Communities & Neighbourhoods (CaN)

We Do Things Differently



Free Hot Meals



Poplar Boat Club



Summer Festival

POPLAR HARCA 25 years

Annual Social Value Report 22-23

We Do Things Differently 2022-2023

"Crisis after crisis. It seems endless", cried many of us when just as we thought the pandemic was finally over, the cost-of-living crisis hit the UK and the world.

Soon enough, we all felt the impact of the crisis in varying degrees. People on low-income found themselves in worryingly high levels of hardship. The majority got in arrears for many payment obligations, unable to afford unexpected expenses, used credit to pay bills, or have gone without essentials. The high cost of energy has made poor households unable to keep their homes warm, on top of struggling to have enough food on their tables. Some who used to be economically stable had to make very hard decisions. Many were forced to reduce their insurance payments and pensions savings. Instead of looking forward to a comfortable old age, they now feel very insecure.

The pressures of survival amidst this quandary causes stress and anxiety, which in turn affects one's over-all health & well-being. Not enough nutrition, cold homes, no essentials, and increased debt burdens are perfect ingredients for mental and physical health meltdown.

Aware of the impact of the new crisis on our own residents in Poplar, we have enhanced our regular provision at our community centres and our various specialist hubs.

We wanted everyone to feel secure in these spaces where they can be with others to share and learn ways to cope with the crisis. There were emergency support, information about opportunities, practical ways to save energy in the home and free hot drinks and freshly cooked healthy lunches for everyone.

We thank our local partners which helped us offer increased essential help and services. We are also grateful to colleagues in various teams at Poplar HARCA which offered different types of support to our residents across all our 10 estates.

Poplar HARCA are proud to present these interventions and their positive impact on local people in this edition of *We Do Things Differently 22-23* – our CaN Directorate's Annual Social Value Report.





SOCIAL VALUE GENERATED IN 2022-2023

Employment & Training
£5.5 M

Spotlight Youth Service
£7.2 M

Community Development & Wellbeing
£8.6 M

Volunteering
£2.2 M

Digital Inclusion
£1.3 M





Enhanced provision to address the crisis

To reduce the impact of the cost -of-living crisis, we have enhanced offers at our community hubs for both regular and first-time visitors. We have mobilised partners to run programmes where people can take part and learn ways to lessen the impact of the crisis on their daily lives.

MONEY AND ENERGY SAVING ADVICE

Various ways to save money and energy in the homes provided by our partners.

- **Clean Slate** – ran a day a week advice service for 12 months covering money management and employment support, and provided vouchers to residents in need of heating/electricity support.
- **LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership)** – accepted referrals from us to provide free energy advice and home visits for more focused support.
- **Bromley by Bow Centre** - offered free, impartial and confidential energy advice to those struggling to pay their gas, electricity or water bills.
- **Sunny Jar Eco** – held sessions on how to recycle, re-use and re-purpose old clothing. They also organised clothes swaps.
- **Bikeworks** – led bike repairs workshops teaching young people and other users of our Cycle Hub how to repair old bikes and own them afterwards.
- **Save the children** – donated toys that enabled us to give poor families free toys for their children as well as hold toy swaps.



Money Management Advice



Crisis Support

Community Hubs

Our community centres have always been open to all our residents and other local people. Based on what they tell us will be useful to them and the wider community, we work with partners, resident groups among them, to deliver relevant services.

At the centres, there is always a quiet corner to have some peace and quiet to relax, a yoga class and other physical exercises to keep fit as well as a cookery class to learn to cook low-cost healthy meals. There are spaces for local clubs, groups or established organisations to hold their meetings, coffee mornings, and/or deliver services for their members and the wider community.

We have specialist hubs like The Hive for jobseekers where they can learn skills for employment, get advice and support to find work or progress into other jobs.

Young people go to Spotlight and satellite youth hubs to discover their arts, music, drama, sports, leadership, and all types of talents that they want to enhance. Here, young people can access specialist services like one that reduces their risk of being victims of violence or committing violence themselves. There is an in-house youth-centred GP service. There are also health programmes that help those with mental health needs.

Residents concerned about issues around regeneration projects in their midst talk to members of our Resident Empowerment & Support Team (REST) who engage with them at every stage of these schemes.



Community Hub


Linc Centre

Enhanced provision to address the crisis

FOOD SUPPORT

We worked with partners to deliver food aid programmes.

- **The Food Store** - The Burdett Football Club kept the Food Store in service from Limborough Hub in the Burdett estate.
- **Teviot Food Coop** - Leaders in Community, on the other hand, ran the Teviot Food Co-op for the Teviot residents.
- **Felix Project** – provided free hot meals for everyone visiting the Centres and the Hubs.
- **Men's Cabin** – helped to extend our warm hub service to the Brownfield Cabin by offering hot food and drink for £1 every 1st and 3rd week of the month from Feb 2023.
- **Kitchen Social** – gave funding for family cook-offs during school holidays throughout the year.
- **Well One Partnership** – conducted cook well and eat well sessions to help people learn to cook nutritious meals at a low cost.
- **Food Growing** – At least eight PH-supported Communal food growing gardens provided extra fresh vegetables and herbs for daily cooking. They also offered relaxing environments for people to de-stress and learn ways to beat the crisis with their fellow gardeners.
- **LBTH Council** - supported Spotlight in running the Lunch Club that enabled young people attending summer sessions to start by eating a healthy hot meal.
- **Food Parcels** - taken home by young people attending Spotlight's summer activities, to cook with their parents.

COUNSELLING AND THERAPY SERVICES

In partnership with specialist providers, our community centres have made it possible for local people to seek help which they would otherwise find hard to find.

- **Peace of Mind** – a project helping men's mental health support group at the Linc Centre.
- **Trapped in zone one** – ran weekly exercise sessions and support group for women at Bow Hub.
- Art therapy sessions such as jewelry making were held at various Centres.
- Monthly health workshops held at **SPW Centre** in partnership with SPW Medical Centre
- **HEALTHSPOT** – helped young people overcome the effects of the crisis on them.
- **Public Health Child Growth project at Aberfeldy Centre** – psychologists worked with 2-3yr olds whose development was affected by Covid.
- Staff at the **Linc Centre** facilitated a SEND parents' support group.
- Colleagues at the **Linc Centre** assisted a women's support group.
- **East London Rape Crisis** – provided counselling and support to survivors of rape and sexual assault. They offered one-to-one services to three clients at a time at our LinC Centre.
- **Nour** – provided advice and support for victims of domestic violence, also from the Linc Centre.

FRIENDLY PHONE CALLS TO THE OVER 70'S

CaN staff volunteered to take part in the Poplar HARCA Safeguarding Team's welfare calls to our older residents. We made sure that none of them is in danger of getting ill due to lack of sufficient heating in their homes. We asked them how Poplar HARCA could be of help to them if they were struggling and what their concerns are regarding the CoLC. The calls have re-assured many of our older residents that help is at hand should they require it especially during the winter months.

HOME VISITS/LISTENING CAMPAIGNS

Our Resident Empowerment Support Team whose staff have conducted regular listening campaigns have made sure that everyone they spoke to knew that help is at hand should they need any. The Listening campaigns are conducted to gather our residents' input and views about planned redevelopment programmes.

OUTDOOR SPORTS

Our Community Development and Well-being team (CDW) worked with water sports provider Moo Canoes, to enable 18 women, majority of whom are from BAME backgrounds and non-swimmers, to form the Poplar Boat/Canoeing Club. They sought help to train the enthusiastic group to learn to enjoy kayaking, rowing and paddle boarding in the canal and other waterways.

Black Swimming Association, London Youth Rowing, Shadwell Sailing Club and the Royal Outrigger Canoe Club all lent a hand in providing the ladies the necessary training and confidence to enjoy water sports, a first for many who found this opportunity an incredible offer from Poplar HARCA.

Being able to do something like this, has helped participants to cope with the pressures of the Cost-of-Living Crisis. The outdoor activity offered participants a way to relax and a respite from the impact of the crisis.

Our CDW Team has also supported a group of 20 Asian female footballers across two teams to run regular sessions at a football pitch in Mile End.





Regular Services And Our Achievements

Employment and Training Service

"Being unemployed amid the cost-of-living crisis, how much worse could it be? Thanks to the dedicated staff at The Hive. Poplar HARCA's employment & training hub gave me a lifeline."

Emerson, Local Jobseeker

Over-all, the service has supported 290 local people to get a job in various sectors. Of these, 28 are young people who came through the Kick Start programme and landed jobs within Poplar HARCA and some of our strategic partner employers in London. Part of this cohort of successfully employed local people are 50 vulnerable individuals who have received extra support from the team.

Our Digital Inclusion programme continued to build on the successes of our initiatives during the pandemic. With help from our Digital Champions, we have distributed 145 laptops with data, sourced through the Good Things Foundation, to all eligible trainees and job seekers. These gave immense benefits to those who did not have the right equipment and cannot afford sufficient data to continue their job searches and application efforts outside the training venues.

A total of 1,155 learners have successfully achieved at least 1 qualification in 22-23. These qualifications included skills to be able to land a job in the health sector. We thank Barts NHS Trust which has partnered with us each year, to train people for guaranteed jobs in the NHS. .

"I lost my job in 2019, just before Covid. Landing a new one has been extremely hard! Thanks to the training courses and well-rounded support from The Hive staff, I just got a job in the NHS! I have told all my unemployed friends to register here where there is hope."

Marie, Local Jobseeker

Poplar HARCA's employment & training team has received an enormous number of requests for extra help not just for training and employment amid the cost-of-living crisis. They have referred many of their clients to colleagues in the community centres, who have enhanced their normal offers to include emergency support.



EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING SERVICE IN NUMBERS

1,215
achieved at least 1 qualification

290
local people into jobs

50
vulnerable jobseekers supported into jobs

10
young people supported into apprenticeships in the creative sector

Regular Services And Our Achievements

Community Development and Wellbeing Service

Our Community Development and Well-being (CDW) team has been at the heart of Poplar HARCA's Cost-of-Living Crisis support schemes.

Together with Spotlight, our youth service hub and The Hive, our training & employment service, they worked with various Poplar HARCA teams and external partners to deliver much-needed help to our residents.

Alongside these, the team continued to run new and existing provisions. Their achievements this year include getting an OFSTED grade of ***Good*** for its recently opened creche facility at St. Paul's Way Community Centre. They have also established a new community facility at Calder's Wharf for residents in Island Point. Preparations to move from the old to the new community centre at Aberfeldy have gone full steam this year.

They have introduced a bespoke programme for young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The team has also welcomed partners who specialise in supporting people with mental health issues, long-term illness and those experiencing isolation and loneliness, one of which delivered a Mindfulness course, *Take Back Your Life.*

> "It gave me confidence in myself. It showed me I'm ok - it's ok being not ok. This course – Take Back Your Life- did what it said on the tin - it gave me my life back - and now I want to put that into action."
>
> **Course Participant**



Poplar Boat Club

CDW has also supported new outdoor sports clubs, notably among women such as the Poplar Boat Club and two local women's football clubs. Through the Chrisp St. Cycle Hub, they have enabled over 200 families (parents and children) to take up cycling through cycle loans, cycling training and group rides.

> "I have done lots of community activities but this one felt particularly magical, similar goals, similar aged women wanting 'me time', wanting to get fit and be like minded together."
>
> **Sunny (39), founding member, Poplar Boat Club**



Summer of Wellbeing - WellOne

The Wellone partnership, led and hosted by Poplar HARCA via the CDW team has successfully delivered 50 health & well-being projects across the borough. Their 2022 Summer of Well-being Festivals have highlighted the depth and breadth of the network's health and well-being offers. The events were held each week for nine weeks in nine different outdoor venues in and around Poplar. Four of our community Centres were involved and delivered sessions jointly with 36 partners. Over 5,000 people in total attended.

All the above initiatives have been supported by 558 community volunteers as well as 51 corporate volunteers who have offered their spare time and skills. Among them are our passionate Digital Champions and Net Zero Carbon Champions.

Their support has been key to the success of our other events and celebrations like Elders' Christmas dinner, summer festivals, Challenge Poverty events, Cost of Living support campaigns, Get-Online Week, and many others.

CDW has also worked very closely with colleagues at Poplar Union (PU), our well-established arts and cultural venue at the heart of Bartlett Park and close to a section of the Limehouse Cut canal. PU has recently launched new moorings along the canal and so far, had four boats signed up.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING SERVICE IN NUMBERS

1,937
families received advice, saving tips and cash support to beat the crisis

7,134
people attended in-person health-related sessions at PH community Centres

10,561
local people attended our in-person events

558
volunteers engaged

429
people benefited from this year's summer scheme – **314 children & YPs, 115 adults.**

5,962
subscribers logged in remotely to take part in our online health-related sessions

16,657
online views of health & well-being activities via **HARCA Centres Unlocked**

18
women took up paddle sport for the first time and set up the Poplar Boat Club

20
Asian ladies across 2 football teams enabled to run their weekly sessions



SPW Nursery - Good OFSTED

Regular Services And Our Achievements

Spotlight Youth Service

"I was always getting into trouble, you know... if you had nothing to do after school, trouble will come looking for you...Here, I can be myself. I have friends, I can make music the way I want. I feel supported and safe."

Young Person (17)

This teenager is one among the 3,082 young people whom our world-class youth facility has welcomed to its doors and engaged in a range of life-changing programmes and services.

Every year, our dedicated youth service staff celebrates 12 months of successful engagement with young people who become members of Spotlight. They highlight the various levels of milestones that the young people have reached, the goals that they have achieved and the confidence and strength that they have found in themselves.

This year is no different from any previous years. It just got better and better. In 22-23, Spotlight services have covered the whole of Tower Hamlets.

Its violence prevention programme has enabled those in the borough hotspots to find a service that they can trust, youth workers who can support and accompany them towards the right direction. A total of 231 YPs engaged in Spotlight's Anti-Violence Scheme this year and 95 of those received in-depth support.

Health Spot, our in-house youth-centred GP service has increased its opening days from one evening to two evenings a week. Apart from routine consultations, it now offers counselling, therapy, sex and relationships advice, drugs and alcohol cessation advice & speech & language therapy.





One Youth Dance

The GP service was one of the various sources of assistance for Spotlight members who have experienced extra difficulties because of the Cost-of-Living Crisis. The service team also worked with external partners to provide young people with extra support. Spotlight is thankful to its young volunteers who have happily assisted staff in delivering this essential support to every young person in need.

> "Being part of Spotlight's volunteering and empowerment programmes has really helped me to develop my skills, build my experience for future job search and most importantly make friends along the way."

Mahir (17)

Mahir is one of the 60 young people who have signed up to Spotlight's new cohort of trainees for the Youth Empowerment Board (YEB) and its pool of dedicated volunteers. YEB has been in existence for years and has helped shape future leadership careers of young people by taking part, making their voices heard and playing a role in local decision-making.

This year, Spotlight has embarked on two research programmes. One was in partnership with Queen Mary University, which led the HEAL study (Health engagement to avoid interpersonal violent injury in young Londoners). A grant from the Arts Council, on the other hand, has funded the research on Creative Youth Work, highlighting the benefits of involvement in arts on a young person's life.



International Women's Day



Music Making



YEB Training

Basketball Session - Spotlight

YOUTH SERVICE IN NUMBERS

3,082
total young people engaged via Spotlight

95
young people received more in-depth support around violence prevention

924
young people engaged via partners

84
young people attended Health Spot

231
young people engaged in Violence Prevention programme

25
YPs currently involved with newly-reconstituted Youth Empowerment Board

84
Young people attended Health Spot

Regular Services And Our Achievements

Resident Empowerment and Support

Like in previous years, Poplar HARCA's Resident Empowerment and Support Team (REST) has kept our residents fully engaged and actively involved in shaping the masterplans for their estates undergoing redevelopments. They were always on hand to answer questions and receive suggestions or requests in relation to the schemes.

In this reporting period, the team not only dealt with queries around regeneration concerns. They also offered advice and support to residents who were affected by the cost-of-living crisis. Through the Resident Steering Groups (RSGs) in the Teviot estate and the Aberfeldy estate, REST was able to identify and help local people who were in need. The RSGs, as always, have been instrumental in keeping the links between us and our residents as relevant and useful in all aspects. Members of the RSGs ensure that developers and Poplar HARCA will not deviate from the residents' expressed needs and aspirations for their new homes and improved surroundings.

In 22-23, the team has facilitated monthly RSG meetings, conducted listening campaigns as well as led RSG visits to similar communities undergoing regeneration. They have also produced and published written reports to keep residents up to date with the various stages of the projects.

One of the major events in the REST calendar for 22-23 was the meeting of the Tower Hamlets Council's Strategic Development Committee which decided the fate of the planning application for the Aberfeldy West masterplan.

Prior to the meeting, over 1,000 residents of Aberfeldy submitted letters supporting the application to Tower Hamlets Council. Sadly, despite being recommended for approval by Council officers, the Committee turned down the proposal. Over 300 Aberfeldy residents, their friends and supporters attended the meeting.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, however, has reviewed the council's decision and has agreed to look at the application again. The GLA – Greater London Authority has "called in" the application, meaning it has stepped in to take control of the bid from Tower Hamlets Council. We hope to get the London Mayor's decision, hopefully in the latter part of 2023.

At the Teviot estate, over 70 members of its RSG took part in Co-Design workshops that shaped the Teviot masterplan. REST has consulted a total of 740 residents regarding the masterplan, 94% of whom gave it their positive support.



RSG Meeting



Aberfeldy New Masterplan

RESIDENT EMPOWERMENT & SUPPORT TEAM STATISTICS

70
RSG members took part in Co-Design workshops that shaped the Teviot masterplan

740
residents consulted on the Teviot masterplan

94%
of those consulted in Teviot gave the master plan their positive support

Over
1,000
Aberfeldy residents submitted letters supporting the Aberfeldy Development planning application

Over
300
people attended a meeting at LBTH Town Hall in support of Aberfeldy planning application



Teviot Engagement Plan

Feedback from our residents and partners

Below are some of the feedback from our residents and partners with whom we have worked this year.

"Your help with obtaining the vouchers to pay energy bills is greatly appreciated by all members of our family. It was a real godsend, especially considering cost of living and energy bills now. Thank you so much."

Energy Voucher Recipients

"It was really fun! I think it was quite important to discuss the need to build confidence and speak up for yourself"

Youth Empowerment Board Training Participant

"I must say you have a very professional and active team. I have worked with many teams but you guys are the best."

CaN Corporate Partner



Summer of Well-being Festival



"I would highly recommend volunteering at Poplar HARCA, especially if you are passionate about giving back to your local community. The Community Development and Wellbeing team have a real zeal for helping others and has created a nurturing environment where they appreciate talent – no matter how young or old or what your background is.."

CDW Volunteer

"I want to be outgoing ... it's just I don't feel secure and safe in my body to be out alone. Being a woman, a disabled woman and a coloured woman -I'm frightened of unknown. Coming to the course allowed me to go out and I felt safe and happy."

Mindset Participant



Over 50's Club



Poplar Boat Club



Food Support

THANKS TO ALL OUR FUNDERS AND DONORS IN 2022-2023

- Access Sport
- APASEN
- Apple Music
- Arts Council England
- Barts Health NHS Trust
- Big Lottery Fund (Reaching Communities)
- Brit Trust
- Department for Work and Pensions (Kickstart)
- East End Community Foundation
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Good Things Foundation
- Greater London Authority/ Adult Education Budget
- Greater London Authority/ European Social Fund (Love London Working)
- Groundwork
- Community Chest Fund/ Teviot LLP
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- London Marathon Charitable Trust
- London Sport
- London VRU
- Mayor's Fund for London
- One Housing
- Peabody Trust
- Public Health
- Rangoonwala Foundation
- Sony
- South Gloucestershire College
- Sport England



POPLAR HARCA 25 years

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