

WE DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY

2021-2022

POPLAR

HARCA



INTRODUCTION

The year from April 21 to March 22 marked the gradual easing of Covid restrictions in the country. Our services over-all in Poplar HARCA have also started to slowly shift from online delivery to a hybrid model.

Our community Centres have welcomed residents back in person to attend some activities and sessions. Local people and colleagues started enjoying a cup of tea/coffee and some delicious freshly cooked food at our community cafés.

It started slowly but not for long as people got more confident to meet each other again in person. Safety precautions remained and everyone was asked to remain vigilant. Learning to live with Covid has been the call of the time and so local people started to adapt to the “new normal”.

Despite opening back, our online channels have remained and continued to deliver services for those who still prefer to access online activities. All our teams have retained this option especially for those who find it more convenient to stay online. So with or without Covid, there is something for everyone.

This year’s report looks back at how we have slowly recovered from the hectic demands of working in the midst of the unprecedented global crisis. With Covid no longer a major threat and barrier to our delivery, we have gradually attended to other pressing issues that confront our residents.

There is a long list and they are equally as challenging as when we were addressing them during the time of Covid. The global energy crisis exacerbated by the war in Ukraine has resulted in high inflation rate. This has sent the cost of living to soar astronomically which our most vulnerable residents and low-income families find very difficult to deal with. Unprecedented rise in energy costs have left many families to choose between eating and heating their homes. The inflation has reduced people’s access to affordable food which has severely affected people’s physical and mental health. This has also meant lower attainment for children in schools due to lack of access to proper food and stress at home. Many adults suffer from poorer mental health due to stress caused by economic hardships. There is increased incidences of crime and people feel unsafe in some areas.

Through the years, Poplar HARCA’s Communities and Neighbourhoods Directorate has tried to do as much within the resources available to respond to some of the issues facing our communities. Together with our residents, local, regional and national partners, charitable donors, the local authority and private agencies, we have run services, programmes and activities that help reduce the impact of poverty.

Through our work, we try to enable residents and local people of all ages and all backgrounds to overcome the barriers that they face. We create and offer opportunities to regain or build confidence, gain and improve skills, find employment, overcome loneliness, improve mental and physical health & wellbeing as well as make the environment safe and sustainable for all.

We are pleased to share our achievements in 21-22, the year that we have started to slowly build back from the ruins of Covid.

Social Value generated by CaN Work 21-22:



EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SUPPORT

Traces of the negative impact of Covid-19 on employment have continued to present themselves especially among local people who lost their jobs during the pandemic. They were unable to easily acquire training to gain skills for work. As lockdown eased in April 21, we saw a surge in enrolment to many of the courses that our employment & training service offer.



Every year, we aim for 375 people to achieve at least 1 qualification. This year, 1,102 learners completed accredited courses. They have achieved a combined total of 1,118 qualifications which is double the number of qualifications achieved during the Covid period. The confidence that they have gained through their new-found skills have given them the perfect starting point to eventually land sustainable paid work.



One of the highlights of our work around employment & training support is being judged OUTSTANDING by OFSTED. This is the first inspection that we have undergone since becoming an accredited learning centre. In their report, Inspectors commented on the outstanding service that we have provided to learners with complex needs delivered through passionate and caring staff. They were impressed with the commitment right from the top to supporting the most disadvantaged in the community, many of whom face personal, social and financial difficulties. It was evident to them that senior leaders at Poplar HARCA provide effective oversight of the quality of education and training and share the same commitment as the staff to help learners in the community to achieve their goals.

The team was also recognised at the 2021 UK Housing Awards for its excellent work in getting people into jobs. It was an affirmation of Poplar HARCA's outstanding record in supporting a wide variety of jobseekers, majority of whom have multiple and complex barriers. They are far away from the labour market, are hard to reach and have vulnerabilities and need more time to become job-ready.



Throughout 2021-22, we have helped 291 local people get into jobs. Of these, 57 were young people who took up the government's Kickstart programme. We have supported a total of 60 young people to complete a 6-month programme of training under this scheme.

We will continue to cater for the vulnerable groups of jobseekers and provide them with the necessary tools to successfully enter the world of work. We will also expand our work with young people in search of jobs as we have done with those who have taken up the government's Kickstart Programme.



“Although I’m nervous as it’s my first paid work, I feel confident that I have got the knowledge and skills required to fulfil this dream job as an Appointment Co-ordinator in the Endocrinology Department at Barts. Thanks to The Hive at Poplar HARCA and the NHS Trust for all your valuable support!” ZAHRA



291 PEOPLE

into jobs

1,102 LEARNERS

completed accredited courses

1,118 QUALIFICATIONS

achieved by learners

250 KICKSTARTERS

engaged

57 KICKSTARTERS

into jobs

60 KICKSTARTERS

completed accredited training

73 JOBS

secured via Barts NHS trust

100 COMPUTER DEVICES

distributed to over 50’s trained
in Basic Digital Skills

100 OVER 50’S

trained in Basic Digital Skills

82 PEOPLE

received accredited Digital
Skills Training



THE HIVE

**“The Hive helped me find
the right route into jobs.”**

HAMIDAH BEGUM

I dropped out of university as a Nursing student as I found it very emotionally demanding. But I remained very interested in the different roles within the NHS, which is how I came across this programme. It helped me gain knowledge on the different types of common health conditions within society and how to possibly detect the illnesses beforehand. It gave me confidence to write my CV and supporting statement and prepared me for job interviews.

The Hive team and Rukshana were extremely supportive and helped me immensely during and after the programme had finished. I was in contact with my advisor, Rahela whilst looking and applying for jobs.

She would help me perfect my CV, help adjust my supporting statement and prepare me for interviews, which was extremely helpful as I was able to successfully secure an apprenticeship within the NHS!

Before being able to successfully find an apprenticeship, I also took part in Employability Skills and Equality and Diversity, which had allowed me to gain much knowledge and help me prepare for my role. I hope that the courses I took part in will allow me to progress from an apprenticeship to a full time position within the NHS.

Personally, I enjoyed the interactions with the different tutors and staff members. Due to lockdown it was cut short, however, I enjoyed all aspects of how the course was delivered. Healthcare Horizons allowed me not only to gain a qualification in common health conditions but also gain access to apprenticeships and internal job vacancies within Bart’s Health NHS Trust.

CAFÉ



FUEL POVERTY RELIEF PROGRAMME

Energy bills have been increasing for many households for as long as over 10 years ago. This is being felt again more recently and even more acutely especially by low-income families nationwide as several companies have announced significant price increases in gas prices.



We know a good number of families who live in our properties who find growing energy prices challenging to pay. Support such as social energy tariffs, Warm Home Discounts, and the like already exist. But these are not always available to the families that need them most. We use our frequent contact with a wide range of households to ensure that people in fuel poverty are accessing all the help to which they are entitled.

**“Thanks so much.
Cashed it in! Absolutely
amazing gift. Greatly
appreciated especially
in the mornings waking
up and switching the
heating on!!! Thanks.”**

FUEL VOUCHER RECIPIENT

Since 2016, we have engaged over 60 local residents as Energy Champions in various programmes. We have trained them about the what's, why's and how's of supporting our residents to learn to save energy in the home to reduce their energy bills. We have raised external funding and jointly with partners who are experts in the field, implemented the following: produced awareness-raising materials, trained energy champions as well as staff to do home visits and support residents to adopt simple home measures (as basic as using draught excluders, using energy-efficient light bulbs and appliances). Energy champions also worked with experts to deliver money management courses to residents. They facilitated workshops to teach people how to switch tariffs and energy suppliers. We have also trained energy champions to maximise the use of social media, Facebook in particular to facilitate exchanges among local people around ways to save energy, find the best energy deal, where to seek support and what people are entitled to from the government. Apart from energy saving tips, people also shared ways of recycling and upcycling.

From late 2021 to early 2022, Poplar HARCA (through the CaN team and with support from other Housing colleagues), has signed up and contributed to the Energy Redress programme initiated for the network by the Housing Association's Charitable Trust (HACT).

“The vouchers have helped me greatly. Before Christmas and over the holidays, I was trying to find ways to stay out of the house in order to reduce my energy bills. I was worried about them. Since receiving the vouchers, I have been able to stay indoors and is also in a bit of credit. I am so happy and really grateful”.

FUEL VOUCHER RECIPIENT



The HACT Energy Voucher scheme enabled us to provide between £84 to £149 worth of vouchers to each family during most of December 21 till end of Jan 22. By this time, we have distributed over £25k worth of support to 275 households. Soon after the HACT vouchers have run out, we have managed to source 1,500 x £50 worth of ASDA and TESCO vouchers from Tower Hamlets Council via its Anti-Poverty Team which we distributed to our fuel-poor residents. Jointly with various CaN and Housing teams, we have supported a total of 951 families most of whom got 2 vouchers (£100) each. Of these, 220 are pensioners.

In February and March 22, when the HACT Energy Support Cash vouchers have re-opened we have benefited a further 95 families.

The HACT energy voucher scheme is continuing although cash vouchers are no longer available. Residents with pre-paid meters are still able to get support. We will keep identifying residents who are struggling to pay their bills and offer whatever we have sourced.

We believe that the voucher support is only a temporary measure to ease the difficulty experienced by many of our residents. We will continue implementing projects that offer longer-term solutions. We will keep encouraging local people to become their own change agents by becoming energy champions. Not only will they learn ways to save energy and reduce their own bills. More importantly, they will feel proud that they are able to help change people’s behaviour towards embracing more sustainable ways to end fuel poverty. We have also started to embed the provision of support to fuel poor families while increasing their energy saving skills and knowledge. We do this with the help of colleagues in Poplar HARCA’s Net Zero Carbon Champions’ Group.

“These vouchers have been a very great help in managing my energy costs and I want again to thank you and Poplar HARCA for this.”

FUEL VOUCHER RECIPIENT

60 LOCAL RESIDENTS

trained as energy champions

275 HOUSEHOLDS

received Cash vouchers worth a min of £84 and a max of £149 each

951 FAMILIES

benefitted from the supermarket vouchers

220 PENSIONERS

received the vouchers

£25K WORTH

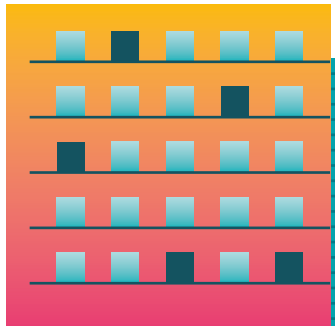
of HACT vouchers distributed

£75K WORTH

of ASDA and TESCO Vouchers distributed through a grant from LBTH

£100 WORTH

of supermarket vouchers received by each family



HEALTH & WELLBEING

Covid-19 has no doubt tested our resilience as an organisation in the most serious way. Like the majority of service providers outside of government, we were faced with unprecedented challenges in terms of both protecting our staff, volunteers and most of all our residents from the negative impact of the pandemic.



The health & well-being of all was our priority throughout, and we prevailed, thankfully. Last year's report has highlighted this. From April 21 onwards, when we started to return to face to face provision, the first thing many residents signed up for were our health and well-being programmes.



Health Spot, our in-house GP service for young people based at Spotlight, has attracted more young people aged 11-19 (or up to 25 with additional needs). They sought medical advice and well-being support with ease and confidence. Throughout this reporting period, the service has seen 82 young people. 31 have had follow up appointments. 100% of them asked after the appointment said that they would recommend the service to a friend. One of the young people commented that "having a youth worker in the consultation with me made me more confident and made it easier for me to talk about my problems". The health spot team has produced a video which can be found in www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxxVhBYgJps

The service model has received a lot of attention and recognition from neighbouring boroughs. It has received special commendation in the Primary Care Innovation of the Year category at this year's HSJ (Health Service Journal) Awards. The service's partners – Tower Hamlets GP Care Group, Spotlight (Poplar HARCA) and NHS North East London Clinical Commissioning Group attended the prestigious annual awards ceremony. It was held to celebrate teams and individuals who have been a source of life-changing best practice across 23 different categories.



HEALTH SPOT

100% of young people asked after their Health Spot appointment said that they would recommend the service to a friend. One of the young people commented that:

“having a youth worker in the consultation room with me made me more confident and made it easier for me to talk about my problems.”



Not only have young people confidently accessed medical advice from the in-house GP service. They have also engaged in borough-wide health partnerships that aim to give young people an active role in supporting the mental and physical well-being of their peers. In collaboration with the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH), St Paul's Way Medical Centre and Langdon Park School, Spotlight members launched the Young Health Champions programme. Through this, 10 sixth-formers from LPS gained accreditation via the RSPH on how to steward their own as well as their peers' mental and physical health especially those still coping with the negative impact of Covid-19.

Through our Employment & Training Hub, we have enabled young people to participate in Health Care Horizons and Community Works for Health programmes. These are schemes open to young people who want to go into apprenticeships. We have included Mental Health First Aid as one of the qualifications that we offer to young people in response to the higher number of this cohort who are experiencing mental health issues.

During the period from April 21 to March 22, our neighbourhood centres' teams have seen the gradual return of local people into our community centres. They have facilitated participation in both indoor and outdoor health-related activities. A total of 6,437 people attended these sessions in-person throughout the year. The range of activities included: cycling training and group cycling for all ages (visit www.communitycycles.co.uk/ for more info on this), walking trips organised with walking groups, tennis sessions for beginners, football sessions and paddle boarding in the canal among others.

Indoor sessions covered Yoga for babies and adults, Keep Fit exercises, Dance sessions, Arts and Crafts and Mindfulness sessions, entertainment like film showing, musical concerts and inter-generational sessions like cook, eat and chat. The event was held during Eid where young people from Spotlight spent the day with members of our over 50's Hub, the Burcham St. Community Centre.

Our community cafés engaged with groups who have proven capacity to deliver free healthy meals to children daily, intending to change young people's eating habits by introducing them to healthy alternatives.



Over the Easter holidays in 2021, with Kitchen Social, they have filmed two recipes and provided recipe kits to 160 families with some top results by the home cooks. In the summer they have teamed up with First Love Foundation, one of Poplar HARCA's partners, to cook 200 meals every Monday and Tuesday for their summer scheme with Kidz Café. The café team also worked with Spotlight, to provide cooked meals to their young service users for the duration of its summer scheme, which made sure no young person went hungry. The café staff held a live cooking event and a cook-off, aimed to encourage families to cook together and create tasty and nutritious food with minimal ingredients.

Despite opening up however, many have continued to access some of these activities via HARCA Centres Unlocked (HCU), our Facebook page set up at the height of the pandemic. We have recorded 13,269 online views of a wide variety of health & well-being activities for all ages delivered weekly by an average of 11 of our local partners.

We continue to lead the Well One partnership with its ever-increasing partners including three housing associations and many other voluntary sector organisations. Wellbeing is a pressing issue and Well One is helping to synergise efforts to combat health inequality. The team has collaboratively produced the A-Z of Wellbeing, a free digital guide to support people to invest more in their health and wellbeing. The guide was read, shared and downloaded by 1,000 subscribers over six months.

Various partners across the network have endorsed Well One's Play campaign which embodies one of its main objectives, of improving physical and mental wellbeing. Although run locally, and concentrated in Tower Hamlets, the campaign engaged with the national charity Save the Children. It has reached over 500 families and children who attended 20 professionally-led, and three play champion-led workshops, encouraging family interaction through play. It connected 14 partners, three schools and was featured in two publications circulated in the Borough. Save the Children have invited Well One to participate in their 2022 National Summer of Play campaign.



CHRISP ST. CYCLE HUB

The beginnings of what is now a very successful Chrisp St. Community Cycling Hub can be traced back at our efforts last year to revive our cycling offer that had to stop during Covid. We started by partnering again with Bikeworks which got one of our local residents to enrol and complete an intensive cycle instructor training for free.

We then worked with Sustrans to deliver our Spring/Summer 21 cycling programme. The Kids BMX sessions attracted 15 participants aged 6 – 11 while the Sustrans Women's Cycle Club trained six women from BAME backgrounds with no cycling skills. At the end of the project the women got to keep the folding bikes that they have used in the training. In September 21, with help from Accents colleagues, we launched the Hub with Sustrans and Hubbab. 305 adults and 140 children took part in various cycling activities while 151 people loaned out a bike in this period.

“My daughter Naima could not ride at all and had no confidence in riding. She learned to ride in only 3 weeks! Wow, I was so amazed! Her first 3 lessons were on a balance bike then had pedals put on in the 4th session and now she is ready to go. I know she loves to ride and I’m glad that she can do it properly now. I will be getting Naima a bike and I will definitely be taking her out and about so she can build up more confidence. Thank you, I love this.”

SADA DIRIR, NAIMA’S MUM

6,437 PEOPLE
attended in-person health-related sessions at PH community Centres

82 YOUNG PEOPLE
attended Health Spot

500 FAMILIES ATTENDED
Well One’s Professional and Play Champion-led Play Campaign workshops

305 ADULTS AND 140 CHILDREN
took part in various cycling activities

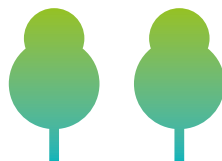
500+
take n make recipe kits delivered to local families

13,269 ONLINE VIEWS
of health & well-being activities via **HARCA Centres Unlocked**

31 YOUNG PEOPLE
attending follow-up appointments

1,000 ONLINE VIEWERS
read and downloaded Well One’s A-Z of Wellbeing

200 BREAKFAST & LUNCHES
per week cooked for families in need during holidays



FOOD SECURITY

Access to sufficient and nutritious food is one of the pillars of food security. It helps reduce illness among members of communities. With enough food on the table, people are able to spend more time in building their livelihoods. They have opportunities to thrive economically and have capacity to care for vulnerable community members.



Even before the pandemic hit, food security has heavily featured in our work to reduce poverty in Poplar and Tower Hamlets. We offer our assets like unused land to local residents who wish to engage in food growing. We allow free use of our spaces for food banks to store donated food and use as distribution centres. We offer local charities free use of our café and training kitchens to cook hot meals for children and older people in need of extra food support especially during the holidays.



Since November 2021, we have hosted the Food Store which is funded by LBTH and operated by our partner Burdett Football Club (BFC). Designed to replace the traditional method of helping people in need of extra food support via food banks, the food pantry model offered pathways out of poverty. For £3.50 a week membership fee, each family gets groceries worth £30 plus fresh produce on the side. At the same time, support on how they can help themselves improve their situation is programmed throughout their 3-6 months' membership. Based on the project's outcomes BCF has proven the effectivity of the model.

Throughout the year (21-22), they have supported over 120 families with their weekly food needs as well as helped and directed them to service providers that helped address their barriers to work, improve their ill health, help with their housing problems and gain skills in managing money and debts. The pantry has impressively helped members to clear £24k worth of debts.

Alongside developing the Food Store model discussed above, we continue to support existing food provisions in the area. During the London Challenge Poverty Week, we have mobilised Poplar HARCA colleagues to take part in a food drive to benefit other local food banks.

“I’ve been coming here every Tuesday, since you’ve been open and it is so convenient because I just live down the road. The food co-op has encouraged me to eat healthier, my kids have definitely been eating more fruits. I also see a lot of parents come together , it’s like a little community get together. You don’t usually see people getting together or talking to each other, but since this has been opened, I’ve seen so many happy faces!”

TEVIOT FOOD CO-OP USER

We have collected 19 big crates of non-perishable produce from all our offices which we donated to Bow Food Bank. With four in ten children in Tower Hamlets being food insecure and reliant on food donations, this remains a very valuable contribution.

Our community cafés lend a huge support to our campaign on food security for local people. Every week, they give surplus food worth £100, from Bow Brew and Spotlight Cafe, to the Food Store. They ranged from delicious sandwiches to mouth-watering chocolate brownies and banana loaves.

Since gradually opening up in April 21, local people have enjoyed the affordable options on offer at the community cafés. Keeping in mind the impact of high inflation on our low-income residents, they have maintained low prices. For example, locals can buy 2 pieces of toast with butter and jam for £1. Older residents who prefer light snacks even share this between two, so they only spend 50p each. Everyone loved recipes cooked in-house from fresh ingredients with prices that rival and beat local unhealthy takeaways such as chicken shops.

Our Centres’ team continued to work closely with the Women’s environmental network on projects that are part of the wider Just FACT (Food and Climate Transition) programme. We work with Leaders in Community (LiC) which drives youth engagement into the programme as well as with R-Urban that leads in training people about food recycling and organic composting, among others.

Together with a team at the Limbrough Green Hub which is supported by our SPW Centre staff, the three organisations have started working with local residents, mainly from Teviot and Burdett estates. They have programmed a series of direct gardening support and training on various topics. This included sustainable local food growing, healthy eating, and reducing food waste as well as saving our bees.

We were also engaged in the LBTH’s drive to develop new spaces for community gardening and improving existing gardens that are in need of repairs and further support to maximise their potential for food growing. We were successful in our partnership bid with LiC to refurbish the Teviot garden and with BFC to create the Maydwell community garden.

We are thankful to all our partners and funders who have fully supported us to deliver projects that help enhance food security in our local communities.



120 FAMILIES

benefited from being members of the Food Store for 3-6 months

£24K WORTH

of debts cleared through Money Management support to those in debt

£100 WORTH

of surplus food donated weekly by PH cafes to the Food Store

150 CUSTOMERS PER DAY

enjoyed healthy and delicious meals at affordable prices at Bow Brew

2 COMMUNITY FOOD GROWING GARDENS

received support from LBTH (1 refurbished, 1 newly-created)

19 CRATES

of non-perishable items donated by PH staff given to Bow Food Bank



YOUNG PEOPLE'S SAFETY

Protecting and safeguarding children and young people is everyone's priority. We want them to be happy, healthy, successful and supported at home and their communities. Many of them have these positive experiences but we also know that others, especially those in disadvantaged areas, need more support.



Helping and inspiring young people to thrive is at the heart of Poplar HARCA's mission. Through the years, we have worked with vulnerable children and young people at our community centres to steer them towards safety and success. In partnership with the local council and other generous donors, we have later created Spotlight, a world-class youth facility. The space has since engaged and inspired over 4,000 young people across Tower Hamlets every year.



For the majority, Spotlight has been a safe place to discover and enhance their talents in areas like music, arts, theatre and IT among many. It was a special place to experiment, make friends, and gain skills for life, build confidence and find opportunities to achieve great things.

The building had to close during the height of the pandemic but services and programmes continued online. Where possible, our staff met young people outdoors, following strict Covid rules. As restrictions eased from April 21, we have welcomed everyone back in person. In this reporting period, we highlight Spotlight's direct intervention to keep children and young people away from violence and crime.

One of Spotlight's initiatives in this area included the delivery of the **Breaking the Cycle Against Youth Violence** Programme in partnership with Early Help, Youth Offending Team and Osmani Trust. It aims to improve school attendance, reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour among young people whilst providing support for the whole family covering education, training and employment. Weekly one to one and mentoring took place with the individual young person. We dealt with a total of **75 cases in the period. 13 young people completed the Evolve workshops** which covered topics around healthy relationships, drug and alcohol awareness, knife crime awareness and social media and identity.

“We need more of these programmes and spaces like Spotlight Phoenix Heights for young Islanders. It has helped me and friends with our development by gaining from various opportunities including a Level 3 in Emergency First Aid at Work”.

IYAAZUL AHMED, 18YRS OLD

Spotlight is also a partner of the Tower Hamlets Island Community Network (THICN) a programme funded by the Mayor of London's Violence Reduction Unit - **MyEnds**. It is a neighbourhood-focused initiative and a response to evidence and academic research on understanding and preventing violence, which highlighted the importance of a place-based approach. **215 young people** from the Isle of Dogs have been involved in the programme so far.

The service has partnered up with One Housing to deliver youth programmes for those aged 11-19 years on the Isle of Dogs. It offers a range of activities including detached youth work, chill out and games, football (roof-top 3G pitch) and educational workshops @ Phoenix Heights Community Centre.

In August 2021, we invited senior representatives from the Mayor's Office – Violence Reduction Unit, key partners, MET Police, elected officials and young people to a day packed with presentations, networking and a tour in the Isle of Dogs.

It was an opportunity to showcase the work that Spotlight and its partners have done from March 2021 when the MyEnds programme started. They collectively came up with solutions to combat some of the issues that unfortunately still exist. The team has identified **9 hotspots** that are associated to different groups of young people with whom they have engaged. They discussed some of the complexities surrounding building relationships with disengaged and disadvantaged young people. Many young people shared their journey with the audience which was very impressive.

In October 2021 the Spotlight Team and partner colleagues came together and kicked off this year's edition of the National Crime Awareness Week annual observance by taking part in a football tournament organised by the local authority. 12 PH staff took part in the event.

After the brutal stabbing that happened on the Isle of Dogs towards late September 21, Spotlight's detached youth work team worked around the clock carrying out targeted detached street work in the area to reassure young people and residents.

After several discussions with them, the team raised some questions to the local authority and have met with clinical leads from the NHS. As a result, they have agreed to work together and deliver workshops around Post Traumatic Stress, Managing Loss of Loved ones, How to deal with Depression, Stress and Anxiety.

Nahim Ahmed, one of Spotlight's very experienced staff last year received an MBE from her Royal Highness the Queen, for his exemplary work with young people specially those at risk of crime and violence. Nahim's passion and expertise has been essential in Spotlight's work in this area.





Key to steering children and young people towards safety and success is to raise their aspirations, instilling a belief that they can realise their dreams and be the best that they wish to be. Spotlight's varied programmes and services embed this ethos. Last year, as in previous years, young people actively and enthusiastically took part in activities that address their needs.

Some of the highlights are below:

27 young people have completed the Bikeworks' Build-A-Bike Programme where young people got a chance to build their own bikes, learn how to maintain them and had a lesson in cycling road sense. Each young person succeeded in building a bike which they now own.

10 young people from across the Spotlight service took part in consultations to give their views and opinions on the development and implementation of the new east of the borough Area Action Plan.

Poplar HARCA's Youth Empowerment Board (YEB), made up of **25 young people**, has been re-established by the team at Spotlight to function as a way of bringing youth voice into the heart of the decision making processes at Poplar HARCA. They have been undergoing training to build their confidence including a three-day residential to Gloucestershire to bond as a group and work on their teamwork and leadership skills.

Young and talented music artists took their talents to the next level in the summer of 2021 at Spotlight on a brand new **Today at Apple** artist development programme. Collaborating with Apple, Reprezent Radio, Platoon studios and hosted by the amazing DJ Carly Wilford, we offered **10 artists** aged 16-25 the chance to collaborate, create their own tracks, and receive professional feedback from leading names across the music industry. Funding from Apple in Sept 21 enabled us to deliver the **Spotlight Sounds Artist development programme** as well as make significant improvements to the music studio equipment at Spotlight.

We have completed the second Apple funded Creative Ideas Fund project where a group of 7 young people created a short film which tells the story of a young black business man setting up a fashion business and the barriers he faced. It was live streamed on you tube and the young people did a live Q&A on Instagram. The film is empowering and inspiring which you can watch using this link. www.youtube.com/watch?v=zn_NgMv7Zbg&t=4s

During half term, the English National Ballet came to Spotlight and worked with our dance partners One Youth Dance and IMD. Musicians played live music as they took the dancers through the first act of Swan Lake.

2,875 YOUNG PEOPLE

engaged with our Youth Services

75 CASES

dealt with under Breaking the Cycle Against Youth Violence Programme

13 YOUNG PEOPLE

completed the Evolve workshops

25 YOUNG PEOPLE

currently involved with newly-reconstituted Youth Empowerment Board

12 SPOTLIGHT STAFF

members attended the Annual National Crime Awareness Week

27 YOUNG PEOPLE

have completed the Bikeworks' Build-A-Bike Programme

10 YOUNG PEOPLE

from across Spotlight services gave views on LBTH AAP

7 YOUNG PEOPLE

created a short film upon completion of the 2nd Apple - funded Creative Ideas Fund project

10 ARTISTS

aged 16-25 benefited from the Spotlight Sounds Artist development programme funded by Apple

9 HOTSPOTS

identified in Isle of Dogs to put emphasis for delivery



VOLUNTEERING

Every year, we pay tribute to our extremely generous volunteers. We honour them and acknowledge their valuable contributions during Volunteer Week. Without people like them who share their spare time to help and give back to the community, it would have been much more difficult for us to widen our reach. Their heroic deeds during the pandemic are heart-warming especially to those whom they have helped.



When we opened up our community centres at the beginning of 2021, many have expressed a willingness to continue what they have started volunteering for during the lockdown days. A total of 301 volunteers worked with us in this period, a third of whom are young people engaged with Spotlight.



Young people find volunteering valuable in enabling them to gain new skills, useful experiences and exposure to the wider world. A youth member of Spotlight has started assisting the Tower Hamlets Education and Wellbeing Service and the Spotlight Team. She has helped with planning and delivery of the Tower Hamlets Mental Health Ambassadors' sessions. This has made this successful programme fundamentally more youth-led.

The various roles fulfilled by our volunteers this year included: digital champions, energy champions, graphic designer, videographer, befrienders, cooking content contributor, outreach, skill-share volunteer and young community heroes. We have also recruited volunteers for gardening support, running art workshops as well as cycling support, online tutoring and photography.

For the first time we have opened our child care nurseries to volunteering and have two people in supporting roles working alongside staff to support and play with children. We have also recruited volunteers to take up opportunities in the Finance Team of Poplar HARCA, particularly those looking to find a job in the financial sector.

“While I have only been volunteering as a befriender for a few months, it has been one of my best and most memorable experiences of the last year. The training and structure of the programme has been effective and helped prepare me for the role and the team has provided wonderful ongoing support”

VOLUNTEER



Throughout the year, our volunteers shared their spare time and skills to help us deliver many of our programmes and services. They have added enormous value to our offer for which residents and local people have been very appreciative.

Our nine (9) Befriending Project Volunteers for example, have established very good relationships with their befriendees, who were very pleased to have someone at the end of the telephone line, making sure that they are fine. Our staff have made sure that the relationships are progressing well. In July 21, we have allowed a face to face meet up between them. Volunteers were fully trained and had to follow strict safeguarding guidelines that we have put in place to extend the provision, which we have started during Covid and delivered over the phone.

In March 22, we recruited and vetted more befriending volunteers who have completed the befriending training course. Staff also attended the session and a ‘train the trainer course’ will enable community centre staff to deliver this training in the future. The volunteers have been successfully matched with local residents. This is a six-month project.



When we re-opened our Centres to the public, we worked in partnership with the City of London, to record a podcast with City professionals who were looking at their career and how volunteering have helped. We also invited our Covid Volunteers who supported us throughout the lockdown from April 2020. They shared their experiences, stories and why they got involved.

Before the pandemic, we used to welcome groups of corporate volunteers to assist in our seasonal upkeep of our Seven (7) food growing community gardens. This year, we welcomed back a team from Arcadis, an engineering consultancy firm. They have helped clean up Limborough Garden in the Burdett Estate and received great feedback from residents.



VOLUNTEER PARTY

I initially volunteered to support my local community and give back, but I feel I have personally gained a lot myself (which I did not really expect). I always look forward to my weekly calls with my befriender (maybe more so than her!) and have felt enriched by this relationship. It has helped me learn how to be more aware of the challenges other people face and how to relate to others from different backgrounds to myself.

I am pleased to find this programme and have been able to volunteer. The Poplar HARCA

team has set up a well-organised program that focuses on the well-being of the local community and volunteers at the same time. The volunteer support has been brilliant and invaluable to me. I feel lucky to be part of a community of individuals who want to improve the world around them. Thank you to Becs and the team for working so hard on creating a wonderful experience for all involved!

NADA

301 VOLUNTEERS

engaged over-all during the year

14 DIFFERENT ROLES

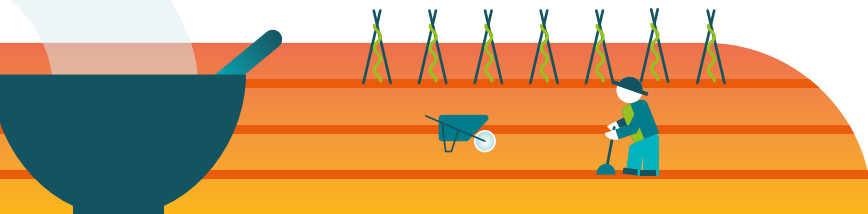
filled in by volunteers

1/3 OF TOTAL

volunteers are young people

£45K FINANCIAL VALUE

of volunteer contribution in the year



RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT IN REGENERATION

In the 2020-21 version of this report (WDTD 20-21 Resilience in the Time of Covid), we have highlighted the creative ways in which our Resident Engagement Support Team (REST) has sustained contacts with our residents.

REST TEAM AND RSGs

Throughout this reporting period, the REST Team has worked tirelessly with the Resident Steering Groups (RSGs) in Aberfeldy and Teviot estates. RSGs are key to making area masterplans reflective of local people's views and aspirations. Both RSGs are composed of very diverse members of the existing communities. Teviot RSG has 90 members while Aberfeldy RSG has 72. Everyone takes active part in reflecting on the appropriateness of the proposals designed based on their inputs. Their enthusiastic and honest feedback greatly help to crystallise each stage of the plans.



Faced with the limitations posed by the pandemic, the team resorted to phone and virtual connections to enable continued participation of residents in shaping the plans for both the Aberfeldy and Teviot estates, two PH estates currently undergoing major re-developments.

Apart from the RSGs, residents also get involved in monitoring the impact of community programmes funded by the Teviot LLP (Limited Liability Partnership of Poplar HARCA and Hill) via its Community Chest Fund. The Fund aims to ensure that each year, throughout the 15-year span of the scheme, projects that benefit the community are delivered by various local partners including established resident groups. The projects aim to: generate opportunities and build the capacity of current community groups; achieve local economic impact through creating employment opportunities and supporting local supply chains; improve the prosperity, health and over-all well-being of Teviot residents as well as promote safety in the community. These are wider benefits that the LLP hopes the regeneration programme can bring apart from delivering the new high standard homes and well-designed buildings and landscapes.



A resident representative now sits at the LLP Social Value Board. The group advises the Teviot LLP main Board about the progress of the funded programmes and how much social value are generated from them. This is measured by using the UK Social Value Bank and Social Value Insight tool developed by the Housing Associations Charitable Trust (HACT), of which Poplar HARCA is a member. In 2017, REST undertook a listening campaign to determine what changes residents want to see in Teviot. Based on this, the LLP has identified 12 outcomes against which to measure the projects' impact on the lives of Teviot residents.

Young people have also been active in the consultations facilitated by REST on both estates. Members of Poplar HARCA's Youth Empowerment Board who live in Teviot gave important inputs during the Teviot co-design workshop held in September 21.

Our youth service Spotlight and REST facilitated a discussion with young residents from Aberfeldy estate via Langdon Park School. The youngsters told the ZCD Architects what young people need with regards to open spaces. Fourteen (14) of them have met Champion design agency and Poplar

HARCA's Community Development & Wellbeing team to influence the plans for the new Aberfeldy community centre.

Building on their active engagement in said consultations, they have formed themselves into a group called "Aberfeldy Heroes". They want to give young people a voice and continue to take part in the affairs of the estate. Like in Teviot, Aberfeldy residents also has access to a Community Chest Fund administered by Aberfeldy Big Local, a local charity funded by the Big Lottery. The Aberfeldy Heroes has won a grant from them to deliver a local youth activity.

Details of consultation events facilitated and participated in by the REST team and the RSGs can be found in the Poplar HARCA website www.poplarharca.co.uk/new-homes-regeneration/development-projects/status/in-consultation/

WE WANT...

- ▶ Modern new homes that are affordable, secure, spacious, light and well built
- ▶ Improved safety for all residents at the heart of the design
- ▶ New shops, cafes, safe green spaces to create a better place to live
- ▶ The Residents Steering Group (RSG) to have a proper voice as the regeneration plans come forward.

(EXCERPTS FROM MINUTES OF CONSULTATIONS WITH RESIDENTS)



BIG THANKS...

To all our funders and donors who continue to support our community development work.

Apple

Arts Council

Asif Rangoon Wala
Foundation

Barts NHS Trust

East End Community
Foundation

European Social Fund
(Love London Working)

Good Things Foundation

Greater London Authority
- My Ends

Greater London Authority
-Adult Education Budget

Greater London Authority
Young Londoners Fund

Hill

Kickstart

London Borough of
Tower Hamlets (various
departments)

London Marathon
Charitable Trust

Peabody Trust

Public Health

Sony

Tesco Community Grants

The Big Lottery - Reaching
Communities Fund