



The Multiplier: Communities Impact Report

2025



Who are we?

The Communities Operational Hub brings people and services together to create stronger, more resilient neighbourhoods. Guided by our Communities Strategy, we focus on tackling inequality, building opportunity, and fostering belonging through practical support and local partnerships. At the heart of our work is Community Links in Newham, our main hub and a trusted space for advice, wellbeing, and connection. From housing and debt support to digital skills and community activities, Community Links demonstrates how local action drives lasting impact.

We are proud to be part of Catch22, a national not-for profit business with a social mission.

Our Mission

To design and deliver services that build resilience, aspiration, and prosperity for people of all ages within communities across the UK. Through prevention and early intervention, we tackle challenges before they escalate, while promoting equity and social justice to ensure fair access to education, health, and economic opportunities. By creating integrated pathways of support and driving system change, we empower individuals and neighbourhoods to thrive.

Our Vision

A strong society where everyone has good people around them, a good place to live, and a purpose in life, with access to efficient and impactful public services

Our Values

We are driven by our dreams and judged by our delivery.

Foreword

By Elizabeth Booker, Director of Communities



We face challenging times: the economic climate is tough, and changes to national priorities, especially around budgets, have placed extra strain on the charitable sector. We hope this report serves as a clarion call, encouraging everyone to come and step up and join with us in the vital work we do, work that impacts thousands of people every year.

When I think about our impact, it's easy to focus on the big numbers and the impressive scale of work achieved from our base at 105 Barking Road and beyond. But the truth is, our impact is measured in individual lives being transformed: the person who now has money in their pocket to afford heating bills, the person who has the seeds to build their new career, the person who has the information they need to take ownership over their own healthcare. Individuals thriving so that, together, we can build thriving communities.

We've had an amazing year, marked by some truly exciting milestones. These include visits to Number 10 that helped us reconnect with our policy roots, the platforms from which we have been able to amplify lived experience, and the launch of our new strategy for prosperous communities. This year we have been able to bring a cohesive structure to our communities work that is broader than just Community Links while still building on our long history. We have worked with partners to launch new ways of ensuring that place-based work remains at the heart of what we do, and we are moving forward with this tested and proven approach. And, as you'll see in the report, this is just the beginning.

I hope you find this report inspiring. It showcases the incredible work that has taken place and the future we can build together with our communities. And with you.



“What has been achieved comes much from the passion and dedication of our staff, volunteers and members.”

Ian Robinson, Chair of the Community Links Advisory Board



We are pleased to share our latest report and looking forward.

Four headlines stand out:

Community Links is making an additional, unique impact in improving and transforming lives. Based on Theory of Change our programmes have been developing plans that achieve, and demonstrate, the greatest impact. And this drive will continue.

The needs in our communities continue to be pressing – from maintaining a roof over the family's head and food on the table, to securing the qualifications for a first job. Whilst referral lists are longer, and resources are stretched more than ever.

Our response is bold. We have to take our work to new levels. With a vision and determination that are characteristic of Community Links we have ambitious plans for our programmes ahead: to release the full potential within individuals and communities, to reach further and to influence lasting structural change.

Finally, what has been achieved, and the promise of more, comes much from

the passion and dedication of our staff, volunteers and members. It shines out meeting them, and it is appreciated. But it is incomplete. It is your participation that has made, and will continue to make, all the difference.

How?

Young people from Links College & Studios recently recorded an event promoting our new Links Advice Hub. Whilst we waited, Steven shared with me the challenges he'd overcome in life and how important our leaders were as the one fixed point of support and compassion in his life. With camera in hand, he was nervous about capturing a real-life moment for the first time, let alone if it could lead to future qualifications and employment.

Afterwards, when I asked the leader if they had successfully recorded the event the answer immediately came back:

“Steven is buzzing. Two people came up to him and asked him for his Business Card!”

That is participation.

It is your part in making all the work possible that is especially important. Generous unrestricted funding support that is so precious to driving it all; grant and contract agreements, and statutory support, to take forward programmes. We thank all our friends and partners; we are deeply grateful to you all.

We look forward to renewals of support and partnership, and to new additions. In these ways we can, and will, take our work to new levels, for lasting, sustainable change in individual lives and our communities. Together, we can build thriving communities.

Our Impact

This year, Community Links stood at the heart of our Communities hub, opening our doors to nearly 17,000 people and reaching over 40,000 individuals across the Communities Operational hub.

CULTURE WITHIN NEWHAM

243 free creative and cultural events

15,718 people engaged with arts and culture, many for the first time.

3,500 community co-creators helped shape the direction and outcomes of projects.

YOUTH

100 young people engaged in our Studio.

57 young people completed mentoring interventions

56 learners enrolled in academic year 2024-2025

Pass rates of 61% in Maths and 86% in English.

ADVICE

Supported **248** clients through the Finance, Benefit, and Debt (FBD) programme in partnership with the Ministry of Justice.

Provided advice to an additional **1,417** clients via collaborations with housing associations, law firms, and the Greater London Authority.

Optimised client income by **£2.6 million**, including £2.0 million through debt management and £600,000 in welfare benefits.

HEALTH

96% of Primary Care Network's (PCNs) worked with received tailored data packs and planning support through our PCN Cancer Facilitator Project.

19,941 patients reached through our Cancer Screening Calling Projects.

630 service users accessed support through our Community Connectors programme, embedded within the Community Integrated Mental Health Service in Newham.

COMMUNITY

28 cases supported by our Catch22 housing Intervention Project (CHIP), impacting **94** individuals and preventing homelessness in **100%** of those at risk in permanent accommodation and **93%** of those at risk of homelessness in temporary accommodation.

1503 individual young people engaged by Suffolk Positive Futures

61 referrals received across the academic year by Bespoke Counselling Services, with 37 cases closed

365 households supported by Norfolk & Suffolk Mediation Services affecting at least 400 individuals through mediation and conflict coaching.

100% of young people engaged by the Camden Mediation project remained at home, avoiding entry into supported accommodation.

105 older adults graduated from our digital literacy course, Community Clicks.



Spaces, Spending, and Strategy

What is the need?

From our base at 105 Barking Road, Newham has been the home of Community Links for nearly 50 years. While the borough has seen major infrastructure investment in recent years, through projects like the Silvertown Tunnel, Crossrail, and the Royal Docks Enterprise Zone, the benefits of this growth have not been evenly shared. Newham remains one of the most economically vulnerable areas in the UK, with entrenched challenges around poverty, housing, and inequality.

In 2025, Newham continues to have the highest rate of households in temporary accommodation in England, with 5.7% of households affected, more than double the rate of the next highest borough. Over 7,300 families, including over 9,000 children, are currently housed in temporary accommodation by the council. The borough also has one of the highest eviction rates in London, driven by rising private rents and overcrowding.

Poverty remains widespread. Newham is among the London boroughs with poverty rates significantly above both the London and national averages. Nearly one in four jobs in Newham still pay below the London Living Wage, which rose to £13.85 per hour in 2025. Free School Meals eligibility remains high, with nearly a third of pupils qualifying, compared to around 24% nationally.

These challenges are not unique to Newham. As we expand our work across London, Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk, we see the lasting impact of austerity, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. In 2025, over 7 million low-income families across the UK are going without essentials, and 1.6 million people are waiting for mental health support, with some waiting over 18 months for treatment.

The cost-of-living crisis continues to hit the most vulnerable hardest. 57% of UK households reported rising costs in January 2025, with food, energy,

and housing cited as the main drivers. For families with three or more children, nearly 9 in 10 are going without essentials.

Never has the need for our services been more acute or more chronic.

105 Barking Road

105 Barking Road in Canning Town has been our home since 1991. Originally built between 1892 and 1894 as a Victorian public hall, the building has a rich legacy of social action. With historic ties to East London's suffragette and labour movements, it has hosted figures like Sylvia Pankhurst, Keir Hardie, and Bertrand Russell. This year it also hosted a broadcast of BBC 4's Any Questions, highlighting Community Links' continued socially important presence in the area.

Today, 105 Barking Road is a vibrant community hub. It houses our Community Links team and colleagues from across Catch22. In the past year, over 16980 people have walked through its doors, and more have been supported via phone or external referrals. The space also continues to be an asset to the community with groups including a Pensioner's bingo group, a dance group and others calling the building a home.

Recent interior remodelling has modernised the space with updated kitchens and bathrooms, a new baby feeding space, and a dedicated staff wellbeing area. We're now seeking long-term partners to hire space in the building, helping us build meaningful collaborations and ensure this historic hall continues to serve the community for generations to come.

Governance & Finance

Since merging with Catch22 in 2021, Community Links has continued to integrate with the wider organisation while maintaining our deep commitment to Newham and East London. Recently, we became part of Catch22's newly formed Communities Directorate, which supports place-based work across the UK. This year, we completed an extensive theory of change project, and we're now using its insights to strengthen our internal processes, particularly around reporting and impact measurement, to support sustainable growth.

Oversight of Community Links' legacy and local mission remains with our Advisory Committee, made up of passionate individuals from across East London. Their guidance ensures our work stays rooted in the needs of our community. As we evolve within Catch22, we remain focused on building strong partnerships and delivering meaningful, locally-led services that reflect both our history and our future ambitions.

Income & Expenditure

	Financial Year Ending August 2024	Financial Year Ending August 2025
Income (gross)	£3m	£2.8m
Expenditure (gross)	-£2.8m	-£2.6m

We are responsible for raising its own budget, which is ringfenced, meaning all funds donated go towards our work in the community.

Every pound we are given is important to us in a carefully balanced budget to use resources to achieve the most impact.



1

Culture: breaking barriers and sparking ownership

Culture Within Newham is the Creative People and Places programme for the borough, funded by Arts Council England to increase arts provision in areas with historically low cultural engagement. We are a resident-led arts and culture programme and incubator, upskilling communities to develop the culture they want to see. Our audiences are not service users, they are participants and co-creators, shaping the programme through their own ideas, experiences and ambitions.

All our activities are co-created, meaning they are designed in collaboration with local people and respond directly to the needs they identify. We work with anyone who lives, works or studies in Newham, and our work is governed by a consortium of local organisations and affiliates.

The programme is delivered by a small but deeply committed team whose ability to adapt, listen and build trust has been central to its success. In a borough where many residents have felt excluded from cultural opportunities, this approach has helped foster confidence, creativity and long-term engagement.

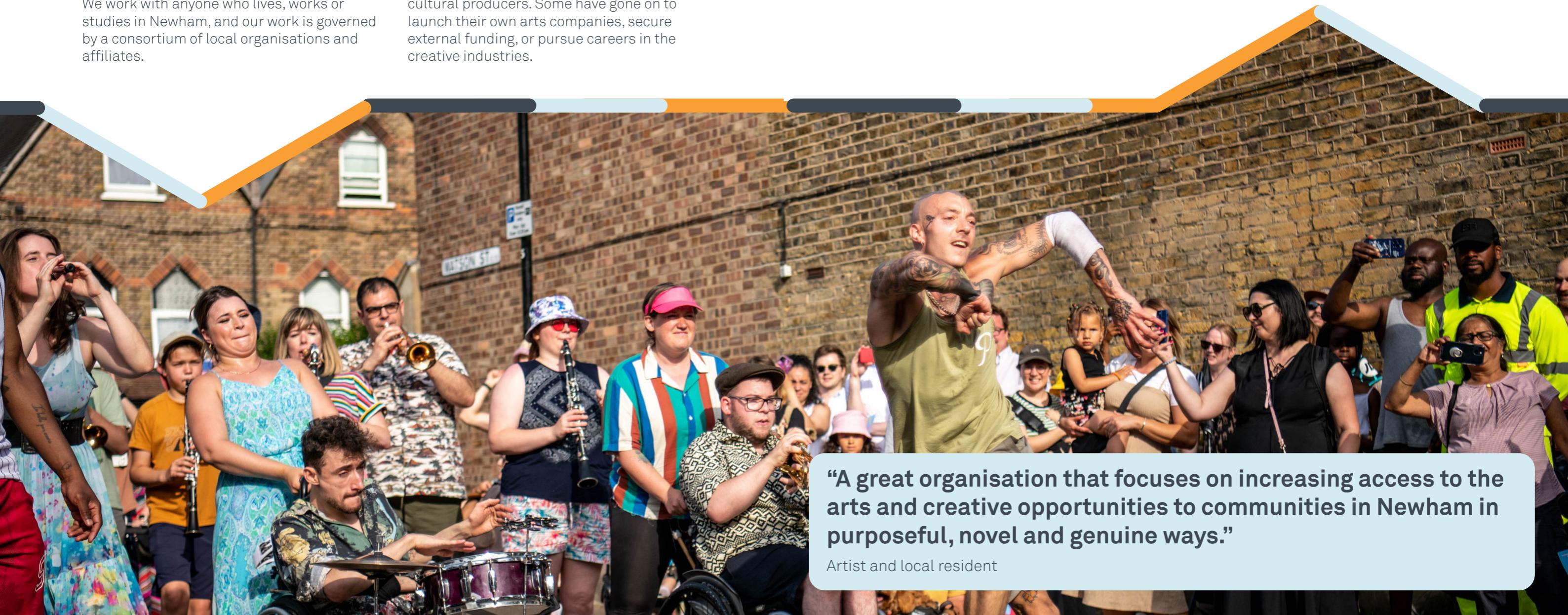
We work largely through community-led arts commissions, structured around open calls for creative ideas. These are often themed and selected by our Community Voices Panel and Children's Board. We've evolved an incubator-style approach, supporting residents to grow from first-time participants to confident cultural producers. Some have gone on to launch their own arts companies, secure external funding, or pursue careers in the creative industries.

The Difference We've Made

- Delivered **243 free creative and cultural events** across Newham.
- Supported **34 community-led projects**, involving **102 project leads**.
- **Engaged 15,718 people with arts and culture**, many for the first time.
- Reached **250,000+ people on social media**, with **55,000 website visits** from January 2024.
- Allocated **£210,000** in funding to **32 community commissions**, selected from 266 project applications.
- Engaged approximately **3,500 community co-creators** who helped shape the direction and outcomes of projects.
- Collaborated with **133 artists, 94 creative suppliers**, and **350 organisations**.

Looking forward: Culture as a catalyst for change

In the next phase, we aim to increase engagement to 71,000 people and grow the number of community co-creators to 10,500. We will continue to amplify underrepresented voices and build lasting partnerships that support creative confidence across Newham.



2

Health: the key to unlocking potential

We help to build healthy communities by increasing participation in cancer screening programmes, providing support to those facing health inequalities, and empowering people to take more control over their own physical and mental wellbeing.

This year, our health programmes have faced growing challenges due to significant NHS funding cuts and structural changes within commissioning bodies. These shifts have made it increasingly difficult to recommission successful projects and maintain vital partnerships. Gaps have emerged in the system, meaning we have had to be increasingly creative to support the communities we serve. Despite these obstacles, our team has continued to deliver impactful, community-rooted services that address persistent health inequalities and improve access to early diagnosis and care.



PCN Cancer Facilitator Project

Now in its third year, our PCN Cancer Facilitator Project, commissioned by the North East London Cancer Alliance (NELCA) is driving measurable improvements in cancer screening uptake across seven boroughs. Working closely with Primary Care Networks (PCNs), our facilitators use localised data to develop bespoke improvement plans, create heatmaps, and guide Quality Improvement (QI) initiatives.

We support multilingual outreach events, distribute culturally appropriate resources, and deliver targeted staff training, including bite-sized cervical cancer awareness modules for non-clinical staff. Our facilitators embed sustainable changes within GP practices, ensuring long-term improvements in engagement and outcomes.

Bowel Screening Calling Intervention

Funded by the North Central London Cancer Alliance, this project supports newly eligible patients to complete and return their bowel screening kits. The programme is grounded in direct, personalised engagement and is designed to reach communities with historically low screening uptake. Our multilingual Health Facilitators use motivational interviewing and behaviour change techniques to overcome barriers such as fear, misinformation, and cultural stigma.

The Difference We've Made

- In total **4,998 patients were called** as part of the project, of which we were able to speak to around 2,650, a **contact rate of 53%**.
- The project led to **1,937 additional completed FIT tests**, of which 23 returned abnormal results.
- **All invited GP practices participated**, showing strong system-wide engagement.

The Difference We've Made

- **96%** of PCNs received **tailored data packs** and planning support.
- One PCN **increased bowel screening uptake from 75.9% to 97.4%**.
- **81%** of PCNs rated the programme as **excellent**.
- **90%** **reported enhanced efforts** around early diagnosis.
- **95%** **found facilitators accessible** and easy to work with.

Breast Screening Calling Intervention Projects

The Breast Screening Calling Intervention Projects focused on identifying and supporting breast-screening patients who did not respond (Did Not Respond/Did Not Attend) to their initial invitation, engaging a highly diverse population through multilingual Health Facilitators. Using motivational interviewing and behaviour-change techniques, health facilitators addressed barriers such as lack of awareness, fear, logistics, and communication issues, while helping women rebook into appointments that are specifically set aside by the Breast Screening service for the community links team, and improving understanding of breast-screening importance. This personalised, culturally sensitive outreach significantly improved uptake among hard-to-reach groups.

The Difference We've Made

- **14,354 patients reached** across North, Outer North East, West, and South West London breast screening services.
- The projects achieved nearly **43% engagement** with 6,133 patients spoken to.
- **1,990 appointments booked** across the project.

“As part of the PCN Cancer Facilitator service, I’m passionate about connecting primary care with the community to support earlier cancer diagnosis through awareness and education. I really enjoy being part of events like this, where open conversations can help people recognise symptoms, overcome barriers to screening, and feel confident in seeking help early.

Naeema PCN Cancer Facilitator

Cervical Screening Calling Intervention

Our cervical screening outreach programme, funded by the London Borough of Newham, is designed to reach women from Bangladeshi and Romanian backgrounds who have not responded to NHS screening invitations. Delivered through 1:1 phone-based interventions in the participant’s preferred language, the programme offers more than just appointment reminders, it creates space for open, culturally sensitive conversations that build trust and understanding.

Health Facilitators gently address myths and misconceptions, explain the importance of screening, and help women navigate a system that can often feel inaccessible. Many of the women we speak to have never had the opportunity to ask questions about cervical screening in a safe, respectful environment. By integrating with GP booking systems, facilitators can book appointments directly, removing logistical barriers and ensuring a smoother patient journey.

This personalised outreach model has proven effective in increasing uptake and improving equity in access to cervical screening services.

The Difference We’ve Made

Among Bangladeshi women: 949 identified, 557 reached, 354 appointments booked (64% of those reached).

Among Romanian women: 124 identified, 33 reached, 20 appointments booked (60% of those reached).

Community Connectors

The Community Connectors Programme, commissioned by East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT), plays a vital role in supporting individuals in Newham living with serious mental illness. Delivered in partnership with Community Links, Aston-Mansfield, and Mind in Tower Hamlets, Newham and Redbridge, the programme offers a compassionate, person-centred approach that complements clinical care by addressing the broader social factors affecting mental health.

Our dedicated team of Community Connectors works closely with service users to build trust, identify needs, and provide tailored support across areas such as housing, financial stability, social inclusion, and wellbeing. Embedded within multi-disciplinary teams and deeply integrated into the local community, Connectors act as a bridge between individuals and the services that can help them thrive. Their work not only improves access to essential resources but also fosters resilience, confidence, and a renewed sense of belonging.

The Difference We’ve Made

- Supported 630 service users**, with 43% accessing help around social inclusion and community engagement.
- Delivered five regular groups** including Craft Club, Book Club, NeurodivergX, Mindfulness, and Men’s Group, supporting 50 participants.
- Facilitated events for Mental Health Awareness Week**, Newham Mental Health Day, and Newham’s 60-Year Celebration, promoting wellbeing and local resources.
- Built strong partnerships** with Newham Recovery College, IPS Employment Service, and Newham Council Public Health.
- Embedded within the **Community Integrated Mental Health Service (CIMHS)** and contributed to multiple steering groups including the Mental Health Transformation and Homelessness Forum.

Stakeholders praised the programme for creating “welcoming, accessible spaces” that “bring joy” and “enable recovery.”

Feedback on Community Connectors

Looking forward: Building Resilient Health Systems

We’ve successfully secured funding to pilot a Health Bank: a new initiative offering health advice and linking individuals to wellbeing services, including other Community Links and Catch22 programmes. The idea for the Health Bank emerged from the team’s experience volunteering at the Community Links Food Bank, where they identified a gap in access to health support. Building on this insight, the pilot aims to reduce health inequalities and improve access to care, with future plans to explore collaboration opportunities with local food banks.



3

Youth: laying the foundations for success

We support young people to unlock their full potential, raise their aspirations and build a sense of purpose. Our youth programmes offer creative, vocational and personal development opportunities in safe, supportive environments. We prioritise trust-based relationships and early intervention, helping young people build confidence, gain qualifications and develop the skills they need to shape their futures.

Links Studio

Links Studios delivers creative and mentoring support for young people aged 10–25, offering sessions three evenings a week focused on lyric writing, vocal recording, live instrumentation and music production. Alongside creative development sessions, offering young people opportunities to complete bespoke music projects, the programme provides mentoring around personal development, employability, and mental health and wellbeing.

Links Studios works closely with Social Switch to connect young people with employment support and opportunities. Individuals working with the studio have also been receiving support from our Gangs and County Lines service, demonstrating the studio's role in wider wraparound care. The studio continues to be a vital space for young people to access trusted support and creative opportunities.

Referrals into specialist mental health support continue to face increasing thresholds and longer waiting times. At the same time, external

organisations are closing cases more quickly when engagement is inconsistent. In this context, the studio's consistent, relational and therapeutic-based approach remains a vital anchor for young people and their families navigating complex challenges.

The Difference We've Made

- Engaged with over **100 young people**
- 57 young people** completed mentoring interventions
- Young people from **16 London boroughs** have accessed opportunities through Links Studios
- Completion of self-reporting** pre and post mental health and wellbeing & resilience surveys; Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale and The Child and Youth Resilience Measure have shown;
- A decrease of self-reported 'low wellbeing'** post interventions. (43% pre vs 36% post)
- An increase of self-reported 'moderate wellbeing'** post intervention (36% pre vs 52% post)
- 42.4% of young people self-reported a **'meaningful positive' change** to their wellbeing post intervention.

"The studio has really helped me grow artistically and boosted my confidence with singing. Joel has been amazing. He is not only mentoring me but also helping me with making beats and the music business aspect. Within just two months of being here, he helped me land two back-to-back paid opportunities, which was a huge deal for me. Even when landing these opportunities, he made the effort to support me in preparing for it and emailing the company which hired me for singing. I'm still quite new to the studio, but it already feels like a second home. It's such a welcoming, fun environment, and every time I come in, I'm learning something new. There are always other young creatives to collaborate with, and I leave feeling inspired every time."

Parents told the inspector "Catch22 are a dream come true!" and praised our dedicated and patient staff, appreciating good communication between College and home, they felt their children were understood and valued.

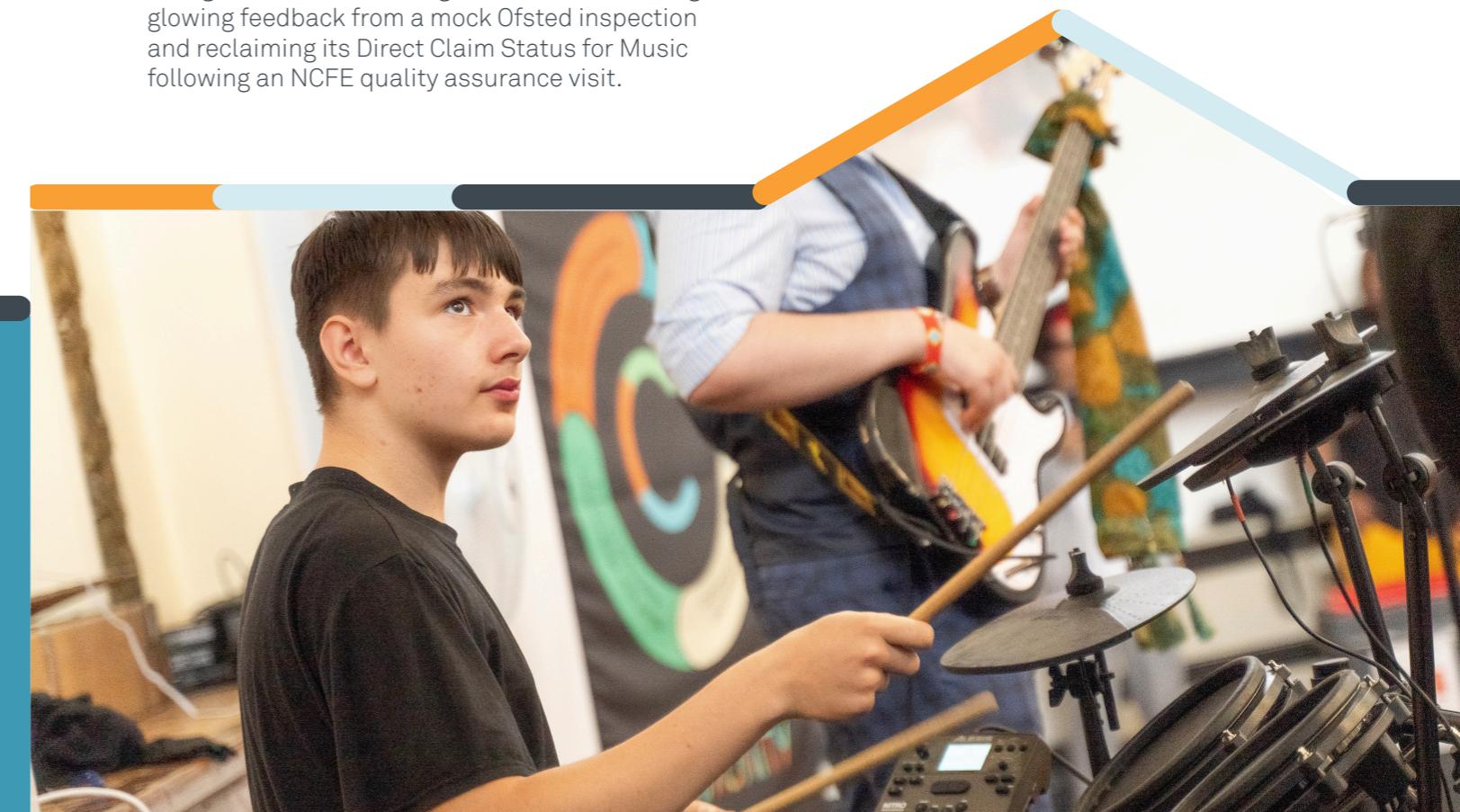
Links Media College

Links Media College has undergone a period of rapid growth, expanding from 15 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) learners in 2023–2024 to 45 FTEs in 2024–2025. The introduction of an ESOL programme has broadened access, and in March 2025, the college transitioned from the Communities Hub to Catch22's Employability & Skills division. This move has helped strengthen its position within the wider Catch22 Colleges network, whilst keeping local provision.

The college supports young people who may not thrive in mainstream education, offering a mix of academic and vocational qualifications in a nurturing environment. Learners are supported by a growing team of staff, including an ESOL teacher, two teaching assistants and an administrator. Despite the challenges of rapid expansion, the college has maintained high standards, receiving glowing feedback from a mock Ofsted inspection and reclaiming its Direct Claim Status for Music following an NCFE quality assurance visit.

The Difference We've Made

- 56 learners enrolled** in academic year 2024–2025, with 44 completing the year
- 64% of learners** from academic 2024–2025 returned for academic year 2025–2026
- Maths **61% pass rate**
- English **86% pass rate**
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) **56% pass rate**
- The first young people from the Studios and College **secured mainstream College and University places** studying; music, performance & childcare
- 30 young people** joined British Exploring Society expeditions, widening their sights and horizons





Community: the power of together

Our Community Resolution and Resilience Services (CRRS) provide targeted, person-centred support to individuals and families facing complex challenges. From housing insecurity and family conflict to emotional wellbeing and youth violence, these services work across multiple regions to build stability, connection and resilience. Whether through mediation, counselling, or intensive tenancy support, each programme is designed to meet people where they are, offering practical help, therapeutic care and opportunities for growth. Together, these services form a vital part of our place-based approach, helping people navigate difficult circumstances and move towards more secure, hopeful futures.

Across all services, teams are seeing increasing pressure from rising thresholds for specialist interventions and reduced tolerance for disengagement from external agencies. In this context, CRRS teams continue to offer flexible, relationship-led support that prioritises trust and long-term impact. From Camden to Colchester, Suffolk to Basildon, our work is rooted in local communities and shaped by the needs of those we serve.



Catch22 Housing Intervention Project (CHIP)

CHIP provides intensive, hands-on support to vulnerable tenants in Colchester who are at risk of eviction, homelessness, or experiencing tenancy-related challenges. The service works with individuals and families in permanent, temporary, or emergency accommodation to address the root causes of instability and promote long-term resilience.

The service operates across two strands: support for permanent tenants facing issues such as rent arrears, hoarding, or antisocial behaviour; and CHIP Solutions, which supports those in temporary or emergency accommodation with tenancy sustainment, benefit access, and transition into permanent housing. In a context of rising mental health needs and reduced local authority resources, CHIP continues to offer flexible, person-centred support that empowers service users to take control of their circumstances.

The Difference We've Made

- **28 cases supported**, impacting up to 94 individuals
- **100% homelessness prevention** for permanent tenants; **93% for temporary accommodation** cases
- **100% of service users reported:**
 - **Feeling more confident** in making positive choices
 - **Feeling safer** and more able to enjoy life
 - **Improved mental health** and reduced stress
 - **Willingness to recommend Catch22** to others
- **91% of service users made progress** in at least two outcome areas; average progress was across 5.8 areas

“Catch22 CHIP helped me to sort my life out. They helped me to get a flat and with my debts. I’m happier than I have been in years.”

CHIP service user

Camden Mediation

At Catch22, we believe that strong relationships are the foundation of thriving communities. The Camden Mediation Service embodies this belief, working alongside young people aged 13–24 and their families to reduce conflict, build trust, and strengthen communication. Whether supporting young people at risk of homelessness or helping families navigate difficult transitions, the service is rooted in empathy, persistence, and a deep commitment to positive change.

HM, a 15-year-old boy, was referred to the Camden Mediation Service following escalating tensions at home, emotional dysregulation, and a potential ADHD diagnosis. Through a blend of one-to-one sessions and joint family meetings, the team helped HM and his family rebuild trust, establish boundaries, and navigate conflict. A turning point came when HM faced school expulsion due to cannabis possession. The mediation team coordinated a compassionate appeal with his family and social worker, allowing HM to remain in school. This intervention not only safeguarded his education but also strengthened family bonds and reinforced the value of collaborative support. HM’s story is a powerful example of how relationship-based mediation can transform lives and lay the groundwork for long-term resilience.

The Difference We've Made

- **100% of engaged young people remained at home**, avoiding entry into supported accommodation.
- **94% of families** reported improved relationships and communication.
- **95% of young people** felt their mental health had improved.
- **90% felt safer** and more able to enjoy life.
- **100% reported increased confidence** in managing life situations.
- The team attended over **230 multi-agency meetings**, reinforcing their collaborative approach.

“You've been such a help and support, I just wish you could stay working with our family forever”

Mum of a 16-year-old girl working with Camden Mediation

Suffolk Positive Futures

Suffolk Positive Futures is a Catch22 initiative that continues to make a profound difference in the lives of young people across Suffolk. Operating in some of the county's most deprived communities, the project delivers sports-based outreach and alternative education programmes that offer young people a safe, supportive space to grow, connect and thrive. Whether through boxing in Lowestoft, football in Felixstowe, or cricket in Ipswich, the service meets young people where they are, on their estates, in their schools, and in their communities. With a focus on early intervention, the project diverts young people from anti-social behaviour and crime, builds emotional resilience, and fosters a sense of belonging and purpose.

The Difference We've Made

- **1503 individual young people engaged** across Suffolk
- **10,023 total attendances** to project sessions
- **1140 hours of activity** delivered across 642 sessions
- **96% of young people felt safer** in their neighbourhoods
- 88% reported **improved mental health**
- 100% felt their **physical health had improved**
- 22 young people took up **volunteering placements**

"As a mother who is struggling, like so many others, to be able to afford to do things with her kids in the holidays, this project has been an absolute godsend. I honestly can't thank you enough."

SPF service user

Bespoke Counselling Service at The Basildon Academies

Catch22's Bespoke Counselling Service at The Basildon Academies provides vital emotional support to students navigating complex personal challenges. Delivered in partnership with pastoral staff and Heads of Year, the service offers a safe, therapeutic space where young people can build resilience, improve wellbeing, and re-engage with their education. Grounded in a person-centred approach, the service focuses on healing past experiences and empowering students to move forward with confidence. Whether addressing anxiety, bereavement, or school avoidance, the counselling team works flexibly and compassionately to meet each young person where they are.

The Difference We've Made

- **61 referrals** received across the academic year, with 37 cases closed
- Average number of **sessions per student ranged from 4 to 5**, with some receiving up to 12 sessions.
- In Spring 2025, **0 students reported worsening family relationships**, and 7 reported improvement.
- **9 students reported improved anger management**, with none feeling worse.
- **95%+ of students reported better confidence**, mood, or anxiety levels by the end of their sessions.
- Students described the service as "**safe, " "supportive," and "life-changing,"** with many reporting increased school attendance and emotional stability.

"Better confidence and ability to open to people more – my friends have noticed."

Counselling service user

Norfolk & Suffolk Mediation Services

At Catch22, we believe that everyone deserves to feel safe, heard and supported in the place they call home. Through our mediation work with local authorities, housing teams and police services, we offer a calm and compassionate way for neighbours to navigate conflict and rebuild trust. We know that every situation is different, and not everyone feels able to take part in a formal mediation meeting so we meet people where they are. By listening carefully, adapting our approach and focusing on what matters most to each individual, we help residents find practical, lasting solutions that make daily life more manageable and relationships more resilient.

One referral was a volatile neighbour dispute that had persisted for over 10 years. The situation involved deep-rooted animosity, PTSD, alcohol misuse, and escalating verbal abuse. Enforcement options were exhausted, and tensions were high. Mediators conducted extensive home visits, listening to both parties and helping them understand each other's needs and triggers. Over time, the neighbours moved from hostility to cooperation. This transformation was sustained without further police or council intervention, demonstrating the power of persistent, empathetic mediation in even the most entrenched conflicts.

The Difference We've Made

- **283 households supported in Norwich**, affecting at least 345 individuals through mediation and conflict coaching.
- 93% of service users in Norwich said their **issue was resolved** through Catch22's intervention.
- 100% of respondents across Norwich and Clarion felt **less stressed and more confident** to manage future conflict after mediation.
- In Babergh & Mid Suffolk, over **90 hours of casework were delivered**, supporting 32 households and 55 individuals.
- Clarion Housing saw **50 households supported**, with 10 cases closed positively and 10 more receiving single-party support with good outcomes.
- Across all three services, **mediation prevented escalation**, with referrers consistently reporting no further calls or enforcement needed post-intervention.

Community Clicks

This project aims to improve the digital literacy and social inclusion of older adults living in Newham. In an increasingly digital world, access to technology is not just a convenience – it is a necessity. Yet, many face barriers to digital inclusion, limiting their ability to connect, learn, and engage with the community around them. Recognising this challenge, we embarked on a journey to bridge the digital divide, fostering empowerment and inclusion for people over the age of 50.

The project is heavily oversubscribed, and impact data continues to highlight a project that delivers exceptional impact. By the end of engagement with us, 93% reported feeling digitally confident – compared to just 20% at the start. A staggering 97% would recommend the project to family and friends and over 95% of people who start go on to graduate from the programme, one of the highest retention rates seen on any programme of activity at Community Links. The project has also observed significant improvements in people's life satisfaction, 9 out of 10 attendees scored the course as 'extremely enjoyable' and data taken at the start and end of engagement evidenced a threefold increase in people's overall wellbeing, particularly in relation to how they feel about themselves, the people around them, and their community.

The introduction of the digital café concept has further embedded the effectiveness of the project's holistic offer. During the current iteration of delivery, we have observed a 75% increase in participants referred to health, advice, and employment-based services at Community Links and Catch22.

The Difference We've Made

- The programme has produced an incredible **395 graduates** since its inception in 2022, with 105 achieving this over the last twelve months.

"Being able to sit and meet was really helpful, we would not have solved it had it not been for the meeting. We are talking again and being civil and alter noise levels, when needed."

Norfolk & Suffolk Mediation Service User

Looking forward: Building Resilient Health Systems

As we reflect on the achievements and challenges of the past year, our commitment to strengthening communities and empowering individual remains unwavering. In the coming year, we will build on the foundation laid by our Resolution and Resilience Services, expanding our reach and deepening our impact through innovative, person-centered approaches. We plan to enhance our mediation and counselling programs, broaden our support for vulnerable tenants, and develop new partnerships with local agencies to address emerging needs. By investing in our teams, leveraging community insights, and prioritizing collaborative solutions, we aim to respond proactively to rising pressures and shifting landscapes. Together with our internal and external partners, we look forward to co-creating resilient, inclusive communities where every individual has the opportunity to thrive. Our shared journey continues—with renewed purpose, strategic focus, and the power of together driving us forward.



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Advice: the power of together

Our advice services delivered exceptional results this year, helping local residents navigate complex financial challenges and secure the support they need. The service provides free debt, housing, legal and welfare advice, offering a range of assistance from initial triage and one-off advice to in-depth form filling and complex casework.

Our work is shaped by the needs of our clients and supported by funders who share our goal of helping communities to be knowledgeable and confident enough to identify and overcome barriers.

Community Links stands out in Newham for its open-door policy, allowing us to reach some of the borough's most vulnerable residents, those without internet access or phones, people with limited English, and individuals experiencing homelessness or digital exclusion.

Advice about debt and welfare benefits continued to be the area of most need, followed by housing issues. Despite facing dual pressures of limited funding and growing demand, our team has supported clients on claiming their full entitlement to benefits and providing practical assistance with debt and housing issues. In an area where poverty levels remain amongst the highest in the country, the impact of this is both significant and transformative. This achievement underscores the vital role of the advice service in reducing poverty, strengthening financial resilience, and improving quality of life for our community.

The Difference We've Made

- **Supported 248 clients** through the Finance, Benefit, and Debt (FBD) programme in partnership with the Ministry of Justice.
- Provided advice to **an additional 1,417 clients** via collaborations with housing associations, law firms, and the Greater London Authority.
- **Optimised client income by £2.6 million**, including £2.0 million through debt management and £600,000 in welfare benefits.
- **Increased income optimisation by £500,000** compared to the same period in 2023–24, despite funding pressures and rising demand.
- Actively **participated in local forums and collaborative meetings**, including those hosted by the London Legal Support Trust, strengthening partnerships across Newham.





The Multiplier: Looking Ahead

Our communities face urgent challenges, and bold action is needed now. At the heart of our vision for facing these challenges head on is the Links Advice Hub, an integrated model of support that brings financial, housing, health, and employment advice together in one place. Our hub launched at Clifford Chance in June with catalyst funding from the Woodroffe Benton Foundation. It was supported by Sir Stephen Timms MP, Minister of State for Social Security and Disability; Rob Lee of Clifford Chance; Chiyo Rimington from Woodroffe Benton; and Howard Dawber, Deputy Mayor of London for Business.

Through the hub we are bringing to life our vision of stronger communities where everyone belongs, feels safe and has the power to shape their future. Already, fundraising is underway to bring on partners who share in this vision. And, we have mobilised an engagement team to strengthen community connections, co-create services and bring lived experience into programme design.

The hub model meets immediate needs and unlocks potential by anchoring services in the principles of People, Place and Purpose. It connects advice, health, employability and youth engagement through locally co-designed, culturally responsive services rooted in trust. This integrated approach will reduce stigma, build resilience, and create an ecosystem of support rather than isolated interventions.

Our ambition goes beyond local impact. We are driving systemic change, influencing policy, and contributing to national conversations on fairness, access to justice, and work. Together, these efforts form a movement for lasting structural change: prosperous communities where every individual has the support and opportunity to thrive.

As we look ahead to the 50th Anniversary of Community Links, we remain committed to bringing people together, honouring a generation of social change and inspiring the next. If you would like to be involved, please get in touch. We look forward to celebrating with you.





Thank You

All our work is made possible by statutory authorities through contracts and agreements, and by generous grants and donations from companies, charitable trusts and individuals.

Your support is crucial to running and developing our frontline work and to all it achieves, and to ensuring the core operations which underpin this.

We are deeply grateful to each and every one of you.

We look forward to maintaining and building our partnerships and friendships in the coming year, to fulfil the mission of Community Links and the ambitions of all those who join with us in this.

We are always pleased to hear from existing partners and friends, and to hear from prospective new ones.

Our heartfelt thanks for our journey, together.

Ian Robinson
Chair, Community Links Advisory Board



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