



University of  
East London



TOWER HAMLETS  
COMMUNITIES  
**DRIVING  
CHANGE**



TOWER HAMLETS

# COMMUNITIES DRIVING CHANGE EVALUATION BRIEFING



THE INSTITUTE FOR CONNECTED COMMUNITIES



CITY UNIVERSITY  
LONDON



Poplar & Limehouse  
Health & Wellbeing Network CIC



## ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The Communities Driving Change (CDC) programme was one of the main priorities of the 2017-2020 Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The programme aimed to build a 'health creation' platform to improve the health of communities by:

- Identifying issues impacting health and wellbeing that matter to local people
- Recruiting other residents who have the energy and passion to make a difference
- Developing and finding new ways to improve health and wellbeing locally.

The programme operates in 12 of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Tower Hamlets. These have been selected based on health data and a need to strengthen assets supporting health and wellbeing in those areas.

## PARTNERSHIPS



NHS PRIMARY  
CARE



NHS SECONDARY  
CARE



EDUCATION/  
SCHOOLS



TRAINING  
PROVIDERS



CVS: CHARITY/  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE



CHILDREN/  
PLAY CENTRES



HOUSING  
ASSOCIATIONS



FAITH COMMUNITIES



FOOD BANKS

“ I think CDC is good for the community as in bringing people together from diverse cultures that maybe wouldn't have socialised, wouldn't get to know each other ... I've got involved and learnt more about different people's cultures and religions through CDC meetings and the classes they've provided.

CDC volunteer

## PROGRAMME DELIVERY PARTNERS

- Tower Hamlets Public Health
- Bromley by Bow Centre
- Poplar and Limehouse Health and Wellbeing Network CIC
- The Young Foundation
- My Time Active
- UEL and City University

## BENEFITS AND IMPACTS

Between Jan 2019 – April 2021

**30,000**

approx population  
across whole of 12  
estates

Benefited  
**13,757+**

individual people in  
and out of area

Mostly reached  
**BANGLADESHI  
FEMALES**  
**25-45 YEARS OLD**  
unwaged or carers

**300+**

types of projects

**130+**

resident-led projects

Pre-Covid, residents  
reported approximately

**5% IMPROVEMENT**

for experiences with services,  
feeling more supported to live  
the life they wanted to and  
make healthy choices

**24,000+**

contacts since  
January 2019

**1,500+**

sessions run by, for  
and with residents

## CDC COVID-19 INSIGHTS

### CDC response to COVID-19

- Residents helped in identifying gaps in support
- Increase in online projects
- Collective action to address basic needs.

### New challenges brought on by COVID-19

- Isolation and grief
- New residents engaged in CDC despite barriers to reach other residents who could benefit
- Training in connecting digitally.

### Old challenges exposed by COVID-19

- Digital and literacy divide
- Food insecurity
- Mental ill-health and loneliness.

“ Because of the pandemic we haven't been able to do as much. But we've still kept in contact whether it's via the internet, whether its via text. Just to make sure that everyone's okay, if they need anything that CDC is still there.

CDC volunteer

## WHAT'S NEXT?



We are still gathering understanding on what is important about the programme in order to ensure that the benefits can be shared across all the council services in Tower Hamlets. Please fill in our survey on the following link by the **Sunday 17 October 2021**:

<https://uel.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/cdc-resident-survey>

## WHAT RESIDENTS AND DELIVERY PARTNERS VALUE MOST ABOUT CDC AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE CARRIED FORWARD

- Understanding one another's values (e.g. good practice, networks and learning)
- Valuing the 'agency' of residents (e.g. strengths based approach)
- Dedicate plenty of time to co-design projects with residents
- Build skills and enhance knowledge
- Honesty and transparency
- Create forums and provide incentives to engage
- Evidence-based decision making
- Peer delivery
- Give examples for how CDC Health Creation approaches can be done
- Entire organisation needs to be onboard
- Community-led co-production
- Link the next steps of CDC to the Council's COVID-19 recovery plan.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all the CDC residents and volunteers for taking part in the programme evaluation. Furthermore, we are grateful for Tower Hamlets Public Health and the Healthy Communities Team, Bromley by Bow Centre, Poplar and Limehouse Health and Wellbeing Network CIC, My Time Active, and The Young Foundation (and Futuregov) for their data collection and evaluation support.

**“ Communities Driving Change has helped me and my community. I had complaints about where I lived and my children's schooling when they had problems during COVID. CDC helped us, they helped me escalate my complaint about my flat and kept my children busy as well during COVID. And when parents didn't know where to go for food, CDC community coordinator helped with that.**

CDC resident