Communities & Neighbourhoods (CaN)

# We Do Things Differently



POPLAR HARCA

Annual Social Value Report 2023-24

# 23-24 CaN Social Value Report



Last year, Poplar HARCA celebrated its 25th anniversary as an exemplary social housing provider. Our award-winning model has impressed not just other UK Registered Social Landlords but also organisations globally.

Our approach is simple: we put our residents at the heart of everything we do. Beyond providing high-quality homes, we offer services that engage residents, encouraging them to thrive in safe, inclusive, and sustainable communities. Our Communities and Neighbourhoods (CaN) Directorate leads these efforts, ensuring we reach those most in need.

This report highlights the achievements of Poplar HARCA's CaN Directorate in 2023-24. It also showcases our successes over the past 25 years. From training local beekeepers and producing Poplar's first honey to building a state-of-the-art youth facility in Tower Hamlets, this edition of CaN's Annual Social Value Report celebrates our milestones.

We thank all the committed and hardworking staff of CaN and colleagues at Poplar HARCA, the generous volunteers who have shared their valuable free time and skills, our local, regional/ national and international partners who have shared their resources with us and most especially our residents with whom we have co-produced our impactful programmes and services.





## REVISITING THE CAN VISION

CaN Services aim to eliminate deprivation in Poplar and neighbouring areas in the next 100 years, removing barriers to residents' potential and ending the generational cycles of poverty. We are residents and communities-driven, supporting our staff to provide holistic services and fostering partnerships to co-create solutions. Our community centres serve as strong anchors, managed by knowledgeable and trusted staff with lived local experiences. Our award-winning teams—Employment & Training, REST, Spotlight, and Community Development & Well-being—are recognised by key stakeholders in the UK and abroad.





We understand that ending entrenched poverty is a long-term effort, requiring decades of hard work. Yet, over the past 25 years, our people-centred interventions have significantly improved residents' lives. Our annual reports, featuring testimonials, case studies and robust social value statistics, confirm our progress. With enhanced resources, we are confident we will make a substantial impact and move closer to eliminating poverty in our communities.

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING TEAM

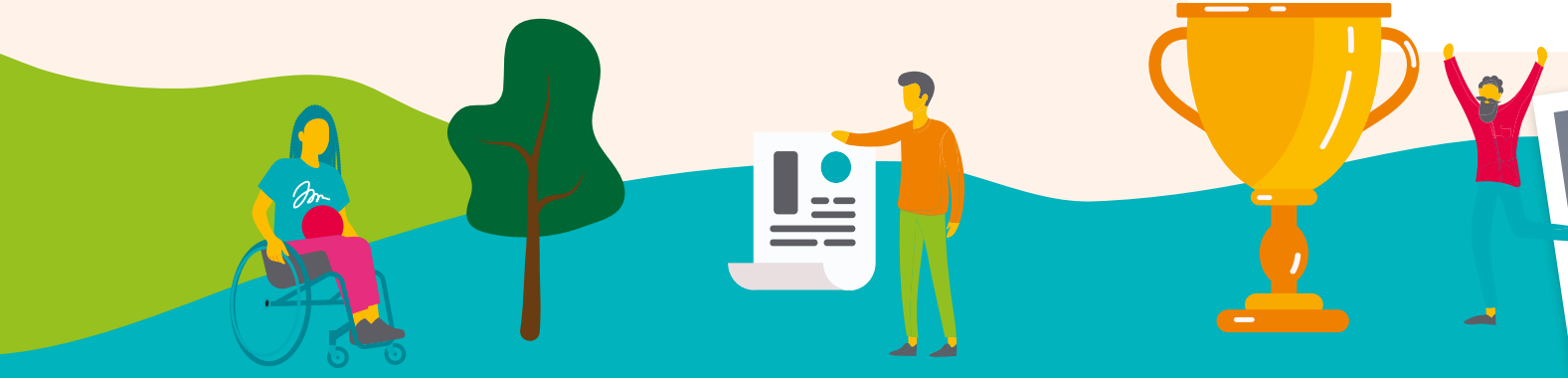
# Improving Pathways to Employment

Poplar HARCA operates in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH), where 22% of residents lack qualifications and have poor English proficiency.

## OFSTED

OFSTED praised our outstanding support and nurturing environment, and we achieved the Matrix quality standard for Employment and Training. Surveys showed 100% of learners rated our service as good, with 99% praising tutor knowledge and 98% reporting increased confidence.

Our accolades include the UK National Housing Award for Best Employment and Training Service (2021), an OFSTED OUTSTANDING rating (2022), and the Most Impactful Team Award from Clarion (2023). Our Women in Health scheme, a partnership project with LBTH and Barts Health NHS Trust, was a finalist at the prestigious MJ Awards 2024.






2019-2024

### WITH A FIVE-YEAR FUNDING ASSISTANCE FROM THE GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

We delivered 3,700 qualifications, targeting care leavers, over-50s, neurodiverse individuals, people with disabilities, and NEET young people.

2023-24

### WE TRAINED 1,770 LEARNERS,

20% of whom were over 50, with 70% from BAME communities and 66% lacking basic English and Maths.

2023-24

### WE SUPPORTED 224 PEOPLE INTO JOBS,

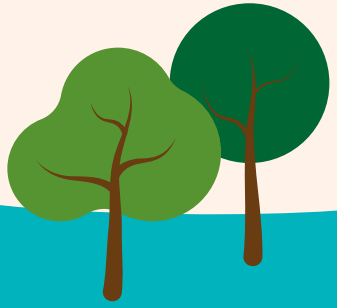
ensuring their skills matched job requirements. Our European Social Fund Employment Support Project, in collaboration with London housing associations, won the ERSA Tailored Employment Support Award. Our bespoke projects included women's initiatives, NHS training, and digital inclusion schemes. Notably, 170 people completed health sector training, with 75 securing NHS jobs.

CASE STUDY

# DANIELLI'S JOURNEY TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE AND CONFIDENCE





Danielli joined our programme hoping to find independence after separating from an abusive relationship. She had minimal English proficiency and lacked experience in independent living.

### Initial Support and Training

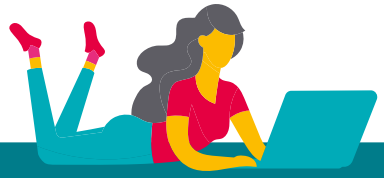
Danielli enrolled in foundational courses, including:

- Functional Skills English (Levels E1-E3)
- A basic computer course
- A conversation class

These courses helped her build practical skills, confidence, and social connections.

### Overcoming Personal Challenges

Facing emotional challenges post-separation, Danielli took a break from her courses. The team provided critical support during this time, including assistance with a Universal Credit application and access to counselling services.



### Achievements and Progress

Upon resuming her studies, Danielli completed her English and digital skills courses. She also received guidance in CV building and job applications, enhancing her employability.

### Current Status and Future Outlook

Danielli now feels more confident and independent. She actively engages with new people and opportunities, crediting the programme's support for her transformation. She highly recommends The Hive's services, reflecting her trust in our team's ability to aid others.

### Conclusion

Danielli's journey highlights the transformative power of comprehensive community support, education, and resilience. Her story showcases the effectiveness of our Active Inclusion programme, and we celebrate her achievements as she continues toward greater independence.

CASE STUDY

# MUHJABIN ALI'S PATHWAY TO A CAREER IN HEALTHCARE




Muhjabin Ali, a 20-year-old from Tower Hamlets, withdrew from university to care for his family, struggling with depression and unemployment. After five months, he sought a career in healthcare, inspired by his admiration for the NHS.

### Joining Healthcare Horizons

Muhjabin enrolled in the Barts Health NHS Trust's Health Care Horizon's programme which The Hive delivers. The training programme offered both accredited and non-accredited training with a focus on better understanding the Trust. This training deepened his understanding of NHS practices, boosted his confidence, and provided a supportive learning environment.

### Experience and Impact of the Programme

The programme was transformative for Muhjabin, enhancing his self-esteem and knowledge. He valued the comprehensive support from tutors and peers, which fostered lasting friendships. Career support from The Hive's Employment Advisors helped him develop a tailored CV, refine interview skills, and prepare job applications.



### Achievements and Future Plans

Muhjabin successfully completed his qualification with The Hive. This placement is a significant step towards his goal of an NHS apprenticeship, equipping him with essential skills and confidence.

### Reflection and Conclusion

Muhjabin expressed deep gratitude for the support from The Hive, which was instrumental in his personal and professional growth. His journey underscores the transformative potential of targeted educational and support services. We wish him continued success in his healthcare career, confident that he will thrive in the sector he passionately admires.

**"The programme was very comprehensive and enriching, everything was so beneficial to me. My tutors were very engaging and the camaraderie of my classmates led to lasting friendships"**

SPOTLIGHT

# Open to Inspire




In 2023-24, Spotlight expanded borough-wide, significantly increasing reach and impact among young people. It has achieved all KPIs for LBTH Youth Service contracts and secured an extension for the NE Quadrant contract. The team also passed all spot inspections by the LBTH youth service team, reflecting the high quality and effectiveness of our programmes.

We have secured continuation funding for targeted interventions on the Isle of Dogs through a hyper-local approach to youth violence and obtained funding for a serious youth violence intervention in Bethnal Green.

The Health Spot initiative, now in its fourth year, extended to a second Tower Hamlets location and franchised in Newham and Hackney, providing youth-sensitive GP services. The Youth Empowerment Board (YEB) was active, with members joining various advisory groups and participating in workshops and panels. YEB also collaborated with Scotland Yard to reshape the 'Children and Young People's Strategy' and attended a City Hall workshop. Moosa Miah, now a Poplar HARCA Services Board member, was shortlisted for Young Leader of the Year at the London Youth Awards.

We launched several targeted programmes, including Get

Our detached youth programme engaged **814 young people** across 20 wards.

Over-all, Spotlight has engaged **2,911 young people** in both detached and centre-based activities.

Joint activities with local youth groups supported by Poplar HARCA benefited a further **1,996 youngsters.**

Empowered: NHS Diabetes-Spotlight, involving 41 young people. The Wellbeing Ambassadors (WBA) Programme trained 66 ambassadors and is active in eight schools. Get Active formed partnerships with 11 leading Sports organisations like London Sport and Get Out UK, the latter taking 11 young people on a surfing trip. Get Creative collaborated with choreographer Adesola Akinleye and Numbi Arts for a youth-led Winter Festival and various creative workshops, resulting in 26 Explore Arts Award Qualifications.

In early 2024, we launched a new games room designed by young people with support from the Rangoonwala Foundation and McLaren. We also delivered targeted school programmes at St. Paul's Way and Langdon Park secondary schools, focusing on at-risk youth.

**Spotlight gives every YP a special treatment. Free access to world class facilities and support: very few places do that..."**

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT

27 colleagues completed conflict resolution training and relaunched our volunteering programme as VIT (Very Important Team).

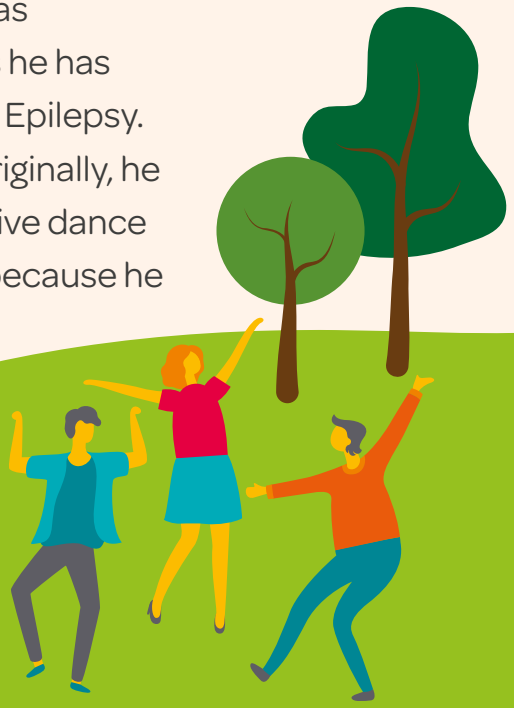


CASE STUDY

# Unlocking potential through volunteering



Anthony has been attending Spotlight since May 2023. He was referred by his Social Worker as he has Special Educational Needs and Epilepsy. Anthony has limited speech. Originally, he came to join Blink Dance Inclusive dance sessions and stated he joined because he wanted to make friends.





Anthony is very creative and enjoys Music and Dance in particular. Since joining Spotlight, he has branched out into the Studio Time sessions on Thursdays where he has been supported by specialist youth worker Josh. Since May 2024 Anthony has been supporting the Studio Time Sessions as a Young Volunteer.

Asked about what he liked about volunteering in the Studio, Anthony says: "Helping people and making friends."

Since volunteering at Studio Time, Anthony has gained significant confidence. He has learned to set up microphones for recording, take the register, use Logic, help pack away equipment, and ensure the other young people leave on time.

Anthony enjoys the social aspect of the studio, appearing much happier and more sociable than before. He is more expressive and often jokes with staff and peers, showcasing his quick wit. Anthony performed in the end-of-term showcase at Spotlight with Blink Dance and has signed up for the Summer Holidays programme.

His participation has led to increased social interactions, improved relationships with trusted adults, and greatly enhanced his confidence and self-esteem. He was thankful to Spotlight for supporting him to achieve his personal goals.

"Its one of the best things I did - learnt loads and laughed more !"



**"You should do it you will meet lots of new people and find it very interesting"**

CASE STUDY

# Away from trouble and into productive ways



Before attending Spotlight, Yusein was identified by his Head of Year at Saint Paul's Way as at risk of failing in Year 11. He faced significant challenges growing up in the Leopold Estate amidst antisocial behaviour and negative influences.

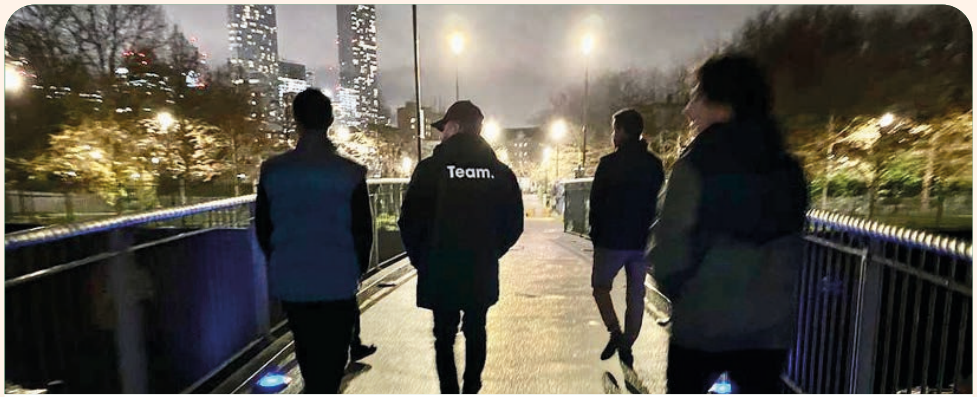
## Joining Spotlight

After leaving school and struggling with multiple colleges, he found himself working at Wing Stop, a job misaligned with his career aspirations.

Yusein was introduced to Spotlight by his Head of Year. Nazim, a Spotlight mentor, began supporting him through one-on-one sessions, maintaining contact over time and building a trusting relationship. Initially reserved and quiet, Yusein gradually opened up through persistent support, personal development conversations, and career guidance. This helped him see beyond his immediate environment.

## Progress overtime

Overtime Yusein showed significant positive changes. His involvement in anti-social behaviour decreased as he distanced himself from trouble.




He participated in various activities and courses provided by Spotlight which boosted his confidence and sense of purpose. Yusein faced challenges related to family pressures, environment, and social influences. Through persistent and personalised support from Nazim and the Spotlight team, he overcame these barriers. His social skills improved becoming more communicative and willing to engage with others. This shift in mindset was crucial for his personal development.

## Spotlight's Impact

Professionally, Yusein' s progress was remarkable. He completed a Level 1 Health and Safety in Construction course and secured a 2-year Level 2 Bricklaying apprenticeship with DWG Group (Berkely Group), offering hands-on experience, paid work and a qualification. This role provided him with professional training and placed him on a stable career path.

## Conclusion

Yussein's journey underscores the importance of consistent mentorship, personal development and having access to professional opportunities, in transforming young people's lives.

**" This is massive for me, It has changed my life completely."**



# Enabling Resilient Communities

The Cost-of-Living Crisis, to this day, has continued to pose massive challenges to our low-income residents.



In response, CaN's Community Development & Well-being (CDW) Team reinvigorated its targeted support and helped over 2,000 residents in 2023-24 with services such as food access, debt management, benefits maximisation, digital inclusion, and direct support like energy vouchers and white goods. Some 18,072 people participated in health activities, 10,289 attended events, and 800 volunteers engaged in meaningful projects. The newly built Feldy Centre at the newly-redeveloped Aberfeldy estate, opened on 12 June 2023, attracted 9,654 visitors and partnered with 25 organisations.

The Well One programme introduced new health initiatives, including the cancer awareness programme "Let's Be Aware Together" with 498 attendees and "Think Menopause!" workshops attended by 186 people. The "Get Moving" and "Cook Well, Eat Well" programmes engaged numerous participants, while the "Sport in Schools" festival involved 480 children.

Community Cafés at our Centres reported increased sales, and childcare provisions reached full capacity. The team supported 21 Community Carbon Champions, who facilitated eight local events and secured £6,000 in funding. Ten community gardens were restored with £27k from external grants.

## SEND SUPPORT

CDW's work with children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) has added new features to its support offer like having sensory corners, improved signage, and inclusive registration processes. They introduced SEND-specific activities, empowered SEND parent groups, and collaborated on healthcare initiatives. The approach aims to provide comprehensive support for SEND families through trained staff, wellness sessions, community events, and bespoke activities like accessible sports and a sensory garden.

CDW has also developed a Somali community hub in collaboration with the Women's Inclusive Team (WIT).



## THE WOMEN'S BOATING CLUB,

Now registered as 'Oar & Explore,' with British Canoeing, has over 50 members and secured £16k in funding. Members earned various paddle sport awards, and the club's plans for 2024/25 are funded by Active Thames and The Teviot LLP Community Chest Fund.



CASE STUDY

# EMBRACING A NEW CHAPTER: JOANNE BARRY'S JOURNEY WITH LINC



Joanne Barry discovered Linc through the Friday afternoon Sizzling Seniors Social Club. As a part-time carer, she sought enriching activities to boost her mental and physical well-being.

### Discovering New Opportunities

Initially drawn to the Social Club, Joanne quickly expanded her involvement, participating in the Linc Autumn Bazaar, Women's Fitness Classes, Sound Meditation Sessions, and Essential Oil Workshops. Her enthusiasm and supportive nature made her a natural leader, inspiring other women to explore new activities.

### Building Connections and Friendships

Joanne's active participation at Linc led to meaningful friendships with women from diverse backgrounds, fostering a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. Her positive influence helped cultivate a supportive community atmosphere in the project.

### Evolving the Sizzling Seniors Social Club

With members like Joanne focusing on self-care and personal growth, Linc has shifted towards offering a varied, holistic program. This approach helps members explore new interests and enjoy personal enrichment.

### Joanne's Reflections

Joanne describes her experience at Linc as transformative, saying, "I really enjoy coming to Linc; there's a great variety of activities, and I've tried most of them! I've made really good friends and connected with people of different cultures and backgrounds. There's a lovely atmosphere, and getting involved has been good for my mind, body, and soul."

### Conclusion

Joanne Barry's journey with Linc underscores the value of community, connection, and self-care. Her involvement has enriched her life and the lives of others. As Linc evolves, it remains committed to providing a space where women can thrive, explore new interests, and embrace new chapters with confidence and joy.









CASE STUDY

# EMPOWERING CHANGE: SONIA AKHTER'S JOURNEY AS A COMMUNITY CARBON CHAMPION



In October 2022, Sonia Akhter, initially unfamiliar with climate change, joined CaN/Poplar HARCA's Community Carbon Champions (CCC) programme. The initiative, part of a borough-wide effort to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2045, aimed to educate residents on environmental issues.

## Programme Participation

The CCC programme included five interactive workshops designed to enhance knowledge about climate change and practical carbon reduction strategies. Sonia, recruited through one of our ESOL classes, engaged actively in these sessions, where she and other participants learned about the community impact of climate change and ways to reduce their carbon footprints.

## Growth and Involvement

As Sonia's understanding deepened, she became more confident and knowledgeable about environmental issues. Post-workshops, she volunteered at community events throughout 2023, sharing insights on sustainable practices and encouraging others to engage in environmental stewardship.






## Outcomes and Impact

The programme significantly increased Sonia's awareness and knowledge, equipping her with practical tips for reducing emissions. It also fostered social connections, providing a supportive network of like-minded individuals. Her active participation in community events not only benefited the local area but also enhanced her confidence and sense of purpose.

## Conclusion

Sonia's transformation into an informed advocate underscores the importance of education and community engagement in addressing climate change. Her journey through the CCC programme illustrates how local initiatives can drive broader environmental goals, highlighting the positive impact of empowering individuals at the community level.

REST

# Empowering Communities




The Resident Empowerment and Support Team (REST) had been busy with its engagement programme to ensure full participation of our residents in shaping the development masterplans for their estates. These are currently on-going in two of Poplar HARCA's major redevelopment schemes, namely the Aberfeldy and Teviot regeneration.

REST services the Resident Steering Group (RSG) in each estate, which was formed to serve as the voice of the local residents, with members putting forward the aspirations and needs of all who will be affected by the changes as a result of the scheme.

In 2023-24, the Resident Steering group, together with REST and the whole of Poplar HARCA, the developer Eco World as well as our community partners in Aberfeldy, celebrated the approval of the Aberfeldy West planning application. It was previously turned down by LBTH Council but was later "called in" by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, for further consideration. It was a glorious day for all concerned as the Deputy Mayor of London, Jules Pipe, who chaired the hearing at the City Hall early in 2024, announced the "Yes" verdict.



The hard work continues but the majority of the residents, who voted for the estate's transformation, were relieved that Poplar HARCA can now start implementing the scheme. The Aberfeldy RSG with support from REST will remain involved to ensure that the schemes' Limited Liability Partnership – LLP (Poplar HARCA and the Developers Eco World) keeps to the Masterplan that was shaped by the residents.




## TEVIOT ESTATE

The Teviot community has worked hard to shape the Masterplan for the area. Planning application has been submitted by the TED LLP - Teviot Estate Development - Limited Liability Partnership (Hill and Poplar HARCA) to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) Council. Resident engagement is on-going with social value projects continuing to be delivered by the scheme's Social Value Team via local partners working with Teviot residents.





REST

# Community investment and social value



It has been 3 years since Poplar HARCA has decided to partner with award-winning housebuilder Hill Ltd. to regenerate the Teviot Estate. Since then, the TED-LLP (Teviot Estate Development Limited Liability Partnership) has invested over £427 k in community projects through a Community Chest Fund, set up to support local initiatives and resident-led community projects in the lead up to the start of actual redevelopment.

The partnership has funded projects that provide vital services, from health and wellbeing, employment and training, environmental programmes, and youth programmes. This has included the weekly affordable food co-op at the Teviot Centre, an exercise programme for older people, paddle boarding and kayaking sessions for young people, energy crisis support, food growing in local gardens, creating a pool of local beekeepers through beekeeping training, Digital Skills workshops for adults, and more.

The fund has also revived the traditional Teviot Festival over the three-year period. The annual event hosts around 500 people each year and is a fantastic example of the positive community spirit at Teviot. It is free to enter and provides a range of family friendly activities and performances, plus a variety of tasty food and drink stalls.

The positive impact of all these interventions is hard to quantify. Feedback from residents who have benefited from the various projects attest to the difference they have made to local people's increased level of happiness, better sense of security, increased sense of belonging, feeling healthier and more active as well as heightened sense of hope about what other benefits await the residents once the development works have begun.



"I always looked forward to the Teviot festival, it's one of the highlights of summer in the estate. Every year is full of fun and new surprises! Thanks to LiC, Hill and Poplar HARCA, it's back in our calendar!"

The Teviot regeneration is expected to deliver over £278M worth of social value outcomes throughout the 15-year period. The outcomes were chosen from the Wellbeing Valuation developed by the Housing Association's Charitable Trust (HACT) that matched what the local people have expressed as their priorities. They revolved around employment and training, financial inclusion, health and wellbeing, sense of belonging to community and safe and clean neighbourhood.

As early as this pre-planning stage, the Teviot residents have started to experience some of the social value outcomes generated through the Community Chest Fund – assisted projects. So far, the Social Value Team has recorded a total social value equivalent of between £20M to £25 worth of positive outcomes.


Images on this spread courtesy of Leaders In Community

WE DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY HIGHLIGHTS

# 25 years of CaN

A map of our journey so far...

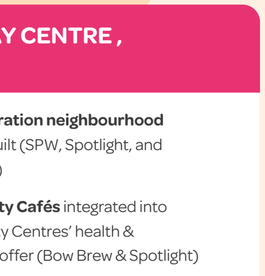
## ST. PAUL'S WAY CENTRE , LINC CENTRE

- **New generation neighbourhood centres** built (SPW, Spotlight, and later Feldy)
- **Community Cafés** integrated into Community Centres' health & well-being offer (Bow Brew & Spotlight)
- **SEND services** developed and delivered from Community Centres and Spotlight
- **Capacity Building** for local voluntary and resident associations started in 2007
- First In-house **Nursery** Provision 2022

**750**
**Events** held since 2000

**"We have made friends and tried new things, feeling more supported and confident as a result. It means a lot that Linc works hard to support their SEND community."**





## POPLAR UNION

- **Led the Limehouse Cut Adoption Group** that animated the canal; hosted water sports provider Moo Canoes and East London Canoe Polo Club 2016
- 1st Poplar **Ladies' Boating Club** created (Oar & Explore) 2023

**"Cycle Loans, local honey, knitting club, free laptops, free courses, jobs, Poplar is the place to bee."**

## St. Paul's Way Centre









## Teviot Centre

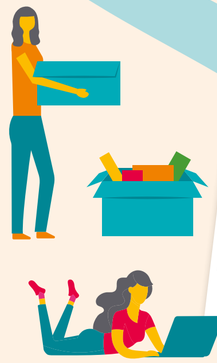


## Spotlight




## Feldy

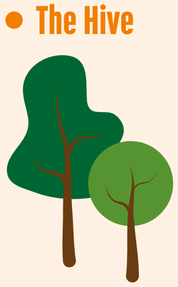






## The Hive







## Chrisp Street Market
































## SPOTLIGHT YOUTH CENTRE

- **Birth of Spotlight**, first world-class youth facility in LBTH 2014
- **1st Youth Music Label** developed in Spotlight Youth Music-making facility
- **Healthspot - First YP-dedicated GP surgery** based at the youth facility
- **Detached Youth work** introduced in 2019 have saved young people from becoming victims of violence or committing violence themselves

**4,000**
**Engaged YPs** each year in positive activities since 2014

**"For a youth-centred GP service, go to Healthspot; I've never been as confident to open up about my health with a GP."**

## THE HIVE

- **E & T Service Rated OUTSTANDING** on 1st OFSTED Inspection - 2022
- **Millions of external contracts won** by E & T, Spotlight and CDW
- **Awards from various awarding bodies** for E & T, REST, Spotlight and CDW services

**8,650**
people supported to achieve accredited qualifications for work since 2007

**3,878**
local people supported into jobs since 2007

**4,500**
volunteers given opportunities to give back to the community, improve job prospects, overcome isolation and gain new friends since 2009

## TEVIOT CENTRE, LIMBOROUGH HUB

- **1st Poplar Honey** made available to Poplar residents through the first beekeeping project supported by PH and implemented and managed by Leaders in Community (LiC) 2015
- First to transform unused spaces into **community food growing gardens** in Poplar 2014
- **First pilot Food Store** developed from which succeeding Food Stores opened by LBTH across the borough were modelled 2022
- Initiated and hosted the very successful **Wellone LBTH-wide partnership**
- Pioneered first **Cycling training for women** in Poplar 2015

**"We are lucky to be part of a community garden. Growing veg and harvesting, lift our spirits!"**

## COVID

- **Hundreds of tablets and Laptops**, free Wi-Fi connections and digital skills training provided to families at risk of isolation and being cut from essential services during Covid 19 pandemic. - 2020
- **Unique Online presence** HARCA Centres Unlocked
- **Over 7,000** food interventions

## SOCIAL VALUE

**£125m+**
total **Social Value** generated since SV tool was first used in 2015

**In 23-24 our SV Outcomes include:**

- **£4.6M** Social Value CDW (including SV for Volunteering)
- **£5.5M** Social Value E & T (including SV for Digital Inclusion)
- **£2.4M** Social Value Spotlight

# THANKS TO ALL OUR FUNDERS AND DONORS IN 2023-2024

- Access Sport
- Canoe Foundation
- Active Thames
- Apple Music
- Art Council England
- Asif Rangoon Wala Foundation
- Barts Health NHS Trust
- Big Lottery Fund (Reaching Communities)
- Brit Trust
- Clarion Housing
- Community Chest Fund/ Teviot LLP
- Common Purpose
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Diploma in Sporting Excellence (DiSE)
- East End Community Foundation
- European Social Fund
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Greater London Authority/ Adult Education Budget
- Greater London Authority/ European Social Fund (Love London Working)
- Groundwork
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- London Marathon Foundation
- London Sport
- Mayor's Fund for London
- Mount Anvil
- One Housing
- Paddle UK
- Peabody Trust
- LBTH Public Health
- South Gloucestershire College
- Sport England

POPLAR HARCA

**Design by**
Tessellate Design Studio