



Community Development Impact Statement

2019/20



Community
Housing



Our Approach

Our approach is centred on four key strategic themes which guide our focus and investment:

- To improve the financial inclusion and employability of residents
- To improve the health and wellbeing of residents
- To work with young people to help them be successful in later life
- To empower communities to become active citizens.

Community Development Impact Statement

2019/20

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Introduction

Our focus at THCH remains on Building Connecting Communities by creating vibrant places to live, supporting our residents to achieve their goals and delivering great value services.

Our Community Development Team is at the hub of supporting activities aligned to our vision through a strategy supported by four key themes:

- Improve the financial inclusion and employability of residents
- Improve the health and wellbeing of residents
- Work with young people to help them be successful in later life
- Empower communities to become active residents

Although Coronavirus curtailed the year prematurely, with our centres closing in mid-March, this report highlights the support and work of our Community Development Team throughout 2019-20. The year has seen us maintain a wide and healthy range of groups delivering many thousands of hours of activities from our centres. Our Tenancy Support Officers assisted over 500 residents and secured over £300,000 in benefits for THCH families, and our Resident Engagement Officer introduced a number of new ways of getting involved.

This report highlights in greater detail much of the work supported and delivered by the team, but we would especially like to thank the dozens of community workers and over 200 volunteers who make this possible through their dedication to improving the lives of their neighbours and community.





Social Return on Investment

The Social Return on Investment for the services delivered by THCH and delivered by organisations using our centres has been assessed via the HACT Model. HACT are a consultancy group offering the housing sector a platform of research, evidence, insight and impact models. Their model for assessing the social return on investment has been widely adopted within the sector for many years.

2019/20

Community Cohesion

inc. Health & Wellbeing, Young People, Hobby

£24,163,940

Tenancy Support

inc. Energy, Debt, Welfare Support

£2,877,913

Employment & Skills

inc. Employment & Volunteering Assistance,
Guidance & Support

£3,218,807



Financial Inclusion & Employability

Tenancy Support

Tower Hamlets is the tenth most deprived local authority in England in terms of its average deprivation score, and has the highest rate of pensioner poverty in England. Half of all residents aged 60 and over are living below the poverty line, more than three times the rate nationally.

The last 12 months saw THCH's **Tenancy Support Officers** maintain our focus on the challenges our residents face in respect to Welfare Reforms - this has also seen a continued increase in our residents moving to Universal Credit.

During the year, our officers dealt with 552 referrals, providing everything from guidance and support through to dealing with extremely complex cases. At the fullest extent, their work resulted in benefit appeals and tribunal hearings and helped secure over £300,000 in welfare benefits for our residents.

The work of our Tenancy Support Officers together with the community groups that provided debt, energy or welfare advice saw a Social Return on Investment of over £2.8million last year.

Case Studies

Discretionary Housing Benefit

Miss A was a single parent who lived by herself in a 3-bed property with a weekly rent of £142.56. She had a low paid job, long-term health issues and claimed partial Housing Benefit to help pay the rent. She had no money and was forced to use credit cards and borrow money to make ends meet and had built up significant rent arrears.

Our Tenancy Support Officer carried out a thorough assessment which resulted in applications for a Bedroom Tax reduction and Discretionary Housing Benefit (DHP).

The applications were successful and resulted in the award of a 25% Bedroom Tax reduction to Mrs A's rent and a backdated DHP award of over £2,000 which cleared Mrs A's rent arrears.

Bedroom Tax & Resident Support Scheme

Mr B had rent arrears and was referred to the Tenancy Support Officer by our Income Recovery Team. Mr B was disabled and required a carer to stay overnight, which is grounds for exemption from the Bedroom Tax. An application was made to Tower Hamlets Council detailing the medical situation which resulted in an exemption being granted and backdated that cleared all the rent arrears.

Mr B also informed our Tenancy Support Officer that his fridge had broken down and as he was still paying off money to his catalogue, he could not afford to purchase a new appliance. A successful Resident Support Scheme application was made to Tower Hamlets Council and a new fridge was delivered by the Council's supplier.

“We’re extremely proud of the six people who gained part time employment at local primary schools and the young adults we helped get into volunteering positions”

The Stifford Centre / Wapping Youth

Our Tenancy Support Officers dealt with

○ **552 referrals**

in 2019-20, compared to 567 last year

Benefit secured in 2019-20

○ **£309,900**

compared to £258,407 last year

Debt & Welfare Advice Social Return on Investment

○ **£2,877,913**

Employment Help & Support Social Return on Investment

○ **£3,218,807**



“We provided different courses, including knife crime awareness, to residents who are economically inactive and unemployed and delivered three Pathway to Work funded employment projects”

WISE Youth Trust





Financial Inclusion & Employability continued

Maintaining a Tenancy

Mrs C was in rent arrears of close to £5,000 which resulted in Court action and a possession order being granted and the genuine risk of eviction from her property.

Following a review of Mrs C's circumstances, discussions were held with officers from Tower Hamlets Council and an urgent application for Discretionary Housing Benefit was applied for. The result was an award of over £2,500, halving Mrs C's arrears. A payment plan was agreed and a referral made to a money management agency to help Mrs C manage her finances. The eviction was cancelled, and Mrs C was able to maintain her tenancy.

Our Tenancy Support Officers can be contacted on 020 7780 3070.

Energy and Financial Advice

As well as direct referrals, our Tenancy Support Officers work with energy saving organisations such as **WaterSure** and **Project LEAP**. Groups including **St Peter's Bengali Association** and **Positive Money Tower Hamlets** have engaged with the community over the last 12 months supporting local residents with advice and guidance. The work of our officers and community organisations help people access services to reduce fuel bills, consolidate debts and save on future energy bills.

Employment Advice & Training

Unemployment levels in Tower Hamlets continue to remain higher than regional and national rates and the work delivered from our centres by organisations such as **The Rooted Forum**, **The Stifford Centre** and **WISE Youth Trust** helped many local resident access full and part-time employment opportunities, volunteer positions and training courses to enhance lives skills and employability prospects.

Groups based from a THCH centre supported over 500 residents onto training and helped over 300 local people find full or part-time employment. The Social Return on Investment of the work these organisations provided last year amounted to over £3.2million.



“We delivered a Knife Defence Workshop designed to help members understand potential attacks and how to deal with threats and what to do in the unlikely event they are attacked or a witness to an attack”

Silat Buka Lingkaran Martial Arts

Support provided to the Community

Energy Advice	167
Money Advice	462
Part Time Employment	88
Full Time Employment	231
Training	594
Volunteer Positions	385
Work Placements	143
Apprenticeships	22

Types of advice provided by our Tenancy Support Team

Energy advice/referral provided:	57
Debt Advice/Referral:	22
Welfare Bens Advice:	473



Social Return on Investment in Training and Employment

○ **£3.2 million**

Social Return on Investment in Welfare, Debt and Energy Advice

○ **£2.8 million**



Health & Wellbeing

Last year we supported 20 organisations with health and wellbeing projects, ranging from martial arts and non-contact boxing to Over 60s line-dancing, Pilates and dance aerobics, cooking clubs and gardening projects. In Tower Hamlets health and wellbeing is a vital issue - people typically start to develop poorer health around ten years earlier than elsewhere in London. The reasons for this are varied, but they are often the result of higher levels of poverty - low income, unemployment, insecure employment, poor housing quality, overcrowding and lack of access to affordable healthy food.

We are pleased that health and wellbeing activities, many of which are free or low cost, continue to be extremely popular and well attended.

Each month during the last year, over 700 people took part in health and wellbeing activities. As well as these regular sessions, THCH also supported several one-off activities, including:

- Supporting the Mayor's Cup Football Tournament
- Supporting St Hilda's Over 50s Health & Wellbeing Week
- Delivered a Health Fair attended by over 200 people

Through our Community Development Support budget, we also provided financial support to several groups to deliver events and activities aimed at improving health, increasing activity and living a healthier lifestyle which included funding two health cooking projects and a 16-week exercise project.

“Members have been training hard and we led a 4-day community workshop on women’s self-defence”

Silat Buka Lingkaran Martial Arts



Health & Wellbeing and Community
Activities Social Return on Investment -

○ **£24,163,940**

“The classes provide users opportunities to meet new people and get to know about healthy food that they can cook and prepare for themselves and their families”

Social Action for Health

○ **705** people per month use our venues for exercise sessions

○ **16** organisations delivered dedicated health & wellbeing activities



“All the regular training has helped us compete in numerous championships and tournaments. We competed in a national Judo competition and returned from the WEKAF-GB tournament with 18 medals”

Community Martial Arts Trust





Working with young people

One of our Community Development Strategic themes for 2017-2020 was to work with young people, supporting them to help develop skills and confidence.

In the last year, 15 organisations provided specific youth services from our centres, ranging from youth clubs to home school revision classes. Groups such as **The Shadow Youth Alliance**, **The Stifford Centre** and **The Rooted Forum** may be considered as more traditional youth services combining their activities such as sport with educational initiatives and training whilst organisations such as **Enam Tutorial** and **Horsed Education** focused on revision and exam preparation for our younger residents.

On average, 441 young people accessed services from our venues each month.

“We’ve been proud how we have engaged with new young attendees, offering employment, interview and university personal statement advice on top of offering a safe recreational space. Our young people also raised over £500 for projects for less fortunate young people around the world”

The Shadow Youth Alliance



“Mothers and children are so happy to be part of this community and every time we get new parents, they love being part of the group”

Our Gems

○ **15** different organisations provided youth services

○ **4851** young people accessed youth services in the year





Empowering Communities

Our approach to working in the community continues to focus on supporting and developing community groups and volunteers to deliver projects aligned to our Community Development Strategy. We focus on projects that reduce isolation, enhance a spirit of community, improve skills and knowledge, help improve health & fitness and tackle the inequalities and financial troubles that affect many local families.

Our centres and gardening clubs are popular hubs within the community, hosting over 60 different groups and 8 gardening clubs delivering over 22,000 hours of activities. Footfall last year was close to 4,000 individual visits per month. Many of the projects are delivered by local volunteers, and we remain committed to help them by providing training for group leads and members.

On average, over 700 people a month attended sessions aimed at empowering the community and we remain committed to supporting groups, such as **Our Variety Club**, **Sew n'Mend**, **St Peter's Community Wellbeing Projects** and **the African Music Class** in the coming year.

“My group has built confidence, team work and become a close-knit family and has performed in front of live audiences at cultural events”

Taal Torongo Bollywood & Bengali Dance



○ **61** different organisations use our venues

○ **22,000** hours of activity

○ **4,000** individual visits per month



“I continue to be proud of my groups dedication and development on marimba and mbira instruments”

African Marimba Music Class



“More experienced individuals support and share experience with other members helping beginners design and make beautiful outfits”

Harry Gosling Sewing Club





Resident Engagement

Scrutiny

Our Scrutiny Panel reviews areas of our performance, monitors standards, looks to see how we are doing and provides recommendations on making our service better. The Panel is made up of a small team of dedicated resident volunteers, with a range of experience and skills – they give their time to help shape and improve our services.

Last year, the Panel carried out a review of how we manage **Anti-Social Behaviour** following a discussion of the performance reports with THCH. The Panel decided to review this area as the policy was relaunched in 2018 and we sought the Panel's overview to see if it is working. An in-depth review was carried out and the Panel made a range of recommendations to our Operations Committee, the majority of which were accepted. THCH is working to implement the recommendations to an agreed timescale.

Resident Forum

The Forum meet quarterly and is a platform for residents to discuss key performance areas and issues across our estates with officers from THCH. The Forum is supported by our Resident Engagement Officer and their remit covers:

- Monitoring performance of key service areas
- Monitoring THCH's service standards
- Monitoring services on estates
- Looking at strategic issues that affect services to residents
- Making recommendations about how THCH could improve

Listening Campaigns

Last year we introduced our Listening Campaign outreach project, where our Resident Engagement Officer attended a block or estate to meet residents and discuss current issues affecting their home or estate. These are then fed back to the relevant team for review. The campaigns were successful and in the 4 sessions held last year, we engaged with 56 residents and raised 13 issues for follow-up.



Customer Journey Mapping

Last year we also introduced Customer Journey Mapping to better understand our customer's experience across parts of our service. This helped us understand what works well as well as identifying the 'pinch-points' that could result in a dip in performance. Feedback is reviewed by THCH's Management Team and actions are put in place to address areas of concern.

Last year we carried our mapping exercises on three areas:

- Customer Service
- Responsive Repairs
- Car Space Sign-Up

Resident Associations

A Resident Association is a formal group of people who live in a block or estate, who volunteer their time to make positive changes to where they live. The group can include tenants, shared owners, leaseholders and homeowners and should work to promote the interests of the residents they represent. We are pleased when residents decide to form an Association and we will provide support and guidance to current groups or to residents thinking about forming an Association. THCH currently has four constituted Resident Associations.

Consultations

Minerva Estate

We held an estate-wide drop-in event at the Minerva Community Centre in April 2019 seeking residents' views and ideas on a variety of local issues. We requested their input to help improve matters such as parking, lighting, security and Anti-Social Behaviour.

Florida Street New Development

This consultation was held in August 2019 at the Zander Court Club Room for residents in the vicinity of the proposed new Florida Street development to view plans and comment on the proposals.

Resident Involvement

An online survey was carried out in October 2019 and used to gather views on the menu of involvement and feedback options provided by THCH. These were fed into our revised resident involvement policy, ensuring we offer several different ways in which residents can get involved to help influence and improve our services.

Concierge Service

In December 2019 we surveyed residents who have a concierge service, seeking views on what they would like to receive in the future. Further work, based on the outcomes of this consultation, have been delayed until 2021.



Resident Involvement continued

Ways to get involved

Board and Operations Committee

An important principle of our approach is the role residents play in helping to set the strategic direction of services and contributing to our overall governance. Places for residents are available on the Board - to put a resident's perspective on strategic directions. We encourage Resident Board members to also join a sub-committee.

Resident Forum

We have a Resident Forum who meet quarterly and provide residents with an opportunity to scrutinise and review services and shape improvements. The forum has a strong influence on the spending we make on environmental improvements.

Scrutiny Panel

The Panel identify areas to scrutinise by looking at customer feedback and performance data to identify priorities. Feedback from other parts of the resident involvement menu will also influence the priorities. Scrutiny of a service provides residents with an opportunity to influence and shape service design – their findings and recommendations are fed back to the senior management team and Operations Committee.

Working Groups

We will set up resident working groups to work on specific projects with us. These will be task-focused and time limited aiming to offer collaborating with officers helping to shape service design.

Involvement at Home

To help residents have their say, without having to travel or attend meetings, we operate on-line surveys, email and telephone discussions.

Customer Feedback Surveys

We offer residents the opportunity to take part in surveys linked to key services to measure resident satisfaction. The feedback is used to enhance service delivery and improve services.

Estate Inspectors

We regularly inspect our estates and schemes, inviting residents to join us. Estate Inspectors work closely with their Neighbourhood Officer to identify areas of concern and monitor the standards of cleaning and gardening. They help focus on local priorities and support estate contract monitoring.

Road Show Events

Road show events take engagement direct to where people live and provide an informal way for residents to have their say and meet with staff and contractors.

Block Meetings

Meetings may be organised on a scheme or block, to enable residents to give their views on services they receive and for staff to discuss service issues or changes.

Listening Campaigns

We will organise drop-in and door-knocking events, going out to schemes and blocks to talk directly to residents about the issues that matter to them where they live.

Resident Associations

We will work with resident associations at a block or estate level. There is a requirement for them to be formally constituted in order to be recognised and supported.

Youth

We want to engage with young people living in THCH homes to give them a voice in their local neighbourhood. We will seek to work with existing youth and community groups to facilitate this.

Procurement and contract monitoring

When appropriate we will seek residents' views to shape service specifications, involve them in procurement and contract monitoring.





Grants and Training

Supported Projects

Our **Small Grants Scheme** and **Community Development Budget** allow us to support the theme of our Strategy by providing funding for groups or residents to deliver one-off or starter projects to the community.

Last year we provided 8 grants totalling **£3,070**, an increase from £2,664 from the previous year, to the following:

St Hilda's LinkAge Plus Over 50s Line Dancing	£480
Bangladeshi Mental Health Forum Mental Health Awareness Training	£500
Beechwood House Resident's Neighbourhood Fun Day	£500
Sew n' Mend Sewing Project	£490
The Stifford Centre/Wapping Youth Crime Awareness Project	£500
The Stifford Centre/Wapping Youth Fit for Everyone Project	£500
Rethink Mental Health Wellness Club	£500
Rethink Mental Health Healthy Cooking & Gardening Project	£500

We also provided over £6,000 support to organisations helping the community host a wide range of cultural programmes, health events and sports related projects. In total, over 800 members of the community attended these events which included the following activities:

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Funding</i>	<i>Attendance</i>
Young @ Heart	St George's Day Party	£150	20
Bright Sparks & Our Gems	Eid Parties	£275	80
LinkAge Plus	New Years' Party	£250	50
The Rooted Forum	Summer Fun Day	£90	40
Our Variety Club	Exercise Project	£400	TBA
LinkAge Plus	Over 50s Wellbeing Fair	£150	85

In 2019-20 we received **£1,000** funding from the **Tower Hamlets Housing Forum** to deliver a **Car Free Fun Day** held in September 2019 at Tait Street, Shadwell which was attended by over 70 local residents and saw THCH join many organisations and local authorities across London highlighting safer streets and car free play.

Training

A core feature of THCH's work is ensuring that our residents and groups have access to training and guidance. Training is designed to improve life skills and confidence, and provide opportunities to ensure our residents and groups have the knowledge and skills to deliver community-focused projects. We were delighted to support individuals directly and also through our continued involvement with the **Community Involvement Network's Joint Training Programme**.



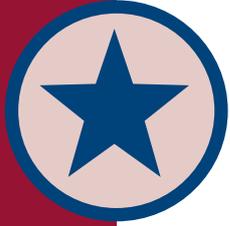
Last year we arranged for 23 community group members to complete a First Aid Awareness Course and delivered Safeguarding Awareness Training to 32 group leaders. Through our involvement with local partner organisations via the Joint Resident Training Programme, a further 42 residents took part in training in 2019/20.

23 First Aid Awareness courses

32 Safeguarding Awareness courses

Course	Numbers Attended
Level 2 Food Hygiene	5
Public speaking	4
Building and managing teams	5
Healthy cooking on budget	2
Personal Leadership	4
Paediatric First Aid	7
Emergency First Aid	1
Safeguarding	5
DIY	2
Grant and Bid writing	4
Project Management	3





Awards

Women in Housing

Lukey Begum

Lukey was shortlisted for the prestigious national **“Improving the Lives of Women or Communities Award”** for the work she has done via the **Harry Gosling Primary School Parent & Staff Association** helping empower local women to become more active in their community.

Lukey’s motivation has inspired the setting up a number of groups for local women from sewing, keep-fit to cooking and gardening, and has supported women into training, to ensure they have the skills and confidence to run their own community projects.

Well done Lukey and all the unsung heroes who deliver projects in the community.



Thank you to all the organisations, community groups and volunteers who work from our centres delivering services to the local community.

Group	Centre	Group	Centre
The Golden Girls Pensioners	Cable Street	Linkage Plus Over 50s Exercise Class	Tarling
Paula's Massage	Cable Street	Stifford Centre	Tarling
Joan's Chiropody - Blue Green Wellbeing	Cable Street	Taal Torongo - Bollywood and Classical Dance	Tarling
Mohila Ongon Women's Association	Hanbury & Minerva	Women's Fitness Class	Tarling
Men's Over 50s Social Club	Hanbury Street	The Cooking Club	Tarling
Horsed Educational & Training Group	Hanbury Street & Wodeham Gardens	The Sewing Club	Tarling
Enam Tutorial	Hanbury Street	Boxers Fitness Academy / The Art of Boxing	Tarling
Overeaters Anonymous	Hanbury Street	Pilates + Legs Bums Turns	Tarling
Men's Group	Hanbury Street	Mum's Café	Tarling
Women's Learning Class	Hanbury Street	Community Martial Arts Trust	Tarling
Asian People's Disability Alliance	Minerva	DJB Taekwondo	Tarling
Shadow Youth Alliance	Minerva	Social Action for Health	Tarling
Bright Stars Parents and Toddlers Group	Minerva	Tower Hamlets Domestic Abuse Service (Look Ahead)	Tarling
BG Community Fitness Club	Minerva	Henna Atelier	Tarling
Aspire Community Works	Minerva	Men's Arabic Language Class	Wodeham Gardens
St Peters Bengali Assoc	Minerva	Arabic Language Class for Adults	Wodeham Gardens
Bengali Women's Arabic and IT Classes	Minerva	Wodeham, Castlemain, Lomas & Trahorn Tenants Association	Wodeham Gardens
WISE Youth Trust (Urban Roots)	Minerva	Golden Dreams Women's Support Group	Wodeham Gardens
TH Positive Money	Minerva	Somali Homework Club	Zander Court
Russian Art Club	Minerva	Newark Youth	Zander Court
Home Schooling Group	Minerva	Young at Heart	Zander Court
Peoples Portal - Grace and Iain	Minerva	Stained Glass Project	Zander Court
Pop Up Business School London Ambassadors	Minerva	St Peter's Supplementary School	Zander Court
Projapoti Cultural Group	Minerva	Our Variety Club	Zander Court & Minerva
St Peter's Community Wellbeing Project	St Peter's	Sew n' Mend	Zander Court
Bethnal Green Montessori Nursery	St Peter's	Open Art Studio	Zander Court
African Music Class	St Peter's	Relaxation Sound Bath	Zander Court & St Peters
Eastside Youth	St Peter's		
Rethink Mental Health	St Peter's	Garden Clubs	
The Rooted Forum	Tarling	Farrell House	
Arabic Learning Class	Tarling	Geoffrey Woolley House	
Weekend Arabic Language Class	Tarling	Hobsons Place	
Bright Sparks Home Education Co-op	Tarling	Minerva Community Centre	
Our Gems	Tarling	Norton House	
Silat Buka Lingkaran (Martial Arts)	Tarling	Tarling Community Centre	
		Winterton House	
		Zander Clourt Club House	



Our Community Centres

Bethnal Green

St Peter's North Community Centre

Pritchard's Road E2 9AX

Minerva Community Centre

Minerva Street E2 9EH

Zander Court Club Room

Zander Court E2 7AY

Spitalfields

Hanbury Street Club Room

Hanbury Street E1 5JQ

Wodeham Gardens Club Room

Wodeham Gardens E1 5BN

Shadwell

Tarling East Community Centre

Martha Street E1 2PA

Cable Street Over 60s Club Room

Cable Street E1W 3DP

TOWER HAMLETS

Community Housing

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THCH is registered with the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) as a Registered Provider of Social Housing.