Organisations have put in place project plans with flexible delivery to enable participants to continue to benefit as Covid restrictions change over the coming months.

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

This schemes priority is to reduce the exploitation of children and young people, and vulnerable groups and to increase the extent to which young feel safe and reduce the number of children and young people, and vulnerable groups being exploited.

There are four intended outcomes as outlined below:



Scheme highlights October 2019 to 2020 include

Participants developed to challenge stereotypes and terminology

13 young leaders, engaging with other young people in schools to reduced exploitation

Resources for Adults - Adverse Childhood Experiences, developed, reviewed 1062 times online

Young people moved away from harmful situations and rescued from exploitation



The Resilient Young Leaders Programme is an initiative led by and for young people (15-19 years) enabling young people to build skills and capacity to feel safe, confident, and responsible in making positive changes they want to see in their neighbourhoods and society.

Participant won the Youth Champion Award for making a positive contribution to his neighbourhood and also in respect of the positive changes he made in his life.



“You made our wishes come true... you stuck by us and believed in my brother from day one... I am thankful from the bottom of my heart” – Participants sister.



The Schools and Community Resilience Programme achievements included:

- Series of one-off workshops on knife crime awareness, grooming and exploitation engaging 177 young people
- Seamless continuation of provision by rapidly moving face-to-face mentoring sessions to virtual and phone meetings
- 12 peer workers delivering on street activities

“He was able to find encouragement and motivation to get out of his comfort zone and benefit others and at the same time develop himself with new skills and experiences” project worker.

KAZZUM ARTS

The Build project uses arts to develop relationships, emotional literacy and communication skills of young people excluded from mainstream education.

A collection of short animations created to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. Each animation explores one of four broad themes: Mindfulness, Relationships, Movement and Relaxation.

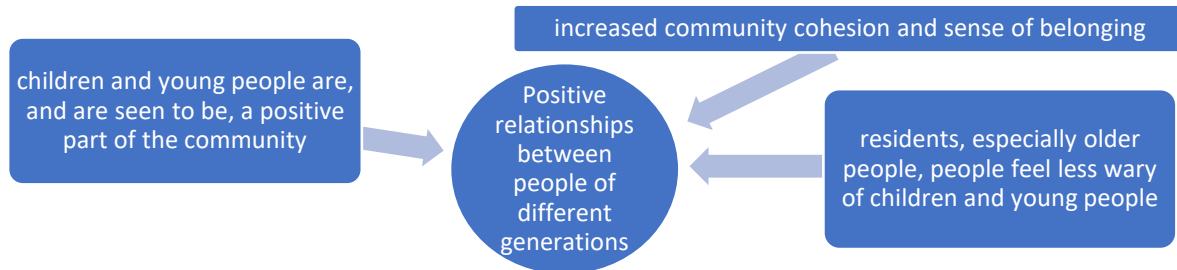


“I felt listened to by the adults because they take in all the ideas that we come up with. It’s important to have space and talk. The sessions have been good for my confidence, I feel better.” — Participant

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

This scheme supports relationships with others in the community by breaking down barriers and supporting positive relationships between people of different generations.

There are three intended outcomes for this scheme:



Scheme Highlights October 2019 to 2020

Successful crowd funding to bring about digital inclusion of older people supported by young people

Individual regular telephone phone calls providing companionship alongside ensuring older participants accessed support

12 participants (five under 25,s, and seven over 50,s) took part in making photograms, a portrait studio workshop and learnt to develop black and white photographs

Into Focus Exhibition
22 - 24 and 29 - 31 October
Thursday - Saturday



“The intergenerational aspect made it interesting, bringing together older people like me who recall when we only had the use of analogue cameras, together with those who see this film as an exotic new way to express creativity. The course provided me with a useful project perspective for resurrecting my analogue practice; and specifically, after lockdown, it gave me a very welcome excuse to rope in my three adult children as black-and-white photography models!”
- Participant.



“On 28/01/2020 the larger co-design session took place, where the planning for the April event was carried out. 14 older people and 6 young people met at Poplar Union, where older participants usually have a dancing class. From session, the ideas that had the most support surprised young people: Quiz night, line dancing workshop (the adults teach the young people one of their routines), storytelling workshop, tai chi class, and yoga”. Project worker.

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 violence. It aims to increase the extent to which young people and families, affected by domestic violence and sexual abuse, **feel safe**.

There are two intended outcomes:

- More residents, particularly families and young people, are aware of the different forms that domestic violence and sexual abuse (DVSA) can take; know how it, and where to access support.
- Young victims and witnesses of DVSA are supported to recognise and report it.

Scheme highlights October 2019 to 2020

A new domestic violence reporting service in six local pharmacies resulting in over 100 women using these to access support services

Refuge service supported 74 women and 64 children over the year

100% of women participating in an empowerment session reported improved understanding of different forms of abuse

Launch of access to Bright Sky DV information app on Royal Mail Parcelforce and Ebay websites resulting in 1,500 visits in 3 days

100% of women supported in the refuge report increased knowledge of how to report DA or where to access help

Provided tablets, games and activities to keep the children engaged with education and to promote their wellbeing during lockdown

NEED A SAFE SPACE?
If you're experiencing domestic abuse, support is available.
You can use the consultation room in your local Boots pharmacy to call a support service.



As outreach and awareness raising components of this project were unable to run as planned during lockdown and covid related restrictions on events, the project rapidly pivoted to raising awareness and increasing available support across Tower Hamlets

Greater needs emerged during COVID-19 and the organisation adapted as necessary to continue delivering the project in the most appropriate form. Survivor ambassadors helped shape the Safe Spaces project during a survivor feedback forum.

SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE
If you're experiencing domestic abuse
find specialist support via the Post Office's Online Safe Space
Visit postoffice.co.uk and click on the Safe Spaces logo





Bright Sky a free to download mobile app providing support and information for anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or for those concerned about someone they know. Bright Sky can also be used by practitioners and employers to learn more and provide support.

Key sessions with the project worker addressed the children's trauma in order for them to understand their experiences of domestic abuse and understanding the purpose of a refuge and the requirement of keeping the location safe. As a result of the support provided, an average of 89.8% of the children in the refuge agreed that they felt more safe and secure.

Below: Writing in, 'I am Happy' Buddy bag foundation book completed by a service user.

he was happy that
he was in his island
and finally ~~met~~ met
his friends

the end
happy ending

Infrastructure & Capacity Building Fund

Tower Hamlets Voluntary and Community Sector (THVCS) Infrastructure Partnership

THVCS Infrastructure Partnership brings together three Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) infrastructure support agencies to increase the range and number of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations that are well-run and resilient.

THCVS is an independent membership organisation for voluntary, community faith and social enterprise organisations in the borough of Tower Hamlets.



Providing a range of services including:

- Information and resources
- Training courses, events and conferences
- Strategic representation and policy work
- Free advice and support

Achievements this year include supporting Voluntary and Community Sector organisations securing resources to provide activities.



Highlights of inward investment.

- **16** Voluntary and Community Sector organisations supported to secure **£235,00** from external sources
- **25** Voluntary and Community Sector organisations supported to secure **£379,377** funding from Public Sector Partnership programmes.

‘Since we were forced to make our Fundraising Officer redundant in March, I have worked closely with THCVS and particularly the Development Officer. I have valued both her suggestions of new grants to pursue and her review of applications - it is always useful to discuss possible applications ... comments reviewing applications almost always provide greater focus and enhanced chance of success. ... excellent level of service, responding quickly to my emails. I have no doubt whatsoever that our funding success has been greatly increased due to the skills and experience of the THCVS team’.

Examples of work carried out during the first Covid lockdown

- 29 groups received follow-up one to one support sessions during April to June
- 2 Health and wellbeing networking sessions (63) and 1 Health and Wellbeing Forum - (35) events with 98 people attending
- Supported holiday hunger scheme
- 8 Ebulletins circulated to 13,403

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

Annual project achievements include:



32 best practice advice sessions to a total of 21 unique organisations

“I will be more consistent in how I communicate boundaries with volunteers. It was good to learn about the legal issues around volunteering also”.

2 organisations supported to achieve the Investors in Volunteers (iV) programme



“... the Farm now has “better induction; a more consistent and confident approach across staff to managing challenging situations with volunteers, and better understanding of why it's important to do so”.



12 e-bulletins published in the year and circulated to organisations



11 individuals completed accredited training

Tower Hamlets Community Transport contributes by managing a fleet of accessible minibuses for hire by member Voluntary and Community organisations. This resource enables vulnerable residents to access a variety of services ranging from social care for the elderly to children accessing sports activities. They also support local Voluntary and Community organisations by providing training, garage services, and through collaborating on community projects. MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) training ensures drivers using a minibus can provide a safe service.

4 individuals received Midas training



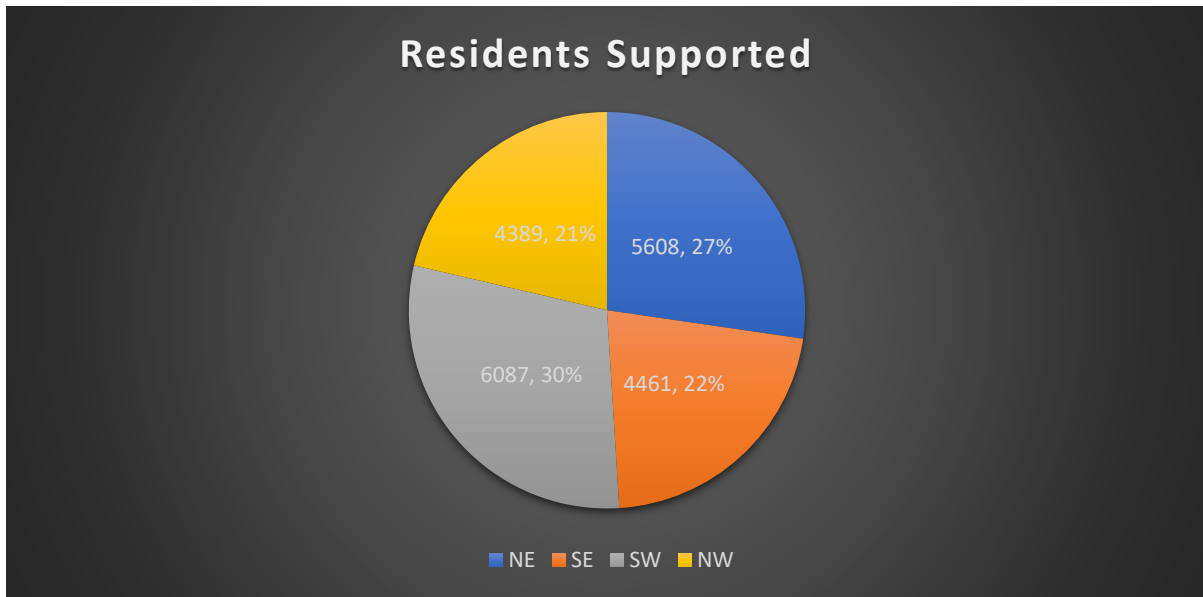
7 trips in collaboration with the Tackling Poverty Team

912 journeys and 5 transport days for a local primary school

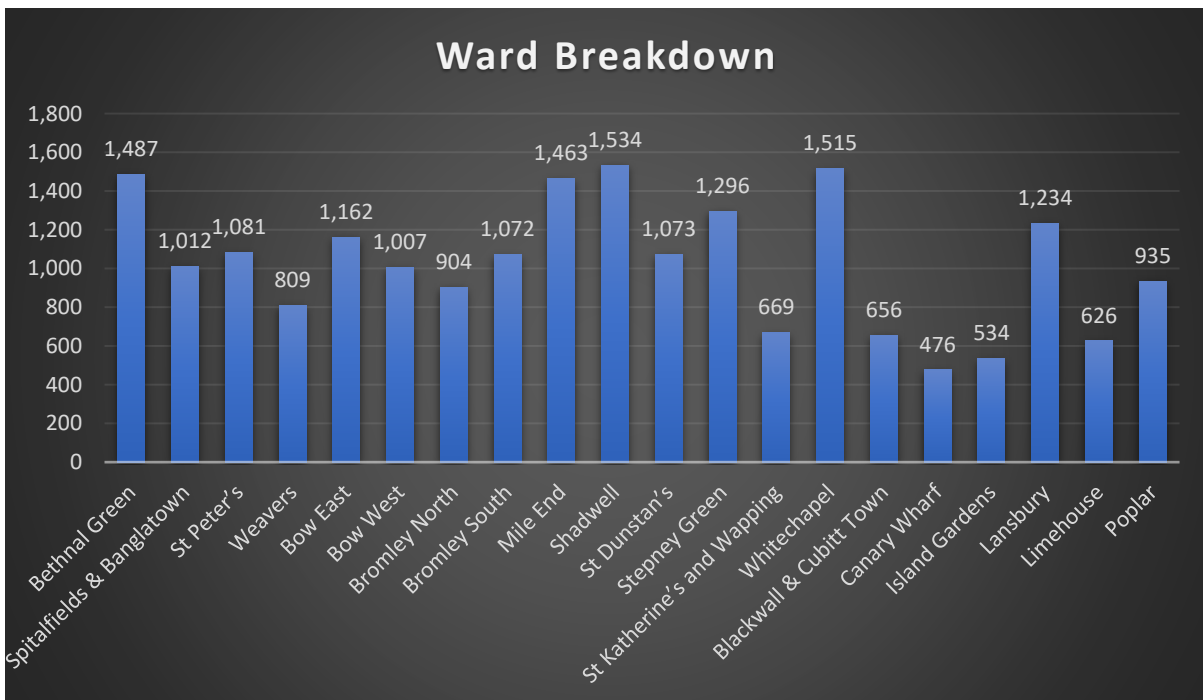


THCVS and VCTH have maintained service throughout the period by moving to online working, with minimum disruption to access. Both organisations have also responded by taking on additional work, some of which is funded by LBTH e.g. the Volunteer Hub. And some of which has been absorbed within existing resources, for example, involvement in about 10 different borough wide Covid-19 response planning meetings. THCT was unable to operate during the Covid pandemic and services were suspended. They have put measures in place to mitigate risk, monitor changes and react accordingly. They are slowly getting back on the road.

Appendix 1 – Geographical data



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|--|---|--|--|
| <p>4,389 in the NW cluster</p> <p>(Bethnal Green, Spitalfields & Banglatown, St Peter's, Weavers)</p> | <p>5,608 in the NE cluster</p> <p>(Bow East / West, Bromley North / South, Mile End)</p> | <p>6,087 in the SW cluster</p> <p>(Shadwell, St Dunstan's, St Katharine & Wapping, Whitechapel)</p> | <p>4,461 in the SE cluster</p> <p>(Blackwall & Cubitt Town, Canary Wharf, Island Gardens, Lansbury, Poplar)</p> |
|--|---|--|--|



Appendix 2 – Equalities data

